THIS IS "LADIES' NIGHT": A CASE STUDY OF A GRASSROOTS

GOLF PROGRAM FOR BLACK FEMALES


A Dissertation

by

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# ABSTRACT

While there is a growing body of literature concerning the experiences of racial minorities in the mainstream sports of basketball and football, less is known of the experiences of Black females in non-traditional sports such as golf. The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of Black females engaged in the Ladies' Night golf program with a specific focus on how gender, race, and social class interact to shape their experiences, as well as if a sense of community is experienced, and if present what contributes to this. In order to address the purpose and research questions, I conducted an intrinsic qualitative case study of a golf program founded and run by a Black female in which the majority of the participants are Black female beginner golfers. Individual interviews with the golf instructor and seven of her participants were conducted. These women were self-identifying Black and female who attended at least three of the original ladies' clinics. Additional data were gathered through two observations of the ladies' clinics, pictures and commentary placed on social media, demographic information, and my reflexive journal.

The findings revealed four main themes. First, the participants described the challenges associated with being both Black and female in golf. Second, the ladies' clinics serve as safe spaces where Black females can learn the game of golf in a non-intimidating and relaxed environment. This safe space environment is created through the instructor being relatable, the TopGolf environment contributing to a relaxed atmosphere, the participants feeling as though they belong to a sisterhood, and

empowerment. Third, participation in these clinics is rewarding as it meets a need the ladies have. Finally, the clinics make golf appealing to the participants.

This research demonstrates examples of sense of community amongst Black females in a non-traditional sport setting, as well as examines how race, gender, and social class interact to shape these experiences. The practical implications include the importance of creating non-intimidating environments, the impact of a relatable instructor, and emphasizing a lack of competition for underrepresented minority female groups in sport.

# DEDICATION

To my wife Claire and son Joshua

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# NOMENCLATURE

PGA          Professional Golfers Association

LPGA         Ladies Professional Golf Association

USGA         United States Golf Association

UGA          United Golfers Association

NGF          National Golf Foundation

SOC          Sense of Community

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sports, in and of themselves, are neutral creations. They involve various pieces
of equipment, such as balls, clubs, and bats, and arenas in which to play. A basketball,
for example, does not care if the individual shooting it towards a metal hoop is a male,
female, old, young, tall, short, Black, White, etc. It merely travels through the air with a
velocity and trajectory that results in either a made or missed shot. What is interesting,
however, is that certain sports and their corresponding pieces of equipment and playing
contexts seem to be viewed as relevant or appropriate for certain groups of individuals,
but not necessarily others. It is the social constructions and meanings associated with
certain sports that contribute, at least in part, to the overrepresentation and
underrepresentation of some groups in certain sports, and racial groups' perceived self-
competency in certain sports, such as Blacks in basketball (Harrison, Lee, and Belcher,
1999). This is particularly the case within the sport of golf. As of 2010, the National
Golf Foundation (NGF) states that racial minorities in general, and specifically racial
minority females, are underrepresented as recreational golfers, and subsequently as elite
golfers (National Golf Foundation, 2010). This can also be seen at the practitioner (e.g.,
general managers, head pros, assistant pros, etc.) and playing professional levels. A
closer look at the historical context of golf could help to shed light on this current
phenomenon.

**History of golf**

While societies throughout recorded history have played games that involve hitting a round object with a club/stick towards a pre-specified goal, the current 18-hole version of golf, which is cited as being developed as early as 1750, owes its inception to the Scottish (History of golf – Scottish perspective, 2013). The game became extremely popular among commoners and royalty, and as a result, Scotland's Parliament attempted to ban golf, as it was hindering military training (National Library of Scotland, 2013). While King James IV's Parliament banned golf, he himself was a known golfer. As the years progressed, formal rules of play were established and organized competitive tournaments began to appear (National Library of Scotland, 2013).

**Golf in the U.S. context**

The game of golf crossed the Atlantic with the early European colonists, and by 1894, the United States Golf Association (USGA) was founded. This organization was largely responsible for writing the rules, conducting national championships and establishing a national system of handicapping in the United States (U.S.) (USGA, 2013). Several years later, the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) was created. What began as an organization designed to increase the number of golf clubs being sold to the public has grown into the largest sporting organization in the world (PGA, 2013c). Perhaps the most recognizable aspect of the PGA is the PGA Tour, which showcases the world's premier male golfers as they compete in tournaments throughout the year. The Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), which was founded in the 1950's, is similar to the PGA in that it conducts its own professional women's tour. Both the PGA

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and LPGA comprise the industry leaders in the teaching, management, and promotion of golf in the U.S. context (LPGA, 2013).

Aside from these three aforementioned sport organizations, several other organizations are dedicated to increasing youth involvement in the game. The most recognizable of such organizations is The First Tee. Founded in 1997, The First Tee's mission is to bring golf to youth from all backgrounds. As time has passed, The First Tee has modified its goals from simply introducing youth to golf to now teaching life skills through the game. To date, this organization has reached 7.6 million participants (The First Tee, 2013). The First Tee is having success in its goals of teaching life lessons through golf, with more than 50 percent of parents reporting improved communication skills, confidence, responsibility, school grades, and social skills in their children after being involved with The First Tee (The First Tee, 2010).

Golf is also a significant contributor to the U.S. economy. The golf industry hit its peak in 2005 with an estimated economic impact of $195.1 billion, and has been on a decline ever since, reporting an impact of $176.8 billion in 2011 (SRI International, 2012). The majority of the revenue collected by the golf industry comes in the form of green fees, membership fees, driving range fees, golf cart rentals, and food and beverage spending at the golf course. The first two forms of revenue play a crucial role in the current demographics of golfing participants. For example, the average price charged to play golf by public courses in the U.S. is $46 (National Golf Foundation, 2009). This represents a substantial barrier to those with limited discretionary income. In the U.S. context, Blacks and Hispanics tend to have less discretionary income when compared to

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their White counterparts (Cunningham, 2011). Perhaps this helps explain the fact that the majority of the recreational golf participants are Whites. While this may not be the only reason for the present underrepresentation of racial minorities in golf, it is arguably a significant factor.

Aside from the financial barriers, the game of golf has been portrayed as the "rich White man's game" in the U.S. (Apostolis & Giles, 2011). The existence of private country clubs likely contributes to this stereotype. Ryan (1997) describes the origins of country clubs as being created by wealthy White, Anglos-Saxon Protestants between 1880 and 1930, when the nation was divided into "us and them." Given the history of oppression of racial minority groups in America (Bell, 1987; 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), it is not farfetched to assert that golf is a sport that highlights and celebrates the wealth that some groups have, such as memberships to exclusive private country clubs, while serving as a painful reminder to others who cannot afford to play the game.

Furthermore, golf-specific media promotes the game as a domain for White males. Apostolis and Giles (2011) state that *Golf Digest*, which is the top consumed golf magazine in the world, continues to, "construct golf as a sanctuary for white, wealthy heterosexual masculinity," and that women of color were absent from the publication all together (p. 235). Both the physical and sociological barriers to participation in the game likely contribute to the low participation rates of racial minorities in golf. Despite these barriers, there are Black males and females who do currently play golf. Furthermore, the history of Black participation in golf, in general, and Black females in golf more

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specifically is rich and largely relegated to the background behind the historic achievements of Blacks in basketball, football, and baseball. A detailed examination of this history is examined next.

**History of Black involvement in golf in the U.S.**

Similar to the Black athlete's experience in other sports, Black golfers have faced challenges in their access to and participation in golf. From being denied access to White owned golf courses to fighting for legitimacy as professional golfers, their story is one of struggle and perseverance. Many Black golfers' first introduction to the game was through the servant role of caddying (Kennedy, 2000; McDaniel, 2000; Sinnette, 1998). A caddie is an assistant to the golfer who carries the golfer's bags and provides advice on what shot to play, informs where trouble is, and helps locate the golfer's ball after it is struck. Through this avenue, many Black male youth were able to watch the game and become familiar with it up close (Kennedy, 2000).

As more people in the Black community became exposed to and involved in the game, there was a need for a professional organization. In 1926, Dr. George Adams and Dr. Albert Harris, two Black male physicians from Washington D.C. decided to join together to create an organization that provided a safe and encouraging atmosphere for Black golfers to compete. This organization in no way represented clubs associated with the PGA, but merely began as groups of Black men and women who joined together to play golf wherever and whenever they could (Kennedy, 2000). As a result of this desire, the United Golfers Association (UGA) , which was a Black only organization that

paralleled the White-only PGA, was formed in 1926 (Johnson, 2010; McDaniel, 2000, Sinnette, 1998).

The UGA grew and held local and national tournaments where Black golfers were able to compete with fellow golf enthusiasts and showcase their skills. Eventually, the UGA began to receive the attention of many Black celebrities such as Joe Louis, Jackie Robinson, and Sugar Ray Robinson. Despite the growing success of the UGA, the all-important PGA membership was still exclusive to Whites only. In fact, the PGA Tour was the last of the large sporting organizations to remove its color barrier in 1961, finally allowing for Black professional golfers to participate in sanctioned events (McDaniel, 2000).

It appears that there has been a shift in the value placed on golf within the Black community since the days of the UGA. What was once viewed as a worthwhile investment, even worth fighting for in the legal system (Robertson, 2005; Sinnette, 1998), currently seems an afterthought. The mainstream glorification of basketball and football, along with the lucrative potential for college scholarships and financial security, serves to place these sports as an ultimate goal for many Black youth in the U.S (May, 2008). This is not to say that there are not young Black males and females who are currently pursuing careers as professional golfers, but that the importance and emphasis placed on this sport is minimal compared to the past.

Within the overarching history of Black involvement in golf, there is a rich history of Black female participation. These women's experience can best be described, as Sinnette (1998) puts it, as "the struggle within a struggle" (p. 96). Similar to most

other aspects of society in the U.S., Black female golfers had to contend not only with the challenges associated with their race, but also with the challenges of being female.

The earliest known organization of Black women golfers is credited to Helen Harris, who formed the Wake Robin Golf Club for Negro Women in 1937. In a time where sexism and racism were very much front stage and frequently manifested, a Black female golf organization was a symbol of liberation, emancipation, and bravery (Johnson, 2010). Not only did this organization serve as a safe space for Black female golfers, but also as a political force. Recognizing the lack of opportunities and avenues for participation due to "White-only" golf courses in the Washington D.C. area, the women of the Wake Robin Golf Club petitioned until all courses in the area were integrated in 1941 (Johnson, 2010).

Black female golfers not only faced exclusion and discrimination from White golf institutions, but from fellow Black male golfers as well. The UGA was a "male-only" organization prior to 1939, when Anna Mae Robinson, who formed another Black female golf organization called the Chicago Women's Golf Club, requested full membership for females into the UGA (Sinnette, 1998). Even with the progress made by Black female organizations, contention continued to exist within the Black golfing community. For example, in 1947 at the Joe Louis Open, Black females were not permitted to play in the tournament. Furthermore, women were excluded from leadership positions within the UGA (Sinnette, 1998). As the years progressed and the number of Black female participants and organizations began to increase, steady progress was made for the inclusion of Black female golfers within the UGA.

Some of the most influential Black females to play golf have become lost in the history of the game. Names like Lucy Williams Mitchum, who was the first woman to win the UGA National Open Women's Championship four times, Ann Moore Gregory, who won five UGA National Open Women's Championships, or Ethel Funches, who won over 100 local and regional titles and trophies are largely relegated to historical accounts of Black female golfers, of which very few exist (Johnson, 2010). Furthermore, the heroic and powerful acts of Black females in golf, such as Tammy Hathaway, who was largely influential in Lee Elder becoming the first Black golfer to play in the Masters tournament, are often overlooked. The impact and significance of these women transcends the sporting realm. Organizations like the Wake Robin Golf Club and individual Black females challenging and ultimately helping to change the status quo of golf is no fact to dismiss. To be Black and female in the golf world in the past and perhaps the present was a political act of strength, empowerment, and justice (Sinnette, 1998).

Several themes emerge from this historical perspective of the history of Black involvement in golf. First, as in other sporting contexts, such as baseball, the Black community has a history of overcoming obstacles in order to provide opportunities for participation in golf. Through the formation of golf-specific clubs and organizations, such as the UGA and the Wake Robin Golf Club, Black golfing communities transcended the barriers imposed upon them by the White-dominated golf world (McDaniel, 2000; Johnson, 2010; Sinnette, 1998). Second, due to the intersections of

gender, race, and social class, Black females have faced limited access and opportunities within the Black and White golfing communities (Johnson, 2010; Sinnette, 1998).

## Purpose and significance of this study

Even though there are certain factors that have contributed to the underrepresentation of racial minorities in golf, in particular Black females, there are those who are attempting to change the demographics of golf to be more inclusive. For example, Black female founded and operated golf organizations in the U.S. exist (e.g., Sistas on the Links, Black Jewels, and the Lady Drivers Golf Club) who seek to increase the involvement of Black women in golf (Johnson, 2010). A review of these organizations' websites reveals that they consist of acting officers and operate in a non-profit manner. Some, such as the Les Birdies Golf Club, Inc. in the greater Cincinnati area, were founded as early as 1976 (Les Birdies Golf Club, Inc., 2014), and others, such as Sistas on the Links in the San Francisco Bay area, as recently as 2008 (Sistas on the Links, 2014). In addition to introducing Black women to golf, these organizations conduct tournaments and golf outings for their members. These clubs continue in the tradition of their predecessors, such as the Wake Robin Club, and serve as communities focused around the common goal of introducing Black females to golf.

In this study, I examine a for-profit golf program founded in the summer of 2013 by a Black female, who previously competed as a mini-touring golf professional and Division I collegiate golfer. Through initial discussions with this instructor and observations of photos on social media, it was evident that she is reengaging one of the most underrepresented groups in the game. The purpose of this current study is to

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understand the experiences of Black female participants in the Ladies' Night golf program. The research questions that guide this study are:

1) How do gender, race, and social class interact in the participants' experience in these clinics?

2) Does a sense of community among these Black female participants exist? If so, what contributes to this?

The potential implications this research has for the golf industry as well as the Black community should not be understated. First, the PGA of America states on their website that they need to do more to increase minority and female involvement in the game, and that golf participants must be representative of the U.S. population (PGA, 2013a, 2013b). In this regard, the outcomes of this proposed research could provide the PGA and other sport organizations in the golf industry with viable strategies for achieving this stated goal. This is certainly important for golf industry practitioners as the growth of the game has become stagnant in recent years and has even begun to decline; and racial minorities, who it is estimated will become the numerical majority in the U.S. by 2040, represent a viable market (Cunningham, 2011; Roberts, 2008; Yen, 2013).

In addition, racial minority females not involved with golf are not capitalizing on the potential for networking and building social capital with individuals in positions of power and influence. Golf is largely regarded as an avenue where business deals are made. For Black females who work in industries where golf is utilized for networking

purposes, learning how to play and also becoming proficient at the game can potentially provide increased opportunities for networking.

Finally, this research is significant in that it sought to examine the experiences of the most underrepresented group in golf, namely racial minority females and specifically Black females in this study. By gaining insight into these participants' experiences, this research has the potential to impact not only golf specific organizations and the academy, but also to help empower and benefit the participants, which is a goal of critical sport management research (see Frisby, 2005). Furthermore, since Black females have historically been underrepresented in the sport management literature and silenced in sport and society (Bruening, 2004a; Bruening, Armstrong, & Pastore, 2005; Bruening, 2005; Carter & Hart, 2010; Sellers, Kupermine, & Dames, 1997; Smith, 1992), this study adds to the growing body of literature on the experiences of Black females in sport, and will hopefully spawn further investigations into issues faced by this population by other sport management scholars. As Bruening et al., (2005) explain, a lack of research on Black females' lives can create an attitude that their lives are not worthy of researching. This study can help challenge this notion and is an avenue that deserves to be pursued.

**Researcher positionality**

Given the nature of qualitative research, in that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2002), and the challenge of the researcher, who is a perceived White male being an outsider to the individuals participating in this research, namely Black females, it is important to discuss researcher

positionality from the outset. First, the researcher as instrument has positive aspects. For example, when engaged in research with the participants, the researcher can immediately respond and adapt to the fluid nature of data collection, such as interviews, rather than being confined to a strict set of predetermined questions (Merriam, 2002). A challenge that the researcher as instrument faces is addressing biases that have the potential to impact the study. Rather than try to eliminate these biases, Merriam (2002) suggests that the researcher identify and monitor them as to how they may be shaping the collection and analysis of the data. This was achieved through the monitoring of my thoughts and emotions on the research throughout the process.

The insider/outsider concept has been debated within the fields of sociology and qualitative research for some time (Andersen, 1993; May, 2014). While there are certainly advantages to conducting research as an insider, the very notion of insider/outsider is complex. For example, Tinker and Armstrong (2008) argue that a key problem exists with the insider/outsider concept. Namely, this concept emphasizes categories, such as race and gender, without acknowledging the fluid nature of identity. Furthermore, a similarity in one of these categories does not necessarily make one an insider, just as a difference does not mandate one an outsider. For example, a researcher may differ in both race and gender from that of the research participants, but share similar religious beliefs, educational background, passions, marital status, or social class to name a few. I do acknowledge that, due to historical power structures, race and gender carry tangible implications in the U.S. context (Andersen, 1993; May, 2014). However, to dismiss research in which the researcher differs in race or gender from the participants

would be faulty (Kamenou, 2007), as there are advantages to an outsider conducting research with a group he/she is not a part of (May, 2014; Tinker & Armstrong, 2008). For example, Tinker and Armstrong (2008) state that by acknowledging a lack of cultural knowledge of the participants' experience, the researcher can: "(a) elicit detailed responses, (b) minimise the respondents' fear of being judged, (c) ask some questions that a researcher from the same cultural group may not be able to, and (d) maintain a critical distance from the data" (p.55). Furthermore, when the researcher is an outsider, the participants are placed in a position of authority on their lived experience, in which the researcher must rely upon them for important information (May, 2014).

Andersen (1993), who is a White female, provides several strategies for conducting research across race, gender, and social class. First, the researcher must acknowledge his/her privileged status as the interviewer and take account of how the participants perceive this power dynamic. This is a concept I reflected upon after the observations and individual interviews in my reflexive journal and audio-recorded debriefing monologues. I noticed that once the participants understood the scope and purpose of the research, there was an overarching willingness to assist and participate in the study. Several participants specifically thanked me for conducting the research. Others stated that the topic was interesting and important.

Second, it is important for the researcher to avoid presenting her/himself as an expert on the lives of the participants. Specifically, Andersen (1993) states that, when interviewing Black women who were poor, "I introduced myself as someone who was interested in learning about them particularly because their lives were unreported and

undervalued by teachers and scholars" (p.48). In Andersen's research, the participants responded that they were honored that someone was taking an interest in their lives, and that participation in the research made them feel positively valued. To address this, I was deliberate in my recruiting statements when I asked for participation and help with my research. Namely, I described the participants as the experts of their experience, and that I sought to learn from them. Third, it is important for the researcher to actively participate in the lives and experiences of the participants. I achieved this by building rapport with the participants through the creation of insider moments, which is explained in detail next.

Finally, Andersen (1993) recommends that the researcher encourage the participants to ask questions about the research and researcher, and to openly and honestly answer these questions. This is a strategy that I employed during my visits to the Ladies' Night clinics and individual interviews, as it helped to break down barriers and built rapport through the uncovering of insider moments, which May (2014) defines as:

> …not predicated upon a presumed shared connection stemming from one's racial identity, but rather upon the convergence of the participants' experiences. This convergence occurs across many boundaries—e.g., racial, gender, class, age, or religious boundaries—when the participants in the conversation come upon a topic with which they each have experience and a willingness to discuss…insider moments entail substantive discussions that allow individuals to transcend boundaries and express deeply rooted feelings and emotions (p. 133).

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By sharing my past history of involvement with and introduction to golf, racial identity, background living in a low-income household, and research interest in understanding the experiences of racial minorities in sport, a level of rapport and intimacy was developed with the participants. This strategy of sharing has been shown to reduce the power balance between research and participant (Graham, 1983), and it is argued that rapport can be created, which can lead to more honest discussions on sensitive issues (Kamenou, 2007). Such was my experience during the uncovering of these insider moments. Through conversations spanning topics including, but not limited to, family, careers, faith, and sports I noted that I was viewed as a real person, as opposed to a distant outsider. Specifically, I developed such rapport with several of the participants that they felt comfortable asking me about my newborn son and sharing their own stories about their children, as well as experiences with religion and career changes.

Despite the advantages of and aforementioned strategies for majority group members conducting research with minority groups, it is important to examine my perception and understanding of race, societal structures, and the influence of various diversity dimensions on the daily lived experiences of minorities (Stanfield, 1993), and to avoid claiming to have ultimate knowledge and understanding of the participants' experience (Andersen, 1993). To achieve this, I turn to Milner (2007), who provides a framework for individuals conducting research on issues of race and culture, for example a White male researching the experiences of Black females. While Milner (2007) does not discredit or discourage this type of research, he does encourage the researcher to

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follow several steps: a) researching the self; b) researching the self in relation to others; c) engaged reflection and representation; d) shifting from self to system.

First, the researcher needs to take account of her/his own understanding of race and culture, and how she/he came to know and understand them. As an individual of mixed race (my father is White and my mother is a Hispanic) who identifies as Hispanic, but is perceived as White by many people, I am cognizant of my privileged position as a perceived White male. Growing up, I was always perceived as White, and as a result, I took the experiences of my mother and Hispanic friends for granted. My Hispanic heritage took backstage to the privilege that came with my Whiteness. While my family was by no means wealthy (we would be considered lower-class SES), I had the benefit of being placed in the advanced classes in my high school. I was aware that the majority of Black and Hispanic students were placed in the "normal" or "remedial" classes, with only three in the advanced classes. Acknowledging this disparity, however, did not lead me to critically analyze this in my youth. It was not until my graduate work that I began to interrogate the larger implications of race.

Once the proverbial "veil" was lifted, it was discouraging to note how quickly and easy it was to begin to interrogate and examine how the larger issue of racism affects and impacts structures and systems at the expense of people of color. Within the sport context specifically, I began to witness instances that caused me to pursue issues of race in sport for my research. For example, while coaching a predominantly White girls' basketball team, our team played in a predominantly Black community gym against predominantly Black teams. My wife attended one game and overheard two White

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mothers discussing how they informed their daughters "not to expect a beauty pageant" (concerning the environment and appearance of the other teams' girls). This dismissal of Black beauty and normalizing of White beauty was discouraging, especially since several of the teammates of these mothers' daughters were Black girls, and these mothers showed no hesitation to cheer for them when it benefitted the team. Another similar experience specifically in the golf context that caused me to pursue this line of research was when a middle-aged White man was conversing with several younger White boys about a local golf course's future. The comment was made that, "if they want to let the course go to the brothers and the beaners, then they should not put any money into it, but if they want to make it nice, then they needed to do X, Y, and Z." This mindset that somehow a lesser quality golf course was appropriate for golfers of color was a comment that placed Whiteness as a desirable attribute of golf.

As a result of my exposure to critical works and coursework, I continually interrogate and challenge my thoughts and perspectives on issues of race, which is a recommendation by Andersen (1993) for White scholars conducting research on race and ethnicity. Throughout the course of this research, I kept a self-reflexive journal of my thoughts and feelings on the research. This strategy of reflecting is recommended by Lorbiecki and Jack (2000), such that academics will look deeply into their research and consider the various political, cultural, and social implications of the knowledge being constructed.

Concerning researching the self in relation to others, Milner (2007) recommends that the researcher explicitly acknowledge the multiple roles, identities, and positions

that researchers and participants bring to the research process. This is imperative so that the researcher's own agenda and objectives do not overshadow or minimize the experiences and insights of the researched group. To combat this, I acknowledged my position as a researcher with privileged status, and explained to the participants that their participation was important, as they were the experts of their experience. Also, I explained that I desired to accurately represent their voices and avoid misrepresenting their thoughts. After this open dialogue, the participants expressed interest and desire to participate in the research. Furthermore, I had the benefit of having Tammy, the golf instructor serve as a liaison, which helped to establish rapport and trust with the participants.

Milner (2007) also recommends that the researcher and participants engage in reflection and representation. This means that throughout the research process the researcher and participants discuss and critique the data and findings of the research. There are several ways to accomplish this. First, I engaged in member-checking with the participants. This is a strategy utilized in qualitative research to ensure that what the participant intended to convey is in fact represented by the researcher in the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Furthermore, by discussing the findings with the participants, the researcher and participants can critically interrogate the path of future inquiry during the course of the research, as some questions of importance may emerge that were previously not acknowledged.

Finally, Milner (2007) recommends shifting from the self to the system during the research. In essence, the researcher takes the scope of the study and places it within

the context of the larger issues of race in society. This can help the researcher to avoid the danger of positioning the racialized experiences of the participants at the individual level, and ignoring larger issues in society. To address this, the literature review provides an overview of the experiences of Black females in sport at various levels, such as athletes, coaches and administrators, and recreational participants.

These steps are important to take when conducting research on race and culture for several reasons. First, research has historically focused on the experiences of Whites, which often is at the expense of people of color. By normalizing the White experience, all other racial groups are silenced, as their unique experiences are not taken into account. Furthermore, when researchers do not take into account their own understandings of race, the danger exists that the experiences of these minority groups will be subconsciously pushed to the side or seen as anomalies in comparison to the majority norm. By centering the experiences of marginalized groups in research, this can potentially be avoided. Also, by disrupting the notion of colorblindness through an honest examination of the researcher's conceptualization of race, a more honest analysis and understanding of the experiences of marginalized groups can be achieved, as it holds the researcher accountable throughout the process (Milner, 2007).

**Definition of key terms**

In this dissertation, I utilize the following key terms:

**Black:** Throughout this dissertation, the term Black will be used in place of African American. Exceptions include when presenting research in which the participants are referred to as African American, or when participants in this study use African American

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during interviews. Given the history of the terms used to refer to Black people, in which constantly changing political forces have resulted in different terms used (Smith, 1992; Brown, 1999; Thornton, Taylor, & Brown, 2000), the term Black was chosen as it is a more inclusive term than African American. For example, an individual born in the Caribbean who lives in the U.S. may share in and identify with a similar experience to a U.S. born Black individual. This individual might not identify with African heritage, as they were born in the Caribbean, and, as a result, not identify as African American, but rather Black. While the term African American would exclude this individual from participation in research where the focus is on the experiences of African Americans, the term Black would allow this individual to participate. Furthermore, the term Black has a history in the Black power, Black pride, and Black beauty movements (Smith, 1992). These movements were rooted in counter-narratives and providing power to the Black community, and the critical paradigm, which is utilized in this dissertation, aligns with the goal of helping to empower to marginalized groups.

**Case study:** "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis" (Yin, 2009, p.18).

**Community:** Either a neighborhood, such as a geographical setting with defined boundaries, or a group that has a common interest (e.g., sporting activity) (Gusfield, 1975; Heller, 1989).

**Credibility:** A confirmation that the research is measuring what it intends to measure, or reality as it is experienced by the participants (Merriam, 1998).

**Dependability:** The ability of other researchers to potentially come to similar conclusions were they to conduct an identical/similar study (Shenton, 2004).

**Epistemology:** The relationship between the researcher and what is known, or how the researcher comes to know and understand reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011).

**Gender/Sex:** While often used interchangeably (Cunningham, 2011), this study will distinguish between the terms sex and gender. According to Powell and Graves (2003), sex refers to a biological classification of individuals based upon reproductive organs and physical characteristics. Gender, on the other hand, refers to the different social roles that are expected of men and women , such as women being expected to stay in the home as opposed to working, or males being expected to be aggressive and tough. Thus, similar to the definition of race, the definition of gender emphasizes the social constructions and expectations that are placed upon biological characteristics.

**Intersectionality:** As defined by Crenshaw (1991), intersectionality refers to the various ways in which race and gender, as well as other diversity dimensions such as social class, interact to shape the experiences of racial minority women. That is to say, when examining the experiences of Black females, one cannot fully capture the experience by

analyzing race and gender separately. For example, a Black woman may experience discrimination based upon both her race and gender, whereas a White woman may only experience discrimination based upon her gender.

**Insider/Outsider:** The concept that shared dimensions of identity, such as gender or social class, serve to unite groups of individuals with similar characteristics (i.e., insiders). Those who are dissimilar, by way of these characteristics, are considered outsiders to the group.

**Insider moments:** During conversation between the researcher and participant, these entail the convergence of experiences across many boundaries (e.g., education, personal passions, social class, among others) that allow individuals to transcend boundaries and express deeply rooted feelings and emotions (May, 2014).

**Intrinsic case study:** A case study design utilized when there is intrinsic interest in the case itself, such as a unique individual, phenomenon, or a program, and the researcher seeks to understand the complexities of the case (Stake, 2005).

**Member checking:** A process in which the researcher asks for clarification from the participants concerning the implications and meaning of their statements, which helps to assure that what the participant intended to convey is being conveyed in the analysis and write up of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

**Ontology:** What is the nature of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011)?

**Paradigm:** An accepted model or pattern that is utilized to examine or address certain research questions (Kuhn, 1996).

**Peer review:** A process by which the primary researcher seeks the counsel of another researcher, who acts as a "devil's advocate," and asks critical questions regarding the primary researcher's motives and feelings about the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Race:** For the purposes of this study, Coakley's (2009) definition of race will be used. Coakley (2009) explains that race refers to socially constructed meanings associated with biological characteristics. The crucial concept in this definition is the emphasis on the social construction of race. While few would debate that there are similar physical characteristics that people share, such as hues of skin color, hair texture etc., when the history of race is studied, one finds that the categories assigned to individuals often change to suit the needs of those who have the power to do the classifying (Coakley, 2009).

**Safe spaces:** Spaces where Black women can self-define and resist objectification based on intersecting oppressions (Hill-Collins, 2000).

**Sense of community:** "A feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9).

**Transferability:** The ability of the reader to transfer the findings of the research to their own situation (Shenton, 2004).

**Trustworthiness:** An attempt by the researcher to ensure to the research community that the research conducted is, among others, credible, dependable, and transferable (Williams & Morrow, 2009).

In the preceding sections, I have introduced the topic of this study, some pertinent background literature, the purpose, research questions, and significance of this proposed study, and defined key terms. Furthermore, I have examined my positionality as the researcher in this context. In Chapter II, I examine the theoretical frameworks I utilized in this study, namely intersectionality and sense of community, as well as the relevant literature related to the topic. In Chapter III, I describe in detail the methodology utilized in this study. In Chapter IV, I discuss the findings of the study. In Chapter V, I conclude this study with a discussion the findings, as well as theoretical and practical implications of this study, and directions for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW


In this section, I examine the frameworks that serve to guide the research, namely intersectionality and sense of community, as well as the relevant literature to the topic at hand. First, I provide an overview of intersectionality. Second, I present literature on the experiences of Black females in sport and how intersectionality influences these experiences. Finally, I provide an overview of the literature on sense of community in general, and in sport in particular.

**Intersectionality**

Intersectionality was introduced in the late 1980s as a tool to focus attention on and examine the unique experiences of individuals across a variety of diversity dimensions (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). Specifically, it has a history of examining the experiences of groups who have historically been marginalized across a variety of dimensions, such as gender and race, as well as examining the influence of structure and power in this subordination (Tomlinson, 2013). It has seen growth across a variety of disciplines and has been utilized for its ability to take account of the complex and layered dimensions of identity, structure, and power in the human experience (Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, & Tomlinson, 2013). As Cho et al. (2013) state, "what makes an analysis intersectional—whatever terms it deploys, whatever its iteration, whatever its field or discipline—is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power" (p.795).

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While the overarching concept of intersectionality is not limited solely to research on the experiences of Black females, the roots of intersectionality can be traced to Black feminist thought and critical legal studies. Crenshaw (1989; 1991), whose foundational works examined how the legal system marginalizes the experiences of Black women as well as how social movements and advocacy groups omit the unique experiences of Black women, is often cited as introducing the term to the academic community (Jordan-Zachery, 2007). For feminist scholars of color, such as Crenshaw, feminist and race centered research, in general, were inadequate to examine and understand the experiences of women of color, who faced additional oppression due to their race and gender, because this research focused primarily on White women and Black men respectively (Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). As such, these scholars felt a more detailed framework that further examined the intersections of race, gender, and social class among other differences was needed.

Crenshaw (1991) provides three ways of conceptualizing intersectionality. First, structural intersectionality states that social services and strategies based solely on the experiences of women, in general, will be minimally effective, as not all women share similar experiences due to differences in a variety of diversity dimensions. For example, since women of color live in a world that is not only sexist, but also racist and classist, their experiences are structurally different from White women's. As such, there is a need for research and programs that address these unique needs.

Second, political intersectionality proposes that women of color are often at a crossroads between two political groups, namely feminist and antiracist movements.

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Historically, the feminist movement focused on the needs of White women, and antiracist politics focused on the needs of Black men (Crenshaw, 1991). As such, women of color, such as Blacks and Latinas, formed their own movements to analyze their own unique experiences, as these two movements further marginalized the issues faced by them.

Finally, representational intersectionality acknowledges that the gendered and racialized experiences of women of color often fall between overarching concerns of both women and racial minorities. Representational intersectionality concerns itself with the production of images of women of color, which often reproduce negative stereotypes of both a racial and sexist nature, as well as the mainstream commentary surrounding these productions (Crenshaw, 1991).

Given the conceptions of intersectionality provided by Crenshaw (1991), McCall (2005) acknowledges that intersectionality is a challenging and complex concept. How does one decide which diversity dimensions are most important and when? Is it important to emphasize categories, such as race, that are socially constructed as concrete entities? To attempt to address this complexity, three approaches are provided. First, McCall (2005) proposes an intercategorical approach. This approach utilizes existing categories, for example Black for race and female for gender, in order to examine the complexity of relationships both among and across multiple social groups and categories. While adopting existing categories seems to deny the complexity and fluid nature of self-identity, it is important to note that, while ever changing, certain diversity

dimensions can and do share common experiences with power structures (e.g., people of color are more likely to live in poverty than Whites).

Second, McCall (2005) describes the opposite end of the spectrum for approaching the complexity of intersectionality, namely the anticategorical approach. In this approach, which is closely aligned with the postmodern paradigm, social categories are viewed as problematic, as individuals can and do self-categorize in a multitude of ways. As such, social life is considered too complex to utilize preexisting categories. Bridging the gap between the intercategorical and anticategorical approaches, McCall (2005) proposes the intracategorical approach. This approach acknowledges the problem of conceptualizing diversity dimensions as rigid entities, but also allows for in-depth analyses of multiple intersecting dimensions by avoiding the full deconstruction of all categories. Case studies are often employed in intracategorical studies, as they can focus in detail on a single group and examine the complexities of social life (McCall, 2005). For the purposes of this study, the intracategorical approach was utilized, as the social constructions of both race and gender have been previously acknowledged and a case study methodology was employed. Furthermore, even though self-identity is a fluid concept, the participants were asked to self-identify both their gender and race, and each participant utilized pre-existing categories to self-identify.

Having provided this overview, it is important to note that due to the fluid and ever expanding nature of intersectionality, which Carbado et al. (2013) describe as a "work-in-progress" (p.304), it makes little sense to frame intersectionality as a rigid entity. However, throughout the growth of intersectionality there have been several key

elements that guide research that employs it. First, intersectionality scholars emphasize the intersections of multiple diversity dimensions, such as gender, race, and social class to name a few, and their interactions with structures and power. Second, the knowledge uncovered through intersectional research is utilized for the purpose of empowerment and change (Carbado et al., 2013). This dissertation focused on these two elements of intersectionality as it attempted to understand how gender, race, and class interact in the experiences of the Black female participants in the Ladies' Night clinics, and attempted to help empower the participants through providing an avenue for them to share their experiences, which is a strategy that has been employed by many scholars in sport research.

In the following section, I focus on the relevant literature that examines the experiences of Black females in sport, which can be organized into several categories: a) Black females as athletes at the collegiate level; b) Black females as coaches and administrators; c) Black females at the recreational level; d) programs focused on increasing physical activity in the Black community. While not all of the research discussed explicitly states the examination of the intersections of race, gender, and social class, it is important to review the literature that examines the experiences of Black females in sport. Doing so provides insight to the current study and helps to provide a broad perspective on the status of Black female involvement in sport across various levels.

**Black females as athletes at the collegiate level**

Smith (2000) examines the history of elite African American sportswomen and the influence(s) of gender, race, and power on this history. First, Smith makes clear the multiple oppressions facing Black women in society, namely racism, sexism, and classism, and how the sporting experiences of Black women cannot be explained outside of this reality. After providing this foundation, a historical overview is provided of several key moments in Black female sporting history. For example, the Tuskegee Institute was a powerhouse in Black females' introduction to and development of talent in track and field. It was Tuskegee that recruited Alice Coachman, who was the first Black female to win an Olympic gold medal (Smith, 2000). Another highly influential Black program was Tennessee State's Tigerbelles, who won all six gold medals at the 1960 Olympics for the U.S. team. Smith (2000) also highlights the positive and negative aspects of Title IX which, on the positive end, increased sporting opportunities for women in general, but also led to the drastic reduction in Black females as coaches and administrators. Also, while the Civil Rights movement led to increased opportunities at large universities for Black female athletes, it had the subsequent effect of depleting high-level Black talent from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Thus, while there is no doubt that substantial gains have been made, there is still ample room for improvement in the overall equity and quality of experience for Black females in sport.

Corbett and Johnson (2000) provide an overview of other factors that influence the experiences of Black female athletes in sport. For example, within the collegiate

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setting, many Black female student athletes feel a lack of cultural inclusiveness on the part of their White teammates. Scenarios in which White parents interact with their daughters' other White teammates but ignore or exclude the Black athletes and their families are cited. Furthermore, the authors note that HBCUs have, "attempted to take as long as they can to do as little as possible to comply, even today, with the inherent principles of Title IX" (Corbett & Johnson, 2000, p.211). Therefore, not only do Black female collegiate athletes face barriers at PWIs, but also at HBCUs. Furthermore, cultural stereotypes about "Black appropriate" sports are also highlighted as barriers for diversity in sport participation choices and career paths for Black females. Finally, the role of the mass media in the silencing of Black female athletes is mentioned. Namely, the media does little to challenge dominant stereotypes, and serves to promote the achievements of White female athletes over those of Blacks.

Smith (1992) provides an overview of the literature (to date in 1992) on women of color in sport. The first issue raised is that, historically, women of color have been silenced in both society and sport. By breaking the research down into three levels (i.e., categoric, or differences between categories; distributive, or distribution of resources and opportunities; relational, or social and cultural connections between individuals and society), the case is made that there are few studies on women of color in sport that examine power relationships and operate from a critical and relational perspective. Furthermore, research that examines the experiences of women of color in sport needs to be conducted, as the experiences of all women are not the same. For example, while White lower class women face multiple levels of oppression, such as sexism and

classism, their experience is not necessarily the same as a Black female's from the same lower class who faces sexism, classism, and racism. Thus, more research that focuses on the unique experiences of women, in general, and women of color specifically is warranted (Smith, 1992).

Bruening (2005) follows in the path of Smith (1992) by reiterating a crucial concept, and one that seemingly has remained consistent in the 13 years since Smith (1992); namely, why in sport research are Black females silenced? According to Bruening (2005), this is due to several reasons. First, there is a lack of research on the experiences of Black women in general. Second, there is a lack of representation of Black women in sport in the media (aside from basketball and track). Finally, aside from statistical analysis, sport research rarely focuses solely on Black women's experiences. Therefore, a call is made for more research that examines the experiences of Black females aside from White females, as their experiences are undoubtedly different from one another. Furthermore, the case is made for more critical research to be conducted that centers the voices of marginalized groups, and challenges existing stereotypes about Black women (e.g., natural athletic prowess, matriarchy, etc.).

Bruening (2004a) examined the experiences of four Black female student-athletes concerning their interactions with and perceptions of their coaches. By utilizing qualitative methods, the participants were provided voice and the opportunity to express their insights, which was an empowering experience for them. These women's experiences with their coaches demonstrated racial ignorance, racial insensitivity, and silencing on the part of the coaches. Given that these females were underrepresented in

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not only the overarching student-athlete community on the campus, but also within their specific sport, their experiences reflected the unique experiences of Black females in society, thus dispelling the notion that sport is a race-free equal opportunity environment, as it is often referred (Anderson & South, 1993; Lapchick, 1996). Also worthy of note is that, despite the negative experiences with coaches, there were highly positive coaches who influenced and encouraged these women to become involved in and participate in their respective sport. This study demonstrated both the positive and negative potential that coaches can have on encouraging and retaining, as well as discouraging and minimizing Black female involvement in sport.

Continuing the findings from the larger study with Black female student athletes, Bruening (2004b) examined strategies for change in the sport participation patterns of Black females. As Black females are overrepresented in stereotypical "Black" sports, such as basketball and track and field, Black student athletes were asked to reflect upon their role models growing up (i.e., those that influenced them to pursue sport) as well as provide strategies for improving the future participation patterns of Black females in non-traditional sports, for example tennis. The findings suggest that role models, such as parents, professional athletes, or coaches had a large influence in the sporting choices of these participants. However, many lacked other Black female role models, which contributes to the underrepresentation of Black females in non-traditional sports. As such, one strategy mentioned by the participants, in particular those in non-traditional sports, was that they planned to be mentors and role models to young Black females, in order to demonstrate that they do not have to participate in only "Black" sports.

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Finally, the Bruening (2004b) demonstrated that exposure and access, or a lack thereof, was mentioned as both a reason why Black females are underrepresented in certain sports as well as a strategy for increasing their representation in said sports. For example, the participants who were athletes in non-traditional sports were raised in middle-class families. As such, they were provided with more options and were exposed to more sporting opportunities than their counterparts from a lower social class. This demonstrates the continued need for sporting programs that offer affordable opportunities for individuals with less discretionary income, such that young Black youth will not be funneled into stereotypical "Black" sports.

Furthering the scholarship on the role of socialization and introduction to sport, Bruening, Pastore, and Armstrong (2008) provide an insightful look into the factors that influence the sport participation of African American females. Through focus groups and individual interviews with collegiate student athletes, several themes emerged. First, parents were highly influential in providing opportunities and encouraging participation in certain sports for the participants during their childhood. Also, environmental factors, such as neighborhood opportunities, economic factors, and racist attitudes, contributed to the sporting choices made by these women. For example, the resources in the neighborhood where several of the women grew up dictated the sporting opportunities available to them to learn as youth. Furthermore, being outsiders in certain sports, for example being the only Black girl on the soccer team, and the corresponding negative racial remarks made towards them discouraged participation in certain sports from an early age. The findings from this research demonstrate the need for more cost-effective

opportunities to be provided in urban settings, as well as further involving parents in sports that Black females are underrepresented, in order for changes in participation patterns to emerge.

Bruening et al. (2005) examined how silencing occurs within the Black female student-athlete's experience. The findings revealed that the participants felt as though the media, coaches, and fellow male student-athletes all contributed to the marginalization and silencing of Black female student-athletes. For example, the media, with its over emphasis on male sports, does little to highlight or expose the consumer to women's sport. As a result, young Black females have fewer role models across a variety of sports, such as golf, and thus are limited in their perceived potential options in sport participation. Also, coaches and male student-athletes contribute to silencing by privileging and providing priority to the needs of the males, for example weight room access, at the expense of the female student-athletes. Finally, the participants felt as though they were often objectified by the male student-athletes in the weight room, and as a result, their overall experience was diminished. The findings represent the challenges of being a Black female sports person in a male dominated arena, and serve as a reminder that the voices of females, in general, and racial minorities specifically should be centered, such that their experience in sport can be improved. This could lead to more females and minorities becoming involved in sport, and benefiting from the health and social outcomes of being physically active.

Continuing the examination of how race influences the experiences of Black female athletes, Carter-Francique, Lawrence, and Eyanson's (2011) research helped to

provide Black female student athletes with voice to explain how they perceived race in their experiences. The findings suggest that each of these Black females experienced some form of racialized incident in their athletic experience. Whether through a sting, in which the participant's race was diminished and caused emotional pain; isolation, in which the participant felt isolated from their teammates due to their race; or a rude awakening, in which the participants were shocked that judgments and decision could be made solely based upon the color of their skin, race was a factor in each participants' experience in sport. Also, the participants noted racial disparities in sport. For example, several participants noted feeling more relaxed or "real" around their Black friends, more so than around their White teammates. It is important to note that, while not always the case, several of the participants felt welcomed by their team, and highlighted the absence of race playing a role in inclusivity by their teammates. Worthy of note from these remarks was the emphasis on the notion that these particular (non-discriminatory) teammates were open minded, and that this mindset was beneficial in minimizing the pain associated with discrimination based upon race. This study highlights both the negative and positive experiences of these Black females in sport.

While the previous studies offer insightful rich descriptions of the experiences of Black female athletes, Bruening, Lee, Borland, and Cho (2009) utilize quantitative measures to examine how Black females are socialized and stereotyped in sport. While the results did not yield an interaction effect for race by gender, practical findings were discussed. For example, Black women were significantly less socialized into sport than their White peers. This speaks to the larger issues in Bruening (2004b) concerning a lack

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of access and opportunity in sport for Black females. Furthermore, Black athletes'

choice in sport participation was significantly more influenced by the potential for

opportunities beyond sport, such as scholarships, and professional careers, than Whites.

This could speak to the view of many within the Black community of sport as a social

vehicle, as it is one of the few avenues where great success is widely seen (e.g., NBA

and NFL players with lucrative salaries). Another important finding was that Black

athletes in this study responded more strongly that stereotypes do exist in sport, both for

them and Whites, and that they mainly concern which sports each race is supposed to

play.

Transitioning from the experiential and socialization aspects of Black females as

athletes, Carter and Hart (2010) examine the perspectives of Black female student-

athletes on mentoring. A crucial takeaway from this study is the importance of parents

and family as mentors in the lives of Black female student-athletes. This is different

from some of the traditional conceptualizations of mentorship, such as a mentor being a

non-relative, and as a result, the authors contend that collegiate programs should

consider the unique experiences and insights of their Black female student-athletes when

designing their mentorship programs.

In a similar vein, Carter and Hawkins (2011) examined the manner in which

Black female student athletes cope with the multiple oppressions they face at

predominantly White institutions of higher education (PWIHEs). Similar to Carter and

Hart's (2010) findings, the highly influential role of family, and in particular mothers,

was mentioned by each of the participants. Namely, the participants' mothers served as

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both support systems and examples of strength. Furthermore, each participant mentioned the role of religion and prayer as a key coping strategy. Finally, the participants had an understanding of their social standing within the university setting (e.g., campus was largely divided along racial lines), which helped them to strategize and make sense of their experiences. This research provides a strong counter-narrative to the stereotypes of Black women (e.g., sexually promiscuous and deviant, among others) by highlighting the role of family and religion in their lives, as well as helping to provide these athletes with voice.

Concerning the role of advisors in the lives of Black female student-athletes, Carter (2008) outlines the importance of understanding the multiple modes of oppression that Black female student-athletes face, and its subsequent impact on advising strategies. Namely, the Black female student-athlete faces racism and sexism on account of her race and gender, as well as isolation, which is largely due to being vastly underrepresented on PWIHE campuses. Given these multiple oppressions, of the utmost importance is for advisors to have cultural competence. This refers to having awareness of both their own (advisor's) values and prejudices as well as an understanding of their student-athletes' culture and providing opportunities to express their insights. Furthermore, it is highly important that advisors understand the powerful role of stereotypes against these student-athletes, and do their best to combat and avoid falling into these stereotypes, for example the stereotype that student-athletes are not serious students.

The role of Black female culture can also play a role in the participation/lack thereof in sports/recreation by Black females. For example, Carter-Francique (2011)

examined the experiences of Black female college students and their use of campus recreational facilities. While the majority of the participants were within a healthy weight range for their height, most did not visit the campus recreational facility more than two days per week. This could be due to lack of programming offered that is culturally relevant to these women, or the overarching cultural concept that these women want to remain healthy but "thick" and desirable to the Black community at the same time. Thus, an overemphasis on exercising would be detrimental to maintaining this image. A key takeaway from this research is the power of culture in determining what is/is not considered beautiful, and its subsequent effect on health outcomes and exercise participation.

Green (2000) provides a perspective on the future of Black females in sport. While she is optimistic that opportunities for Black females in sports that have been historically White-dominated, such as tennis and golf, will be increased, which will largely be due to programs specifically aimed at addressing this underrepresentation, the harsh reality exists that sexism and racism will still present significant barriers. These barriers will affect every aspect of Black female involvement in sport from the recreational to administrative levels. These barriers can manifest in subtle ways and will largely be impossible to identify. For example, in upper-class elite sport settings, successful athletes will need substantial financial backing by way of corporate sponsorships. If the stereotype still exists that there are certain sports that are "Black" sports, it is unlikely that sponsorships will be given at the same level for Blacks in these sports as Whites. Furthermore, the numbers of Black females as coaches and

administrators is predicted to further decrease, as these lucrative positions will continue

to be increasingly taken by White males. Green (2000) concludes by stating that despite

these barriers, there will be Black females who succeed at the highest levels, and this

will largely be due to, "their internal fortitude, desire, and courage to overcome the

obstacles placed before them" (p. 240).

**Black females as coaches and administrators**

While highly represented as athletes in certain sports, such as basketball and

track and field, Black females have historically and continue to face challenges in

securing coaching and administrative jobs in athletics (Abney, 1999; Alexander, 1978;

Barclay, 1979; Lapchick, 1996; Lapchick, 2010; Lapchick, 2012; Murphy, 1980). In this

section, I highlight research that speaks to these challenges and studies the experiences

of Black females in these positions.

Abney and Richey (1991) provide an overview of the barriers faced by Black

female athletic administrators and coaches. While similar to the challenges faced by

White women (e.g., women hindering the success of their sisters, class oppression, lack

of role models, etc.), Black women also have to contend with the added racial oppression

associated with being Black in a White dominated arena, namely athletics

administration. Abney (2000) expanded upon this by further explaining the "double

jeopardy" concept of being both Black and female. Specifically, this continues to create

a glass-ceiling effect for Black females trying to climb the coaching and administrative

ranks in sport. As a result, there are less Black female role models for young aspiring

coaches to look towards, which only serves to continue the minimal numbers of Black

female coaches and administrators.

Delving deeper into the specific experiences of Black coaches and

administrators, Abney (1988) identified the five highest-ranking obstacles faced by

Black women in these positions. Black women coaches and administrators were

compared at both HBCUs and PWIHEs. While Black women at both institutions shared

similar obstacles, such as inadequate salaries, lack of support groups, and being a

woman, differences were also apparent. For example, Black women at PWIHEs cited

being Black and a lack of cultural and social outlets in the community as obstacles. This

is to be expected since they are likely one of only a handful of people of color in the

university they are employed at, and the immediate surrounding community (housing

near to the college campus). These findings are important, as they demonstrate the need

for PWIHEs to provide and ensure a safe and supportive workplace environment for

racial minority females.

Abney and Richey (1992) discuss the impact of Title IX on the opportunities for

racial minority women in sport. While Title IX has increased the participation rates of

women and girls in sport, it has seemingly had a negative effect on the numbers of

women, in general, and Black women specifically as head coaches and administrators. A

possible explanation proposed is that, as the numbers of women and girls participating in

sport increased, the prestige and money associated with coaching and administrative

positions in women's sport also increased. As a result, more men filled these roles and

the opportunities for women decreased. This is a trend that has continued since Abney

and Richey (1992), as demonstrated by research by Carpenter and Acosta (2005) and Acosta and Carpenter (2010).

McDowell and Cunningham (2009) utilize several frameworks (e.g., Thomas & Ely's, 1996 diversity perspectives and Swann's, 1987 identity negotiation framework) to examine the factors that influence how Black female athletic administrators negotiate their identities. By demonstrating how each of these frameworks influence how individuals negotiate their identities in a variety of situations, for example an organization that values diversity as opposed to one that does not, several propositions are provided as to how Black female administrators and coaches negotiate their identities (not all will be described here). For example, given that Black women are subjected to a variety of negative stereotypes, the proposition is made that Black female administrators have a harder time verifying their identity than those who do not encounter such stereotypes, such as Whites or males. Furthermore, organizations can have an effect on how Black female administrators and coaches negotiate their identities. For example, organizations that operate from an integration and learning diversity strategy will value and utilize the insights and perspectives of their culturally diverse employees. As a result, Black females will verify their self-identities due to the positive environment. Conversely, when an organization operates from a discrimination and fairness strategy, in which the organization commits to diversity more on a surface-level rather than deep-level, Black females will conform to the dominant groups' expectations of culture, which could result in a less positive experience at work. This work highlights the

importance of an inclusive and positive organizational culture in the overall experience of Black females in coaching and administrative positions.

Borland and Bruening (2010) provide an examination of 10 Black female collegiate basketball coaches, and their perceptions on barriers to success as well as strategies for overcoming those barriers. Similar to other research on the experiences of women, in general, and Black women specifically, discrimination was one noted barrier. Since the majority of athletic directors are White males, the participants felt as though they often have a candidate pre-chosen before the interviews even begin. Since they are out-group members, namely not White males, Black female basketball coaches are not given the same chance from the start. This is supported by Lapchick's (2010) Racial and Gender Report Card for collegiate sport in which it states that "on the women's teams Whites hold 87.5 percent, 89.5 percent, and 91.9 percent of all head coaching positions in DI, II, and III schools (p.5). Given that 51.5 percent of the female student-athletes playing basketball were Black, the 11.4 percent representation of Black female head basketball coaches is a stark underrepresentation (Lapchick, 2010). Furthermore, stereotypes play a role in the underrepresentation of Black female basketball coaches as well. For example, since Black females have great success as players, it is assumed that they are better at playing than strategizing or coaching. As a result, these women felt as though they are placed into recruiting roles, rather than head coaching roles. The women felt that networking, mentoring, and developmental programs were all necessary if the aforementioned barriers were to be overcome, and more Black women could potentially realize more head coaching positions in women's basketball.

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**Black females at the recreational level**

Concerning Black female involvement with sport at the recreational level, while arguably limited (Fleury & Lee, 2006), I draw from Armstrong (2013), who provides an excellent overview of research on the various factors influencing Black female involvement in physical activity. Due to the emphasis on gender, race, social class, and sense of community in this dissertation, research pertaining to the following three factors will be discussed: social networks, socioeconomic status, and race. I examine the relevant literature on each of these factors next.

**Social networks**

Demonstrating the positive impact of social networks on Black females' involvement in physical activity, Nies, Vollman, and Cook (1999) conducted focus groups with Black women between the ages of 35 and 50, and asked questions regarding the participants' physical activity habits. Concerning barriers to being physically active, a major theme cited was the absence of another person to exercise with. In particular, the women in the study noted how, when they did have a partner to exercise with, they were more committed and consistent with their physical activity. In a similar study, Richter, Wilcox, Greaney, Henderson, and Ainsworth (2002) conducted six focus groups with 42 Black women ranging from 19 to 51 years of age. The role of social networks was also cited among these participants as a motivator for engaging in physical activity. In particular, having a supportive family was important, as it afforded these women the ability to take time to exercise. This finding can also be seen in research conducted by Banks-Wallace and Conn (2002), Dunn (2008), and Kirchhoff, Elliot, Schlichting, and

Chin (2008). Finally, Wilbur, Chandler, Dancy, and Lee (2003) also discuss the importance of social groups and programs in the involvement of Black female physical activity. Specifically of 110 respondents to the question of what could be done in the community to increase exercise levels of Black females, 62 responded that programs should be organized that allowed women to meet and exercise together.

**Socioeconomic status**

Overall, socioeconomic status has been shown to significantly impact the physical activity participation levels of Black females (Fleury & Lee, 2006). For example, in a study involving 917 Black women aged 20 to 50, Ainsworth, Wilcox, Thompson, Richter, and Henderson (2003) demonstrated that an increase in attained level of education resulted in increasing levels of physical activity. Wilbur et al. (2003) demonstrate a similar finding, albeit not identical, in that Black women who had a high school diploma were four times more likely to be physically active than those with less than a high school education. Research also demonstrates that the cost associated with participation in physical activity is both an enabler and barrier for Black women. For example, both the lack of or associated cost with child care was cited as a barrier for physical activity participation by Black women (Richter et al., 2002). Furthermore, when asked to provide strategies to increase Black women's participation in physical activity, Black women cite reducing cost as a strategy (Wilbur et al., 2003).

**Race**

While the following research does not focus solely on the experiences of Black females, it does help to examine the impact of race on Black females' sport participation

patterns. For example, Harrison (1995) posits that the over-representation of Blacks in basketball is the result of self-schema. Namely, there are more Black role models in basketball than there are in any other sport. As such, Black youth witness this pattern and develop the idea that basketball is an appropriate sport for them to participate and excel in. Harrison et al. (1999) provide empirical evidence for this in their study of race and its corresponding impact on perceived competency in sport. The findings suggest that Blacks have the highest perceived competency in basketball, and that Black females, in particular, perceive track and volleyball as the sports in which they have the most competency. Golf was relatively non-existent in Black females' perceptions of competency. Furthermore, Philipp (1999) demonstrates that, when middle-class Blacks self-report the degree to which they feel as though they would be welcomed in a leisure setting, playing basketball is a comfortable space, whereas going to the country club is a place where Blacks feel the least welcomed. Considering that golf is a sport frequently associated with country clubs, this finding could suggest that Blacks avoid participating in golf because they do not feel as though they would be welcomed. This finding leads to the need for the creation of safe spaces, which Hill-Collins (2000) describes as spaces where Black women can self-define and resist objectification based on intersecting oppressions, within sporting arenas that Black women do not feel welcome.

**Programs focused on increasing physical activity in the Black community**

While not all of the following research focuses specifically on Black females' participation in physical activity, it is important to review work that examines programs focused on increasing physical activity in the Black community. In this review, I shed

light into research strategies and findings from the examination of such programs, and provide methodological strategies relevant to this dissertation. McNabb, Quinn, Kerver, Cook, and Karrison (1997) examined the effectiveness of PATHWAYS, which is a church-based weight loss program for urban African American women, when the program was administered in the community setting, as opposed to a clinical setting. While it should be noted that the program was successful at achieving weight loss among the participants, an important application from the program was the strategy of providing the participants with the tools to design and implement their own dietary plans. The participants reported that their successful weight loss was largely due to being treated as adults in the learning process. Furthermore, the community-based approach was cited by the researchers as preferential, as it would reach a wider group of participants. Also, it was important that the program be run by members of the community, such as church members, and held at locations within the community, such that positive associations with the program would be made by the participants. These suggestions are also provided by Parker, Coles, Logan, and Davis (2010) in their study of a similar program for African American women. These strategies are evident in the Ladies' Night clinics, in that the golf instructor is teaching her participants the skills associated with golf, takes golf to her community, and she is a member of the community.

In an examination of a walking program, Wilbur, McDevitt, Want, Dancy, Briller, Ingram, Nicola, Lee, and Zenk (2006) describe the effectiveness of various strategies for the recruitment of African American women. A crucial takeaway is the

importance of utilizing social networks to recruit African American women in the research process, which is also a strategy recommended by Whitt-Glover, Crespo, and Joe (2009) and Baskin, Gary, Hardy, Schoenberger, Scarinci, Fouad, and Partridge (2011). As Wilbur et al. (2006) state, "social networking was the single most effective recruitment strategy for reaching this population" (p.183). As such, this is a strategy that was employed in this dissertation. Namely, the golf instructor assisted by introducing the topic of the research to her participants and served as a liaison.

Transitioning from walking to running, Black Girls RUN!, which was founded in 2009, is a program dedicated to battling obesity in the Black female community. Founders Toni Carey and Ashley Hicks observed a lack of fellow Black female runners and decided to take initiative by creating a program that serves its members by providing encouragement and resources to both new and veteran runners (Black Girls Run!, 2014; Terrell, 2013). They also recognized a need to create an environment that was unintimidating and supportive for Black females to come together and improve their health (Anderson, 2012; Terrell, 2013). Furthermore, the program challenges the notion that Black women are not runners by creating networks of Black female runners across the nation (Thornton, 2012). This program shares several similarities with the Ladies' Night clinics studied in this research. These similarities are examined in the discussion and conclusion section.

Finally, McCray, Durden, and Schaubert (2013) describe strategies utilized in the examination of a cycling program that targeted African Americans. For example, they recommend that word-of-mouth announcements be utilized in order to create a level of

personal connection with potential participants. Furthermore, recruitment should be made at locations where potential participants are already present. Finally, the researcher should be visibly present when recruiting, as this helps to generate open communication with potential participants. In addition to the aforementioned recruitment strategies, McCray et al. (2013) state that it is important to follow up with each participant through phone or e-mail, such that the participant can ask any questions or provide further insights that would be beneficial to the study. While it was my intent at the onset to utilize each of these strategies in this study, due to various reasons, which are discussed in the methodology and limitation sections, only the suggested strategy of following up with each participant recommended by McCray et al. (2013) was utilized.

## Sense of community

In this section, I provide a brief overview of the sense of community (SOC) literature, as well as the relevant SOC literature in sport and leisure studies. Implications for and the relevance of SOC to the current study are also examined.

### SOC in general

A community can be defined as either a neighborhood, such as a geographical setting with defined boundaries, or a group that has a common interest, such as a sporting activity (Gusfield, 1975; Heller, 1989). SOC research is concerned with identifying and understanding the characteristics that contribute to members of a group feeling a sense of belonging to said group. Given this basic understanding of what constitutes a community, Sarason (1974) is credited as the catalyst for developing the concept of SOC. He contended that community psychology had failed with regards to its

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efforts at impacting social reform. His emphasis on a sense of belonging and responsibility among community members is regarded as the inspiration for the following scholars' work in SOC.

While Sarason's (1974) concept of SOC was broad, McMillan and Chavis (1986) built upon and provided tangible constructs to his foundational work and created a working definition and subsequent theory for SOC. Drawing from community psychology literature, the authors defined SOC as, "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). There are four concepts that contribute to this definition. First, the concept of membership entails two groups of people: a) those that belong, and b) those that do not belong. The group/community will set boundaries that dictate who does/does not gain membership into the group. Second, the concept of influence mandates that for members to be attracted to a group, they must be able to influence the group in some way. Furthermore, the group's influence must be felt by its members. Third, the concept of integration and fulfilment of needs states that, in order for a group to maintain a sense of unity, membership must be rewarding in some sense (e.g., meet some needs). Fourth and finally, the concept of shared emotional connection posits that members feel connected through shared history. Examples of works that test SOC in various settings, gender differences in perceived SOC, and the benefits of SOC are provided next.

To test the tenets of SOC theory in the urban setting, Chavis and Wandersman (1990) hypothesized that positive SOC would act as a catalyst for positive perception of and satisfaction with the urban environment in which one lives. Furthermore, positive SOC was hypothesized to positively impact one's sense of individual and collective control over their environment. Through qualitative surveys, SOC was shown to positively impact one's perception of the environment and sense of personal and group power, as well as impact participation within the community. As such, it is recommended that social programs follow McMillan and Chavis (1986) as a guide for implementing elements of SOC to bring about positive change through SOC.

Transitioning from the urban setting to the workplace, Lambert and Hopkins (1995) conducted an analysis of perceived SOC among workers of lower-level jobs at a medium-sized manufacturing firm. Results indicate that both male and female workers perceive SOC to be greater when the organization fairly promotes employees, provides jobs that are challenging yet not overwhelming, and when interaction is encouraged among employees. Furthermore, African American employees reported having a harder time experiencing SOC in the workplace. This could be due to several factors. First, African American workers tended to work in settings in which many of their co-workers were also African American, and their supervisor was a White male. Second, more African American workers reported having less daily contact with their supervisor than White or Hispanic workers. As such, it is possible that these African American workers feel alienated from the rest of the employees, and as a result perceive less SOC than their

co-workers of other races. This finding is particularly important as it suggests that both race and management of diversity can affect SOC.

Research has demonstrated that gender also plays a role in the perception of SOC. For example, Pretty and McCarthy (1991) found that, in the workplace setting, men's SOC was related to support from their co-workers, and that women's was related to their supervisor's support. Furthermore, it was noted that competition may contribute to SOC in men, but detract from SOC in women. Also from Lambert and Hopkins (1995), women reported formal support contributing to SOC, whereas men reported informal support as a contributor.

The benefits of SOC can be demonstrated across various settings, such as schools and communities. For example, Pretty, Andrews, and Collett (1994) found that a perceived strong SOC was associated with decreased levels of loneliness among adolescents in both the neighborhood and school settings. Within the workplace setting, Burroughs and Eby (1998) demonstrated that a SOC was significantly related to job satisfaction across a variety of job positions among 11 different organizations. Finally, McCarthy et al. (1990) found that when college students had a strong SOC, burnout was reduced.

Hill (1996) summarizes the major findings of SOC research and provides suggestions for future SOC research. Most SOC studies have typically been quantitative surveys, and, as a result, there is a general understanding that SOC is real, and that, "we know a psychological sense of community when we see it" (Hill, 1996, p. 432). However, there is also a consensus that communities, while sharing some overarching

concepts, can vary from setting to setting. Hill (1996) suggests that, due to the variability across settings, researchers should gain significant knowledge of the setting they are studying and use a variety of methods, such as qualitative methods, to study SOC. As such, this study utilized these suggestions by implementing a qualitative case study to understand in detail the setting as well as attempt to gain rich descriptions of SOC, if present. While the preceding is a brief overview of SOC in general, a more detailed look into SOC research in sport is warranted. In the following section, I provide an overview of the SOC in the sport and leisure literature. However, before this, I discuss the notion of safe spaces within communities of color, which are important spaces that contribute to sense of belonging and empowerment within these communities.

Safe spaces have been described within the Black female community by Hill-Collins (2000) as spaces where Black women can speak freely, self-define, and resist objectification based on intersecting oppressions. According to Collins (2000), this self-definition is important as it is the first step to empowerment. Namely, when a group self-defines, it is not being defined by others. However diverse the internal group of Black females may be across a variety of diversity dimensions, by necessity, these safe spaces are exclusionary. If they were not, they would be "less safe" (Collins, 2002, p. 110).

**SOC in sport and leisure**

While not specifically in the sport management literature, Lyons (2003) examined how summer camp staff perceived a SOC. The findings suggest that, within the summer camp, the overarching SOC was intentionally established by management through setting boundaries and common goals for the camp staff. For example, during

orientation, the director stated that, "We are here as a team working to get to know each other" (Lyons, 2003, p.57). This explicit goal was seen as a real contributor to the fostering of a SOC among the camp staff. While a general SOC existed, it was not without differing interpretation. For example, the female staff felt as though they were expected to be nurturing and garner trust among the staff, but that some of the males felt as though the females were lacking in trust. So while there was an overarching SOC, there were variations among some of the males and females as to their role/lack thereof in that community. This is a crucial concept as it speaks to the previously mentioned importance of individual differences along gender, racial, or class lines.

Taking a somewhat different approach to the concept of community in sport, Smith and Ingham (2003) critique the commonly touted notion that the building/refurbishing of professional sport stadia can build SOC within the local community. By conducting focus groups with members of Cincinnati community organizations, the authors gained insight into how members of the community felt concerning utilizing public funds to build two new stadia in the city. The results demonstrate that using public funds to build new stadia created a divide along class lines and increased animosity towards the elite. Furthermore, the new stadia hindered rather than helped create SOC. This is a crucial finding and it leads to the question, can sport at the recreational level do more to create SOC than the professional model?

Lyons and Dionigi (2007) sought to examine how older adults perceive community in Masters', which are organized older adults sporting opportunities, sports participation. Through interviews and observations, the authors discovered that Masters'

participants felt as though they were members of the Masters' sporting community due to a shared common interest, namely their participation in sports as older individuals. Also, this membership into the community went deeper than the surface level. Participants expressed an emotional connection with their comrades due to the shared goal of staying fit and healthy in their increased age, as well as having a shared life purpose (i.e., giving back to their fellow comrades and being part of a unique group). Perhaps what is most interesting about these findings and perhaps most relevant to the current study, is the sense of fighting the stereotypes of being old, such as being sedentary rather than active and disabled, and being unique as a key component of the felt SOC.

Warner and Dixon (2011) were among the first sport management scholars to assess the specific factors that contribute to SOC within the sporting context. By conducting a grounded theory study in which former collegiate athletes were asked to reflect upon their athletic experience, several key themes emerged. For these athletes, having administrators, for example athletic directors and academic counselors, invest in them and demonstrate a legitimate sense of care for them was crucial to feeling part of the sporting community. Also, when these athletes were provided with leadership opportunities, such as administrators asking for athletes' opinions on hiring a new coach, there was a definite feeling of belonging and value that was created. Also worthy of note was the concept of equity of administrative decisions, such as equal funding distribution and access to shared practice facilities, among others, as being crucial to either the creation or destruction of SOC. For example, when practice time on shared facilities was

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equally distributed among teams, for example between men's and women's basketball, there was a strong SOC. On the other hand, when access was not equally distributed, SOC was diminished. Competition was another interesting developer of SOC; however, it differed by gender. For example, the male participants cited internal competition among teammates as beneficial to creating SOC, while females viewed it as a detriment to SOC. Finally, the creation of social spaces, for example weight rooms and cafeteria tables, was another avenue where athletes felt a SOC. What was interesting to note was that while the athletes developed a SOC with other teammates in these social spaces, it often led to the exclusion of interaction with the general student body. This research demonstrates the specific factors within the intercollegiate athletic setting that, for these specific athletes, contribute to SOC. Warner and Dixon (2011) also call for more SOC research in a variety of sporting settings so that managers can draw from examples relevant to their situation of how to leverage factors that contribute to developing SOC. This study hopes to answer this call.

Continuing with the concept that gender plays a role in SOC, Stevens (2000) conducted a critical analysis of the transition of Canadian women's hockey from a collective amateur model to a capitalist competitive model, and its subsequent effect on diminishing SOC in women's hockey. By providing a historical perspective of women's hockey in Canada, the case is made that an elitist male-driven model of sport was imposed upon a more community based and equal opportunity driven model. As a result, fewer women had access to organized hockey at the recreational community-building level and the overarching SOC was destroyed. It is interesting to note the emphasis on

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the role of competitive male-driven modeling of sport in the analysis. This notion is similar to the theme generated in Warner and Dixon (2011), in that males and females view competition and its subsequent effect on SOC differently within sport.

To investigate SOC in sport from a different perspective than the collegiate athlete's, Warner and Dixon (2013) examined the perceptions of SOC among collegiate sport club participants. The findings support several of the SOC themes generated in Warner and Dixon (2011), namely leadership opportunities and competition, but vary in other ways. For example, participants in club sports identified common interest and voluntary activity as crucial to creating SOC within their club sport. It is important to note these differences and how the nature of the community speaks to the lack of such themes in the collegiate athlete's experience. With club sports being student-run, as opposed to coach and administrator run in collegiate athletics, the club sport participants have no choice but to be volunteers. There are no consequences for failure to help out with team duties as would be in collegiate athletics, for example losing a scholarship. As such, members of sports clubs participate because they truly want to be there. Those that do not become part of the community quickly tend to eliminate themselves from the setting. Also worthy of note was the concept of common interest. It was made clear by the participants that a shared love for the sport/activity was not enough to create a SOC. As such, managers and administrators of sporting programs should ensure that something more than just the sport is being provided and maintained, for example social gatherings of members outside the sporting arena.

Warner and Dixon (2011; 2013) demonstrate the role of structure in the experience and perception of SOC by sporting participants within the sporting context, namely student-run as opposed to coach/administrator run. Thus, investigation into the differences among program types or management styles is warranted. Warner, Dixon, and Chalip (2012) investigated the manner in which these structures, which were deemed formal and informal, impacted SOC among varsity collegiate athletes and club sport participants. As previously mentioned, several of the themes were salient to both the varsity and club sport participants, namely competition and leadership opportunities. Differences existed in the formal sport theme of equity of administration. Specifically, varsity athletes felt little control over how resources were distributed, and when they were unequally distributed, this contributed to a decreased SOC. A key structural difference between the formal and informal sport settings is the role of administrators. For example, the athletic director in the collegiate varsity sport setting largely determines who gets access to what resources. This can lead to a sense of helplessness and hostility between and among varsity teams. In contrast, the informal sport setting is largely dependent upon its members to distribute resources. As a result, disputes and inequities are handled quickly, and those who disagree subsequently leave the setting. Another important difference existed in the varsity theme of administrative consideration. While varsity athletes felt that when administrators demonstrated care for the athletes that SOC was enhanced, club sport participants viewed a lack of administrative care as a rallying point and a builder of SOC. These differences among the type of sporting structure demonstrate that managers and practitioners need to be

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aware of what builds and detracts from SOC within their specific sporting context, such that they can leverage SOC potential.

Building from the work of Warner and Dixon (2011; 2013), Warner, Kerwin, and Walker (2013) developed a sport specific SOC scale. This scale was developed out of the need for sport specific theory (Chalip, 2006) and a subsequent scale that measures constructs of SOC within sport settings. The scale included items that were derived from the grounded theory work of Warner & Dixon (2011; 2013) and Warner, Dixon, and Chalip (2012). These included: Administrative Consideration, Common Interest, Competition, Equity of Administrative Decisions, Leadership Opportunities, Social Spaces, and Voluntary Action. All items were reliable except for Voluntary Action. It was suggested that this could be due to the sample (i.e., youth sport) and its subsequent view on autonomy, whereas the grounded theory work was mostly derived from college students. As a result, the authors recommended that scholars should use the six-item scale, which excludes Voluntary Action, when studying SOC in sport specific settings. This research demonstrates a significant advancement towards a sport-specific SOC theory.

Similar to the theme of the importance of social spaces in Warner and Dixon (2011), Swyers (2005) describes the "regulars," which is a community of fans who attend Cubs baseball games at Wrigley field and sit in a specific section of the stadium. Through a myriad of examples, Swyers (2005) demonstrates the power that a stadium or social space can have in fostering SOC, which is similar to the 'shared emotional connection' component of SOC as described in McMillan and Chavis (1986). The

nostalgia, traditions, lingo, and practices associated with the "regulars" create a community that those who are a part of the community know without having to acknowledge them. For example, whenever the bees begin to come in September, a member of the "regulars" community can identify a regular from a non-regular by his/her response when the member waves a bee away and says, "It must be September." The correct response would be, "Yeah, the bees are out" (Swyers, 2005, p.1101), which indicates to the regular that this individual has insider knowledge and is in fact part of the community. This ethnographic account demonstrates the power of symbols, namely Wrigley field, and social spaces in generating and maintaining community. As such, it is more than just sport that can create SOC, but rather it is the managing of and interaction with sport that can lead to SOC.

Answering Clopton's (2009) call to investigate the question of whether or not collegiate athletics can generate SOC, Warner, Shapiro, Dixon, Ridinger, and Harrison (2011) sought to examine if the introduction of a varsity football program could create SOC on a university campus. Through a pre-test post-test design before and after the inaugural football season, quantitative surveys with 886 college students were conducted. The results indicate that SOC was not significantly increased after the football season was over for any group, for example non-attendees or loyal attendees. Thus, this finding challenges the commonly used claim by supporters of expensive collegiate football programs that such programs generate and maintain SOC among the student body. While there were no significant differences pre-test post-test, there were significant differences in SOC during the post-test among non-attendees, moderate

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attendees, and loyal attendees. This indicates that those who do attend more sporting events do experience greater SOC, even if the mere introduction of a sport does not foster SOC in and of itself. These findings continue to support the concept that it is, "the management of sport spectating opportunities that has the *potential* to create community" (Warner et al., 2011, p 251).

While not specifically a SOC grounded study, Warner, Tingle, and Kellett (2013) discovered that a lack of being part of the referee community contributed to turnover, specifically among newer referees. Through interviews with 15 former basketball referees, the theme of a lack of referee community was uncovered. Newer referees did not feel as though they were welcomed by older members, who interacted with each other largely through stories about certain coaches. As such, the authors suggest that managers facilitate community building among veteran and rookie officials through mentorships, such that dropout can be minimized.

Much of the preceding literature focuses on the perception and management of SOC. Glover and Bates (2006) examined the motivation for identifying the need for establishing SOC through sport. Through a narrative qualitative approach, the authors examined why founders organized *The First String*, which was a non-profit baseball organization designed to create SOC among a predominantly Black lower-socioeconomic status community. The founders felt as though the status of their neighborhood had diminished since their youth through increased violence, drug use, and crime. For the founders, their past experiences, in which their community gathered around softball, was a sense of nostalgia they drew upon to rationalize creating *The First*

*String* in an attempt to help the youth of their generation overcome some of the similar challenges they faced. This is an important concept that deserved further investigation for its application to the current research. Through interviews with the Tammy, who is the founder of the Ladies' Night golf clinics, this was examined, and the findings are reported in the discussion section.

In this literature review, I provided an overview of intersectionality, research into the experiences of Black women in sport, and SOC in sport and leisure. What is evident is that there are gaps in the literature. First, little to no research has focused on the sport of golf from a racial minority perspective. Further still, there is a need to expand the research on Black females' experience in recreational sport from a qualitative perspective (Armstrong, 2013), as well as an explicit focus on golf. In addition, more research that explicitly examines the impact of intersectionality on Black females' sporting experiences, with an added emphasis on sports in which they are underrepresented, is warranted. Finally, there is a need for more SOC research into sport settings beyond the interscholastic and collegiate realms. As such, this dissertation sought to address these gaps in the literature.

The literature on Black females in sport demonstrates that the intersections of race and gender impact their experience in a variety of ways. For example, both racial and gender discrimination are experienced by Black female collegiate athletes (Bruening et al., 2005). Furthermore, within the collegiate athletic setting, a hierarchy exists that is both gendered and raced in nature, with Black females at the bottom of this hierarchy (Bruening, 2004a). Also, the experiences of Black female collegiate athletes are often

marginalized, as they are a minority group on PWIHE campus, and support systems, such as counselors and advisors, often lack cultural knowledge or appreciate the experiences of their students (Carter, 2008; Carter & Hart, 2010; Carter & Hawkins, 2011).

Concerning the experiences of Black females as coaches and administrators, Black females continue to face challenges in securing coaching and administrative positions on account of both their gender and race (Abney & Richey, 1991; 1992), and racial and gender discrimination are still present in their experience (Borland & Bruening, 2010). At the recreational level, it is evident that race, gender, and social class influence the participation patterns of Black females (Ainsworth et al., 2003; Armstrong, 2013; Fleury & Lee, 2006; Harrison, 1995; Harrison et al., 1999; Nies et al., 1999; Philipp, 1999; Richter et al. 2002; Wilbur et al., 2003). As demonstrated, the importance of intersectionality in the experiences of Black females in sport is a crucial concept to examine. Thus, the first research question guiding this dissertation sought to examine the influence of gender, race, and social class in the participants' experience.

From the SOC literature, it is evident that there are benefits of leveraging SOC in sport settings and communities. For example, an experienced SOC has been demonstrated at the collegiate athlete (Warner & Dixon, 2011; Warner et al., 2012), sport consumer (Swyers, 2005), and recreational levels (Glover & Bates, 2006; Lyons, 2003; Lyons & Dionigi, 2007; Warner & Dixon, 2013), and SOC positively impacts those who experience it. Furthermore, there are apparent differences in perceived SOC among males and females in the sporting setting (Stevens, 2000; Warner & Dixon,

2011). Thus, research that further examines this concept, with the added intersectional components of race and social class, is warranted. In this study, I sought to assess the concept of SOC through the second research question which asks if SOC is experienced among the participants in these Ladies' Night clinics, and, if so, what contributes to this?

In the previous sections, I have introduced the topic of this study, examined pertinent background literature, provided a rationale and research questions, and presented the frameworks utilized. In the following section, I describe the methods employed in this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this section, I first examine and explain the paradigms and their associated assumptions that guide this research. Next, I discuss the design implemented for the research, namely an intrinsic qualitative case study, and the associated description of the specific case and its setting. This is followed by a description of the participants and the strategies utilized to recruit them. Finally, a description of the data collection and analysis procedures is also provided. I conclude this section with a discussion of ethics and human rights protocol measures that were taken in compliance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

**Paradigm**

A paradigm, as described by Kuhn (1996), is an accepted model or pattern that is utilized to examine or address certain research questions. The success of a paradigm and its corresponding "status" is derived from the utility of the paradigm in solving problems that a scientific community deems worthy of study (Kuhn, 1996). It is for these reasons that there are different paradigms, for example positivism, critical, interpretivist, post-modernism, among others. Different groups of researchers have different questions that are important to them, along with different ways of viewing the world, and, as such, need different strategies for studying phenomenon. A paradigm does not, "need not, and in fact never does, explain all the facts with which it can be confronted" (Kuhn, 1996, p.

18). Given this broad view of paradigms, I turn next to the specific paradigms that guide this research.

Each paradigm has its own assumptions about the nature of reality (i.e., ontology) and how we come to know and understand this reality (i.e., epistemology) (Kuhn, 1996; Lincoln et al., 2011). Furthermore, there are certain methodological designs that are associated with each paradigm, for example experimental design with positivism and ethnography with interpretivism, and it would be a disservice to attempt to force a particular research method upon a research question, such as a quantitative survey when the sample size/participant group is five, if it is not appropriate (Ercikan & Roth, 2006). Lincoln et al. (2011) present five major paradigms used in research: positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, constructivism/interpretivism, and participatory/postmodernism. To provide a detailed explanation of each of these paradigms is not the purpose of this section. Rather, the paradigms chosen for this research are described next.

It is my stance that the critical and constructivist/interpretivist paradigms best fit this research. Furthermore, an intrinsic qualitative case study is the most appropriate method for this research topic. An explanation of these paradigms and how they relate to the proposed research are presented next, followed by a rationale for the choice of an intrinsic case study.

**Critical**

Concerning ontological assumptions, the critical paradigm holds that human nature operates within a world that is in a constant struggle for power. Those currently in

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power have the ability to largely influence and dictate what is or is not valuable and acceptable. Those not in power often feel the effects of their oppressed state, which can be a result of their race, gender, or sexual orientation, among others, being different from those in power. This paradigm is appropriate for the current research as it also seeks to examine the experiences of a marginalized group, namely Black females, and to serve in an emancipatory manner by potentially helping to provide an arena for the participants to express their concerns and share their wisdom and knowledge (Lincoln et al., 2011), which is also a goal of intersectionality (Carbado et al., 2013).

Concerning epistemology, research that operates out of the critical paradigm studies social structures, freedom and oppression, and power and control. Furthermore, the knowledge that is produced can change existing power structures and improve the lives of the participants through empowerment. How the researchers come to know is largely through participatory efforts with the researched, and it is acknowledged that the participants' experience is valuable and influenced by contextual knowledge (Lincoln et al., 2011).

The methodological approaches utilized when operating out of the critical paradigm are most commonly qualitative in nature. Observations and interviews are often the primary sources of data collection as interviews help to provide marginalized groups with an opportunity to express their voice (Singer 2005). Furthermore, interviews and qualitative methods transition the power from the researcher to the participant by helping to provide an avenue for them to express their insights through their own words.

**Constructivist/Interpretivist**

Concerning ontology, the constructivist paradigm acknowledges the subjective nature of the human experience and reality, and maintains that humans can interpret their experience in a number of ways, which largely depend upon their lived experiences (Guba, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Concerning epistemology, the manner in which knowledge is uncovered and created is through the participatory interaction between researcher and researched (Guba, 1990). As with the critical paradigm, qualitative methods, such as observations and interviews, are the primary data collection procedures used in the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm (Angen, 2000).

These two paradigms can accommodate each other as they both acknowledge the emphasis on engaging with and helping to provide voice to the participant, and there is a transactional element to the knowledge exchange and creation between researcher and participant knowledge (Lincoln et al., 2011). These two paradigms are appropriate for this study as a goal is to help to provide voice to a marginalized group, namely Black females, and the construction of knowledge is transactional and co-created. Furthermore, while the interviews conducted with the participants were semi-structured in nature, the participants were encouraged to discuss topics of importance to them as well. After all, the participants have the knowledge and wisdom of their experience, and it would be a disservice to the critical and constructivist paradigms to not allow them to express and expound upon issues that are important to them (Creswell, 2007).

**Research design**

The definition of a case study has been discussed for some time within the academy. Some have criticized definitions for being too restrictive (see Flyvbjerg, 2011 for a critique of the *Dictionary of Sociology's* definition of a case study) and others have criticized definitions for being too inclusive, in which anything counts as a case study (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). Thus, a working definition of a case study that has distinct criteria for inclusion, but is also inclusive is warranted. For such a definition, I turn to Yin (2009) who provides the following two-part definition of a case study:

> A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (p.18)

Furthermore, Yin (2009) states that a case study is an appropriate design for studies that: a) ask how and why questions, b) do not require control of behavioral events, and c) focus on contemporary events. This study fits these criteria as the research questions sought to understand how race, gender, and social class interact in the participants' experience, and, if present, how what contributes to SOC in these clinics. Furthermore,

learning from the instructor and her participants does not require control of behavior by the researcher. Finally, the golf instructor explained that these Ladies' Night golf clinics are a recent creation (i.e., summer of 2013 inception). In addition, McCall (2005) states that case studies are a method often employed in research utilizing intersectionality, as they draw from many data sources and have the ability to explore the complexities of social life. Finally, Armstrong (2013) recommends that researchers should utilize qualitative methods to examine the experiences of Black females as participants in recreation and sport.

The specific design for this research is an intrinsic case study. Stake (2005) states that the purpose of an intrinsic case study is not necessarily theory building, but rather the study is undertaken because of the intrinsic interest in the case itself, in this study the Black female golf instructor's golf program and the experiences of her participants. Intrinsic case studies can be especially useful when the case represents a unique or distinct example of a program, individual, or phenomenon. This case represents a unique program as, in contradiction to the majority of Black female golf organizations that operate in a non-profit manner and have multiple officers, this program operates for-profit and was founded and currently run by one Black female.

One major critique of case study research is that it is not possible to generalize to larger contexts or that case studies do not contribute to theory generation. While this may be true in some instances, it would be a mistake to dismiss the importance of case study research. Flyvbjerg (2001; 2006) provides a counter to these critiques and provides rationale for the value of case study research. Namely, case studies can benefit theory by

providing detailed examples of theory, or perhaps more importantly, demonstrate examples where theory is flawed. Furthermore, case study research can be beneficial in providing examples of phenomenon for which new theory is needed or warranted.

**Research setting and the case**

### Tammy – Creator and instructor of the Ladies' Night Out golf clinics

Tammy, who is a self-identifying Black female, began her involvement with golf at the age of six. Her father introduced her to the game by taking her to hit golf balls at a local golf course. One day, a bystander noticed her potential and informed her father that the opportunity for college golf scholarships were plentiful for minority females. A small word of encouragement sparked a junior golf career that included leading a select golf team to six consecutive national golf titles. Her skill provided her a scholarship at a Division I golf program where she led her team all four years. Not long after graduating college, she won a prestigious amateur championship in her home state.

After a short stint in professional golf, Tammy decided that playing professional golf was no longer her passion. She decided to pursue her passion for art by moving to California. In order to generate the funds necessary for the move, Tammy started giving lessons at a local golf course to one Black female client. Through word of mouth, one client quickly turned into two, and then to three. When Tammy informed her clients that she would be leaving for California, they expressed their desire for her to stay. The move to California lasted only two weeks, and Tammy was back in her hometown. One evening, Tammy and a golf client visited a TopGolf facility. Tammy noticed the relaxed atmosphere of TopGolf as well as the diversity that was present among the patrons of the

facility (e.g., beginner golfers, racial minorities, males, females, etc.). She asked a TopGolf employee if any jobs were available. Upon learning that there was a need for a golf instructor, Tammy submitted an application and was subsequently hired as a TopGolf instructor.

Due to increased requests for golf lessons from her followers on social media, as well as her golf students' friends, Tammy decided to start the Ladies' Night golf clinics in the summer of 2013. Because the women requesting golf lessons were beginners, Tammy created the Ladies' Night golf clinics and set the price for her two hour clinics at $20 per person. She credits this price point as well as the TopGolf environment as key factors in customer retention and continued return. She describes the TopGolf environment as, "laid back, loud music playing, and the social aspect of it….TopGolf is everybody. The excitement was there and it was important to getting the ladies to come back." Tammy also cites her teaching style, which she describes as different from traditional golf instruction, as a key factor in the growth of her clinics. "I use profanity if I need to sometimes during lessons, I wear the new Jordans or LeBrons, I keep it fun. I'm not your stereotypical country club golf instructor, and I think that is why the ladies (Black female participants) can relate to me."

Tammy has a passion for growing the game of golf, specifically within the racial minority community. She desires to see women learn the game of golf and leverage it how they see fit. As she said, "Golf gives them another tool in their belt to use for whatever they need it for."

**Rapport building**

I was introduced to Tammy through a network of Black golfers from previous research projects. Upon learning about Tammy through her social media sites and witnessing her posts and pictures of her Ladies' Night golf clinics on social media, I developed an interest in learning from her and her students about these clinics. I scheduled a lesson with Tammy with the hopes of proposing my research idea as well as building rapport. As an added bonus, I also was able to get excellent instruction on my golf swing.

During the conclusion of my lesson with Tammy, I proposed my research idea to her. She was instantly receptive as we shared a desire to see an increase in racial minority involvement in golf. She assured me that her clients would also be happy to assist in my research and gave me permission to recruit and observe at her Ladies' Night clinics. Tammy and I remained in contact through text messages and phone calls since our first meeting, and continued to build rapport throughout the process. Furthermore, she agreed to assist me by providing an overview of the research to her participants prior to the gathering of data. This is a strategy that May (2014) utilized with success when conducting cross-racial interviews.

**Ladies' Night clinics**

A Ladies' Night clinic consists of a one two-hour session per week, and typically occurs on either a Saturday or a Sunday evening. The cost is $20 per person to attend, and the average number of participants is 10. The majority of the participants begin at the beginner level of golf, and several are repeat customers who have attended these

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clinics since their inception in the summer of 2013. There are two overarching goals for these clinics: a) introduce Black females to golf, and b) develop skill proficiency and confidence in the participants, such that they will accept invitations from coworkers to play golf. The focus on beginner level instruction and the relatively low cost of participation are important to acknowledge, as Fleury and Lee (2006) state, when concerning physical activity programs aimed at Black females, "data indicate the need for programs which are consistent with the resource and skill level of participants…must be relevant to those with limited socioeconomic resources and require little in the way of cost" (p. 135). These clinics began at a TopGolf facility in the summer of 2013, and transitioned to a First Tee facility, which resembles a traditional golf course practice facility with a driving range, in April 2014.

At the beginning of the clinic, Tammy introduces herself, describes her background in the game of golf, and asks the participants how they heard about the clinics. After this brief introduction, Tammy has the ladies form a circle and demonstrates the basics of gripping a golf club. As the women watch and listen, Tammy has them follow along. After checking each participants' grip on the club, Tammy instructs the participants to go to a hitting station, which is an area on the driving range where golf balls are set up for them to hit, and says, "show me what your idea of the golf swing is." At this point, the participants will attempt to hit the golf ball using whatever their concept of a golf swing is. Many of the participants laugh at themselves as they attempt to hit the ball. Some will engage in dialogue with the participants closest to them and ask, "do you think I'm doing it right?"

As the participants hit golf balls, Tammy goes to each participant and provides basic insight on the golf stance, posture, and general swing ideas. She spends a few minutes with each participant before moving on to the next one. This process continues for the duration of the two hour clinic. Throughout the clinics, the participants laugh with and encourage one another. Even if the participants do not know each other outside of the clinics, they engage and interact in a friendly manner throughout the clinics. Several women exchanged contact information during the clinics I observed. Furthermore, the participants will stop to take photos and videos of each other throughout the clinics. At the conclusion, Tammy brings the participants back to a group circle, thanks them for coming out, and asks for a group picture with the participants. Also, she tells the women to tag themselves in the pictures placed on social media and to post their own pictures of the clinics to their social media pages.

**TopGolf**

TopGolf is a relatively new invention created by twin brothers Steve and Dave Jolliffe from Britain (racial background unknown) who were bored with the traditional driving range. What began as an idea has grown into a rapidly expanding franchise. To date, TopGolf has provided a memorable experience to several million customers, and new locations are being built across the U.S. (TopGolf, 2013a). What is intriguing about this particular company is that it has found a way to get the "non-golfer" to hit golf balls. The concept of TopGolf is best described as "a 240-yard outfield with dartboard-like targets in the ground. The closer to the center or bulls-eye you get and the farther out you hit the ball, the more points you receive" (TopGolf, 2013b). Having visited several

TopGolf locations, the environment is like nothing I have ever experienced before. My best description would be, "dart/ski-ball scoring with a golf club and golf ball with bowling lanes at your favorite sports bar."

TopGolf is not a typical driving range or golf course. Current popular music is being played through speakers positioned around the complex. Wait staff is constantly bringing you beverages (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) and, if you choose to order, serving you a variety of foods. People are laughing and joking, whether or not they even hit the golf ball. All of the stuffiness and etiquette of golf are eschewed and replaced with a bowling alley atmosphere. As founder Steve Jolliffe states, "The intimidation factor is gone" (Feldmeier, 2006).

Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of this environment is the amazing amount of diversity present at TopGolf. Old and young people, families, friends, and all racial backgrounds are present. The "rich White-man's game" stereotype does not apply to TopGolf. It was after visiting a TopGolf location for the first time and witnessing the amazing amount of diversity that the idea for a research project struck me. With all of the diversity present at TopGolf, I questioned if any of the patrons were interested in trying "real golf" after their experience with hitting golf balls at TopGolf. Specifically, I observed several groups of Black females, who, according to the NGF are one of the most underrepresented groups in the game (NGF, 2010). I was interested to determine if this particular group was interested in taking up golf and subsequently introducing their families to the game after being introduced to golf through TopGolf.

**Participants**

The sampling technique for selecting participants was purposeful in nature. Patton (2002) describes purposeful sampling as a method in which the participants must meet a predetermined set of requirements in order to qualify for participation. The requirements for participation in this study were as follows: a) self-identifying Black and female individuals aged 18 and older; b) attended at least three of the original clinics at the TopGolf facility. It is important that the participants self-identify as Black and female, as it would be faulty to impose or assume a racial or gender identity upon the participants. Since this study sought to understand the experiences of Black females who attend these clinics, no other racial groups were included in the study. Furthermore, participants who attended at least three of the original Ladies' Night clinics at the TopGolf facility were chosen for individual interviews, as they had the most possible experience concerning SOC in the clinics. Tammy described a regular attendee as someone who attended at least three of the original clinics. While this appears to be a small number of attended clinics, it is important to note that spots fill up quickly for her clinics, and, as a result, it is often difficult for clients to attend every week. Furthermore, the clients of her clinics are predominantly professional working women with busy schedules. For example, the participants in this study had careers including real estate, sales, event planning for non-profit organizations, nursing, and public education. Furthermore, several had families of their own with young children. As such, she considered those who attended at least three clinics to be regulars.

Upon discussing these criteria with Tammy, several potential participants were identified who met the criteria and for whom contact information was available. One additional participant was included who, while only officially participating in one clinic, unofficially attended several of the original clinics at the TopGolf facility, and was able to provide insight into the history and atmosphere of the clinics. All but one of these participants volunteered and several interviews were conducted with Tammy for a final $N = 8$.

The participants were asked to provide demographic information prior to participating in the interviews. The average number of clinics attended by the participants was five. The average age of the participants was 28. Finally, the average household income reported by the participants was $50,000-75,000. One participant did not provide her household income. In addition to providing demographic information, the participants were also asked to choose a pseudonym for themselves and describe their previous golf experience (see Table 1 in Appendix D). I provide a description of each of these participants next.

**Tammy**

Tammy began playing golf at an early age when her father introduced her to the sport. She developed skill and proficiency in the game through hard work, involvement with the First Tee, and participating on a travel team that competed in tournaments across the country. She won several high-ranking tournaments and attended a DI university on a golf scholarship. After her collegiate career, she pursued a professional golf career on min-tours both in the U.S. and abroad. After a struggle with the "yips",

which is a condition in which the golfer struggles to make short putts, she ended her professional career and began teaching golf. She has multiple business ventures including individual golf lessons, ladies' clinics, a personal clothing line, and a tax return office. She is passionate about bringing the game of golf to the minority community and decided to create the ladies' clinics to introduce the most underrepresented group in the game to golf. Also, she is constantly interviewed by local television and radio networks for her work in the community. At the relatively young age of 26, she identifies as the "it girl" within the African American golf community. She is single with no children, and earns an annual income in the $50-75,000 range.

**Ana Jones**

Ana Jones is a 29 year old married mother of two who is pursuing a professional golf career. She attended an HBCU on a golf scholarship and dreams of becoming the first Black female to win an LPGA Tour event. Her annual household income is in the $25-50,000 range and she serves as a helper to Tammy in the ladies' clinics. She enjoys participating in the clinics as they allow for her to interact with other Black females in the game of golf, which is rare for her in mainstream golf settings. She has attended 12 ladies' clinics and plans to continue to attend future clinics.

**Cattelya**

Cattelya is a 28 year old real estate agent. When her God-brothers decided to learn the game of golf, she asked them to teach her. This request was continually dismissed and not taken seriously. Given her occupation as a realtor, she recognized the utility in learning the game of golf for networking purposes. She learned about the

clinics through social media, and upon viewing the pictures and seeing that the clinics involved mostly Black women, she decided to participate. The ladies' clinics provide a space and opportunity for her to develop skill in and learn the game of golf amongst her peers. Her only golf experience has been the ladies' clinics. She has attended more than eight ladies' clinics and plans to continue to attend future clinics.

**Cassandra**

Cassandra is a 26 year old nurse with one child. Her annual household income ranges from $50-75,000. She was introduced to golf as a child, but did not take a liking to the game. She comes to the ladies' clinics to support Tammy, relax after a long work week, and to socialize with other Black females. She has attended four ladies' clinics and plans to continue to attend future clinics.

**Felicia**

Felicia is a 31 year old real estate agent who earns a household annual income in the $75-95,000 range. She originally had a friend who was attending the ladies' clinics who subsequently invited her. She has attended four ladies' clinics. Her golf experience includes putt-putt, the ladies clinics, and a few trips to the golf course. Felicia had participated in other golf programs aside from these ladies' clinics, but she enjoys Tammy's teaching. This high quality golf instruction was something she felt was lacking in the other golf program she attended. As such, she plans to continue to attend future ladies' clinics with Tammy.

**Ashley**

Ashley is a 25 year old, college-educated, middle school teacher with an annual household income in the $50-75,000 range. She had no previous golf experience prior to attending the ladies' clinics. She initially came to the ladies' clinics to support Tammy. Ashley enjoys the ladies' clinics as they help to challenge the dominant stereotypes about Black females, and they provide other avenues and opportunities for women. She has attended three of the clinics and plans to continue to attend in the future.

**Jona**

Jona is a 26 year old who graduated college from an HBCU. She has no previous golf experience aside from the ladies' clinics. She earns an annual household income in the $50-75,000 range. She was initially personally invited by Tammy to attend a ladies' clinic and has subsequently attended a total of three clinics. She enjoys the relaxed non-competitive atmosphere created in the clinics, and plans to continue to attend future clinics because they are empowering and motivating.

**Crishell**

Crishell is a 31 year old non-profit event coordinator who earns an annual household income in the $50-75,000 range. She has little previous golf experience aside from the ladies' clinics and individual golf lessons with Tammy. Her father discouraged golf participation during her childhood, as he feared she would encounter negative experiences in this highly White-male dominated arena. She has only attended one official ladies' clinic, but plans to attend more clinics in the future.

**Recruiting**

The manner in which participants were recruited was multi-step in nature. First, Tammy was formally presented with the overall concept for the research project. After obtaining permission to conduct interviews with her participants and observations at her golf clinics, she was asked to serve as a liaison, and to inform her students about the proposed research project.

Having received permission from Tammy to recruit her participants, as well as obtaining contact information for the identified participants who met the requirements for participation, I contacted the participants via telephone. During the first phone conversation, I explained who I was and described the nature of the research to the participants. After spending time building rapport with the participants through conversation that ranged from discussions of careers, children, religion, and favorite sports teams the participants were encouraged to ask any questions they had concerning the research (Andersen, 1993; McCray et al., 2013). Next, I asked if the participants were willing to be involved with the research, and whether or not they preferred to conduct a face-to-face or telephone interview. Six of the eight participants opted for a phone interview. This was due to numerous reasons. First, the participants came from a variety of professions, some of which entail ever changing schedules, such as real estate. Several could not commit to a face-to-face interview for fear of having to cancel at the last minute. This scenario even occurred for several of the phone interviews, and rescheduling took place. Also, several of the participants had family obligations, such as children, in addition to their work that did not lend to face-to-face interviews.

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Furthermore, one participant spent her available time outside of work traveling out of town for special events, thus minimizing her availability for a face-to-face interview. The two face-to-face interviews that were conducted occurred prior to and after the ladies clinics I observed. Upon receiving verbal consent to from the participants, they were e-mailed an information and consent form for their review (see Appendix A). Finally, individual interviews were scheduled with each participant at a date and time of their convenience, which, as previously described, was not always a concrete appointment.

### Data collection methods

The data for this project came from several sources: a) a background questionnaire, b) observations and field notes, c) individual interviews, d) documents and artifacts, e) my personal reflexive journal. The observations came from my attendance at two of the Ladies' Night clinics. The individual interviews came from interviews with the instructor Tammy and her clients who met the requirements and volunteered to participate in the research. The artifacts, which consisted of pictures of the clinics and commentary made on them, came from Tammy's social media sites. Also, I read articles written about Tammy and listened to interviews Tammy has done with local radio and television networks to gain perspective on Tammy and the ladies' clinics. Finally, the reflexive journal consisted of my personal reflections of my mental and emotional state throughout the research process.

**Background questionnaire**

Each participant was asked to fill out a background questionnaire (see Appendix A). In this questionnaire, the participants were able to choose a pseudonym for themselves, as well as self-identify their race and gender. Furthermore, the participants were asked to provide their previous golf experience, their annual household income, their age, and the number of ladies' clinics attended.

**Observations**

Prior to conducting observations and in order to provide disclosure, I asked Tammy to inform her students that a researcher would be present at the clinics. This is a strategy that May (2014) and others (Andersen, 1993; Banks-Wallace & Conn, 2002; Baskin et al., 2011; McCray et al., 2013; Parker et al., 2010; Wilbur et al., 2006) utilized in-cross racial interviews to help build rapport and establish a comfort level with the participants. While this was the plan, during my observations this was not the reality.

At each of the clinics I attended, I arrived early, helped Tammy set up her equipment, and discussed how I would be introduced. At the start of the clinic, I sat several feet away from the women and Tammy as they formed a group circle. Each time, I awaited Tammy's introduction of me to the ladies in attendance. However, Tammy introduced herself, gave a brief history of the clinics, and immediately went into group instruction. Both times, I interrupted and asked Tammy if I could introduce myself. After laughter and apologies, Tammy walked over to me, put her arm around my shoulders, and allowed me to introduce myself. During this time, I used comedy to break the ice by saying, "Let me just explain who I am right quick so that y'all don't think I'm

just some random guy over hear taking notes and watching while y'all hit balls!" After

this introduction, which was met with laughter from the ladies in attendance, I explained

who I was, what my overarching research agenda entails, namely studying the

experiences of racial minorities in golf, and the purpose of my attendance, which was to

study Tammy's golf clinics and gain insight into Black females' experience in golf. I

also explained that I would be conducting observations during the clinics. I noticed that

several of the ladies nodded their heads in approval once I explained who I was and the

nature of the research. Several said, "That's really cool" and spoke to me informally

about my research during the clinics.

I observed that my in-depth interactions with several of the participants served to

relax the atmosphere, as well as include me in the group. After one participant would

come speak to me, several others would stop to talk about various topics, ranging from

our children to my career aspirations. Finally, it is important to note that there were no

objections to my presence or observations during the clinics. My reflexive journal notes

the importance of having a liaison in Tammy, my interactions with several of the

participants, and my personality in building rapport with the ladies present at the clinics

during my observations.

The method of observation followed the recommendations of Spradley (1980).

Observations can be classified into three categories: descriptive, focused, and selective.

During my first observation, I conducted descriptive observations taking note of the

setting, the interactions between Tammy and her participants, interactions amongst the

participants, and conversations amongst the ladies. In addition to descriptive

observations during my second observation, I conducted focused observations, in which I looked and listened for examples of the themes generated during my analysis of the interview, observation, and artifact data.

**Interviews**

The interview data came from two formal individual interviews with the instructor Tammy, two with Ana Jones, who was the participant with the most experience in the clinics aside from Tammy, and one interview with each of the remaining previously mentioned volunteering participants who met the requirements for participation in the study. The individual interviews were semi-structured in nature, ranged from 20 to 40 minutes, and followed the guidelines presented by Spradley (1979) and others. As recommended by Spradley (1979), interviews should not differ, in feel, from friendly personal conversations. The researcher who can conduct an interview with the feel of a friendly conversation can benefit from quickly building rapport and establishing trust with the participant. This feel was created through an initial recruiting conversation with the participants, in which I searched for and established the previously described insider moments (May, 2014). I was able to create an insider moment with each of the participants in the individual interviews, as well as several during my observations. Specific examples of these insider moments include parenthood, as I had my firstborn son during the research process, passion for golf, shared favorite sports teams, shared previous careers, and the importance of faith. These insider moments served to develop a level of comfort and rapport with the participants that I believe would have been missing if not uncovered.

While the feel of the interview should be friendly and informal, in reality, the researcher should have a specific purpose and structure to the interview. For this reason, the individual interviews were semi-structured because the semi-structured format allows for flexibility that a structured interview does not, while maintaining focus on the main issues at hand (Fontana & Frey, 2005). At the onset of the interview, I reminded the participants why they are being interviewed, not to force the participant to answer questions in a structured manner, but to provide an overall concept for the purpose of the interview and remind them that participation was completely voluntary. This can also serve to break the ice and relax the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

After greetings had taken place, the participants were asked for permission to audio record the interview for data analysis purposes. None of the participants refused to be recorded. Furthermore, abundant notes were taken throughout the interviews. The interview questions were semi-structured in nature, in that there were a set of specific questions that were pre-determined, such as, "What brought you to the Ladies' Night clinics?" Specific questions that sought to gain insight into perceived SOC and intersectionality were guided by previous work that examined SOC and intersectionality. For example, Borland and Bruening (2010) provide examples of questions utilized to examine what it meant to be a Black female in sport, such as, "Black women in society have largely been defined as having two intersecting identities: being Black and being female. How do you think these two identities make your experiences differ from that of Black males in college athletics" (p.411). As such, the interview questions that sought to understand intersectionality resembled these types of questions (see Appendix C).

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The interview questions related to SOC sought to examine the tenets of SOC theory as outlined by McMillan and Chavis (1986) as well as the sport-specific SOC developed by Warner et al. (2013). For example, to assess the third tenet of SOC, which states that membership must be rewarding, the question was asked, "Is participation in Ladies' Night golf clinics rewarding? Why/why not?" An example of a question from Warner et al.'s (2013) scale that was utilized in this research was, "I feel like I belong in my archery club." For this research, this was modified to, "Do you feel a sense of belonging to the Ladies' Night group? Why/why not?" The participants were also encouraged to expound upon and provide insight into topics that were of importance to them.

Finally, questions pertaining to the TopGolf environment were also asked, as Tammy highlighted the role of this facility in attracting the clients of her original ladies' clinics. As such, I sought to determine this influence through questions such as, "Was TopGolf important to you coming to the original clinics? If so, why? If not, why not?" Also, questions that were originally unforeseen but were uncovered through the interviews were asked. For example, during my transcriptions and analysis of the interview data, which began immediately after each interview, I took note of insights by the participants that were unrelated to the original interview questions. As such, I asked questions pertaining to these insights to future participants. An example of such a question includes, "Do the pictures placed on social media contribute to the specific demographic coming to the clinics? If so, why? If not, why not?" In addition, probing

questions were asked in order to encourage the participants to provide more detail to their insights.

When face to face interviews were not possible, which were due to the previously mentioned reasons, phone interviews were conducted. While telephone interviews/surveys have commonly been used in quantitative research (Barriball, Christian, While, & Bergen, 1996; Carr & Worth, 2001), the standard in qualitative research has been the face to face interview (Novick, 2008). According to Novick (2008), this preference is due to the inability of the researcher to record visual cues, such as body language, during phone interviews. Despite this disadvantage, there are advantages to phone interviews. For example, phone interviews provide the researcher the ability to take notes unobtrusively, decrease social pressure, and increase rapport (Carr & Worth, 2001; Smith, 2005; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Tausig & Freeman, 1988). Following the phone interviews, I took special note in my reflexive journal of the willingness of the participants to share their insights and experiences. There were no questions that went unanswered by the participants. As such, phone interviews are a suitable method of data collection, and were utilized when necessary.

**Documents**

Documents, in the form of pictures, were obtained from Tammy's social media sites. Tammy posts pictures from her Ladies' Night clinics on these sites and her students and followers frequently post commentary on them. These pictures provided visual representations of the clinics and served to provide another source of data to help visualize the scene. Moreover, the commentary from the students added another valuable

layer of data. Furthermore, I conducted an internet search for articles written on

Tammy's golf accomplishments, ladies' clinics, and business ventures. Furthermore, I

searched for radio and television interviews she participated in. Each of these sources

helped to provide background information on Tammy and her clinics.

**Reflexive journal**

My reflexive journal documented my thoughts, experiences, and emotions

throughout the research process. Reflective practices are utilized in research that

employs the constructive and critical paradigms among others, and, by critically

reflecting upon the self, reflective journals can add another layer of data to qualitative

studies and help to enhance the credibility of the research (Krefting, 1991; Morrow,

2005; Ortlipp, 2008). In this study, I paid specific attention to and reflected upon the

rapport between myself and the research participants, my emotional state, and any

preconceived assumptions I brought to the research process. As I have described the

rapport built between myself and the participants, I detail my emotional state and

preconceived assumptions throughout the research process next.

### Emotions and assumptions

This study spanned the entire spectrum of emotions. Ranging from initial elation,

when Tammy agreed to allow me into her busy schedule to study her clinics, to despair,

when I struggled for weeks to obtain the contact information promised me by Tammy, I

exhausted myself emotionally throughout this study. My reflections note the feeling of

helplessness as I continually asked Tammy for the contact information of the

participants she identified as meeting the criteria for the study. Several times I thought I

may have lost her support. I also noted the sense of relief and joy when I received the first contact from Tammy. My emotional experience during this process led to a valuable lesson learned in research, namely deliberate with great caution before selecting a study that relies upon one individual for access.

Concerning my preconceived assumptions, I took note of the challenges associated with relying upon a single individual for gaining access to research participants. While Tammy was supportive of the research I initially proposed to her, it proved challenging to gain her assistance. Tammy is somewhat of a celebrity in her community. She is continually interviewed by TV news channels, radio stations, and newspapers concerning her impact on the minority community in golf. Furthermore, she has several business ventures that require substantial amounts of her time. My initial assumptions were that she would be able to quickly assist me by providing contact information for the participants who met the requirements for the study. This proved to be a more challenging task than I anticipated. I would often wait for weeks at a time before hearing back from her. I had to balance my requests for her assistance in order to both remind her that her help was needed while also avoiding appearing to be impatient.

A second preconceived assumption I took note of was that I would potentially face resistance from the ladies at the clinics I observed. This caused much emotional distress as I traveled to my first clinic. However, after introducing myself and explaining the nature and purpose of both the current study as well as my overarching research agenda, I was met with friendship and willingness to assistant by the ladies I interacted with. This is not to say that I did not feel the effects of being an outsider during the

research. There were several instances where my outsider status was evident. During my first observation of the ladies' clinic, a woman approached me, smiled, and proceeded to ask, "Hi! Who are you? What are you doing here?" While the tone was friendly in nature, the intent was apparent. This woman was challenging a White male at these ladies' clinics. I proceeded to state the purpose of my presence, the nature and scope of my overarching research agenda, and my passion for learning from Tammy and the participants of the ladies' clinics, such that positive change could be made for the future of minority females in golf. After this explanation, the entire mood of the conversation shifted to one of excitement for the topic and appreciation for the research. This experience truly was an emotionally draining event. Also, before Tammy allowed me to introduce myself to the participants of the ladies' clinics, I noticed several of the women looking in my direction with a questioning look. I could tell that they were wondering what a White male was doing in attendance at the clinic. As previously discussed, once I was allowed to introduce myself and state the purpose of my presence, the tension subsided and the mood was relaxed.

**Data analysis and interpretation**

The textual data, which included word for word transcriptions of the interviews, commentary posted on the social media sites, field notes, and observations, were analyzed using the guidelines of a multi-step inductive analysis (Thomas, 2006), in which the researcher conducts several in-depth readings of the data, with notes being taken, so that general overarching themes can be created. Next, line by line coding helped to further analyze the specific details of the transcripts and field notes. As themes

began to emerge, overarching main-categories were created, with sub-categories under each main-category (Boyatzis, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This process was continued until the point of saturation occurred, that is no new themes were developed (Patton, 2002). This is not to say that every interview was identical, as there were variations amongst the participants' responses. Also, negative case analysis, in which the variations among the participants' experiences were identified, helped to ensure an honest analysis of the data. However, while there were variations, the main overarching themes that emerged from the analysis and interpretation of the data were supported and reached a point of saturation. If more interviews were conducted, there is the potential that more themes would have emerged. This is addressed in the limitations section. In addition to the aforementioned description of data analysis and interpretation, the maintaining of trustworthiness and the establishing of credibility also contributed to the analysis and interpretation process. These are discussed in detail next.

**Trustworthiness**

As this study was qualitative in nature, I was concerned with maintaining trustworthiness through credibility, dependability, and transferability. This was achieved in a myriad of ways. First, credibility, which is a confirmation that the research is measuring what it intends to measure, or reality as it is experienced by the participants (Merriam, 1998), was achieved by triangulating the data, which involved using multiple sources and methods to corroborate findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There are several ways to corroborate the findings from these multiple data sources. For example, in the proposed study, I utilized rich, thick description of the research setting, engaged in peer-

review and debriefing, and conducted member-checking with the research participants. Utilizing rich, thick description allows readers to make decisions regarding whether or not the findings can be transferred due to shared characteristics with their own similar experiences (Merriam, 1988). Peer-review is a process by which the primary researcher seeks the counsel of another researcher who acts as a "devil's advocate" and asks critical questions regarding the primary researcher's motives and feelings about the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer-review took place during my weekly meetings with my Dissertation Chair, as well as through phone conversations with him during my travels home from my observation sessions.

Engaging in member-checking, in which the researcher asks for clarification from the participants concerning the implications and meaning of their statements, helped to assure, as accurately as possible, that what the participants intended to convey was conveyed in the analysis and write up of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This took place throughout the research process and entailed several strategies. For example, during the interviews, when explanations by the participants were brief, I asked for further clarification of their statements. Also, I ask for confirmation of my understanding of the participants' statements. Following the transcription of the interviews, I e-mailed the transcripts to the participants and asked them to read through and make any corrections that they deemed necessary (McCray et al., 2013). It is important to note that none of the participants made any corrections to the transcripts. Furthermore, I shared the main themes, as well as examples of quotes representing each theme, with the two participants with the most experience in the clinics, namely Tammy, who has attended

every clinic as the instructor, and Ana Jones, who has attended 12 of the clinics. I asked for their insights and thoughts into the findings, which also served as a form of member-checking. Both Tammy and Ana Jones agreed with my findings, and provided additional commentary and insight into them. To demonstrate this confirmation of my findings, Ana Jones said, "These findings are amazing and very accurate. Wow! You were really able to capture the struggles as an African American woman in the sport of golf."

Dependability refers to the ability of other researchers to come to similar conclusions were they to conduct an identical/similar study (Shenton, 2004). Through the detailed description of the methods employed, as previously done, dependability can be achieved. Also, another researcher with experience in qualitative methods served as a peer-debriefer, which can help to ensure dependability.

Transferability refers to the ability of the reader to transfer the findings of the research to their own situation (Shenton, 2004). While caution should be employed when attempting to transfer the findings of case studies to broader contexts, as they often are highly specific examples, as is the case with the current study, the power is in the hands of the reader to determine whether or not to do so. As such, it is recommended that the researcher provide as much information about the process of collecting and analyzing the data as possible, as well as the recruitment and involvement of the participants, and detailed rich descriptive text representing the participants' insights (Shenton, 2004). For the current study, it has been my intent to attempt to address this in the methods section by detailing the aforementioned procedures for data collection, analysis, and recruitment

of participants. In the findings section, I provide rich descriptive textual representations of the participants' insights.

## Researcher tensions and challenges

As suggested in the introduction to this study, there were several potential challenges I faced when conducting this research. First, as a perceived White male, I had to address the issue of cross-cultural research and the challenges it presents. For example, by interviewing Black female participants, I was aware of potential reservations for sharing deeply personal insights with a White male the participants might have, which could be due to historical power dynamics or personal experiences. In order to combat this, I spent time developing rapport with Tammy, who then acted as an assistant in recruiting and obtaining trust with the other participants. This is a strategy that I have utilized with success in previous research, namely interviews with high-level Black golfers.

Another potential challenge I faced was ethical in nature. Namely, did I as a perceived White male researcher, have the right to speak for a Black female golf instructor and her racial minority students. This is known as a "crisis of representation." Lincoln and Denzin (1994) describe this crisis as a dilemma in which researchers ask, "Who is the Other? Can we ever hope to speak authentically of the experience of the Other, or an Other?" (p.577) Fine (1994) states that in order to avoid "othering," researchers must continually probe and seek to understand their relationships with those they study. Furthermore, the researcher should not be portrayed as some distant "other," who is far removed from the research participants. It is this level of comfort and

intimacy with the research participants that can lead to a more honest analysis and interpretation of the data (Fine, 1994).

There are several points I would make to address this issue. First, by utilizing the aforementioned strategies for addressing trustworthiness, such as member checking, I did my best to ensure that the participants' voices were accurately portrayed. Second, as research in the sport management literature that addresses issues faced by racial minority females in golf is limited, work that seeks to understand the experiences of this marginalized group can help shed light on their experiences and can potentially help to provide voice. Furthermore, the findings have the potential to positively impact golf-specific organizations seeking to improve the future for racial minorities in golf. Also, as previously mentioned, rapport was built through the uncovering of insider moments with the participants, which helped to ease tensions and create common ground between the participants and myself. Finally, by keeping a reflexive journal of my emotional state and thought processes throughout the research, I was able to continually probe and interrogate my relationships with the research participants (Fine, 1994).

As human beings, our interpretations of life and biases towards certain passions affect everything we do. From the research topics we choose to the theoretical frameworks we utilize, the concept that it is possible to be completely objective as a human researcher is problematic. Creswell (2007) speaks to this issue when he states:

> How we write is a reflection of our interpretation based on the cultural, social, gender, class, and personal politics that we bring to research. All writing is positioned and within a stance. All researchers shape the writing that emerges,

and qualitative researchers need to accept this interpretation and be open about it

in their writings. (p. 179)

In addition, Richardson (1994) states that the best writing acknowledges this and

positions itself within a particular historical and local time and place. Through the

acknowledgement of my race, class, gender, and voice (see the section entitled

*Researcher Positionality*), I embrace this and understand that my life experiences are

what have helped to shape the topics I choose to research, which according to Fine

(1994) can be a strength of qualitative research. This is not to say that I altered the data

in any way, but rather that I did my best through peer-review and reflexive journaling to

identify areas or instances where my biases may have emerged and had the potential to

impact the data in any way.

### Ethics and human subjects

In order to abide by the ethical standards placed by the IRB, a proposal was sent

for approval. The research was approved by the IRB, and a number of other measures, as

previously discussed, took place. First, each participant was given an information sheet,

highlighting the characteristics of the study (see Appendix A). This information sheet

provided the participants with knowledge of the parameters of the research as well as

their expected involvement, and that participation was voluntary. Furthermore, the

document informed them that the interviews would be audio recorded. Finally, I verbally

informed the participants that their identities and any identifying information would be

kept confidential, with only myself and another researcher having access to their

information.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

From the analysis of the data, four main themes emerged. First, *Do We Belong?* refers to the participants' descriptions of the challenges associated with being both Black and female in golf. Second, *Ladies Clinics are a Safe Space* demonstrates how the ladies' clinics serve as a space where these participants can learn the game of golf in a relaxed non-intimidating environment. Third, *Building Confidence and Networks* describes how the ladies' clinics are beneficial to the participants. Fourth, *The Clinics Make Golf Appealing* refers to the manner in which clinics, in general, and specifically the pictures taken of the ladies' clinics serve to influence the way the Black female participants view golf. Below, I elaborate on each of these themes and provide representative quotes from the participants as well as my observations and analysis of the social media data that demonstrate these findings.

**Do we belong?**

The first major theme that emerged was that, as Black women, the participants' struggle to feel as though they belong in golf. The women provided great detail and insight into their experience, and it is important to note that, while their previous experience in golf ranged from none prior to the clinics to pursuing a career as a professional golfer, the overall experience is impacted by both race and gender for these participants. For example, Cattelya described her experience as a Black woman in golf as, "Well see, you (Black females) can't just enjoy the game (golf). You, unfortunately

have to be, uh, haunted by the pressure." She went on to say, "But yeah, it definitely plays into, uh, it's just a different experience (being a Black female in golf). You just can't focus on what you're there for and enjoy, um, the game itself." This quote demonstrates that Cattelya felt as though an unspoken pressure exists for Black women in golf that affects their ability to enjoy the game.

Building upon Cattelya's insights, Felicia explained, "Um, it's (experience as a Black female compared to a White male/female) probably different because you, you kind of know that you're the minority out there (in golf)." Acknowledging that racial minorities and women, in general, and Black women specifically are underrepresented in golf was common amongst the participants. As Cattelya stated, "Because let's be honest, it (golf) is a divider. And it is a, you know, what it's being, what you know is it's only particular races playing the game (golf). So it makes you feel as though you can't exist in the game." She went on to explain, "If you've never seen anyone a shade of you playing the game (golf), you really don't feel like, you don't feel like you're invited, and that it can apply to you."

Ana Jones, who was the participant with the most previous golf experience aside from the instructor, had the most to say concerning the experience of being a Black female in golf. As a current professional golfer playing on mini-tours, who also played golf in high school and college, Ana Jones described her experience when she competes in golf tournaments:

You know, because I'm already set apart, as soon as I walk out there (on the golf course). People already have a judgment about me and that's just from the way I

look. It's like, I'm pretty sure that the other ladies I'm competing with don't get

the looks that I get as soon as they walk on the golf course, and come to get ready

to have a tournament. So, um, I've pretty much, um, learned to brush it off, but,

you know, truth be told, I mean, it's, it doesn't matter where I go, I always have,

you know, the looks, and sometimes I'll hear the whispers, like, "What is she

doing here, is she actually playing or is she somebody's caddie?" I've got that

one so many times, I'm like, "Wow!" (laughter). So, um you know it's

unfortunate, but um, I've, I hate to say it, but I pretty much just accepted it,

because I honestly don't think that that's going to change. There's always going

to be someone who doesn't feel like minorities fit in golf. So, I mean, because it

is, it's not a sport for Blacks or for Hispanics, you know, we're supposed to stick

to basketball and football, and stuff like that because those sports are considered

our sports. So, you know, when we step out of the box and decide, "Hey, we're

going to go try golf." It's like, "No, that's not for you, that's not your area. You

stick to your zone." Because so many people are like, "Oh, you look like a

basketball player." Really, I'm like 5'1"! (laughter) I'm definitely, I don't have

the look of a basketball player, so, you know, but I always know what the real

intent of that comment was. It was, "You definitely shouldn't be out here playing

golf, you should stick to where you belong." So, it's unfortunate, but I have to

deal with it, and um, I'm pretty sure that the ladies in my field don't, don't deal

with it on the level that I do. Now they (White female golfers) may have some

things that they have to, you know, deal with, but I'm pretty sure it's not on the level that minorities have to, at all.

She went on to say:

> Yeah, yeah, we (Black females) have to fight tooth and nail just to be out there to prove to others that, "Hey, we're supposed to be out here." And I'm pretty sure they don't have to do that, have to prove that we're worthy of being out there right along with anyone else.

In this powerful description, Ana Jones uncovered several crucial components of the Black female's experience in golf. First, in these participants view, there is a pressure that exists for Black women in golf that other groups do not have. This is largely due to overarching stereotypes about which races should play each sport and their own personal experiences. Since she, as a Black female, does not fit the mold of the stereotypical golfer, she is met with stares and commentary that her fellow competitors do not have to deal with. As a shorter woman at 5'1", she understands that when individuals tell her she looks like a basketball player instead of a golfer, they are alluding to her race and how it impacts their perception of her as an athlete. Furthermore, she uncovered the power dynamic associated with being a Black female in a sport where women like her are rare when she states, "So, you know, when we step out of the box and decide, "Hey, we're going to go try golf." It's like, "No, that's not for you, that's not your area. You stick to your zone."

In a slightly different vein, Crishell explained that her father conditioned her to think that golf was not a sport for a lady:

Um, I do know that my dad is an avid golfer, however, um, you have to think

generationally. He grew up in the 50s and 60s, um, so he's familiar with Jim

Crow laws etc… So I think that, you know, he just didn't want me to be…he

wanted to keep, I guess, his children's image of life, and stuff like that, in its

purest form. And when I say that, um, it even goes towards, to um, me and my

sisters actual, um, career path. For example, my dad was in oil and gas. And

that's "good 'ole boys" industry and he worked from the ground up to where he

was a senior VP. Now me and my sisters being Texas girls that's all that we

knew. However he steered us out of the, um, engineer field. And he would prefer

that we go into other, um, industries. So it's very similar, to me I think, very

similar my dad, you know, chose, you know, he would be very, um, supportive if

we decided that we wanted to do golf. However he never even, you know, bought

us clubs or anything like that, even encouraged that. He, first and foremost,

encouraged other sports like tennis and volleyball.

Upon further interrogation of her father's influence on sport participation, Crishell

revealed that she believed her father discouraged golf, as well as certain career paths, in

order to protect her from negative experiences he felt she would encounter in

traditionally male dominated spaces. Having family members discourage and discredit

Black female golf participation is a theme that Cattelya also spoke to:

Yes I have two god-brothers that are…uh..like into the sport (golf). Um, my god-

brother used to play professional football, and so for him, he used that skill to

learn new, and give him a sense of competition again. It wasn't that, you know,

contact to contact, but he fell in love with it and literally committed a lot of his time to it. It was great for him after retirement. And so, you know, I always tell him (god-brother) all the time, "Y'all are going to have to teach me (golf), I want to learn." But it would always kind of be dismissed, and really never taken seriously.

From each of these descriptions of the Black female experience in golf, it is evident that, whether it be from family members, stereotypes, or other golfers Black females are often discredited, discouraged, and questioned for their participation in golf. Furthermore, this not only affects novice Black female golfers, but also professional Black female golfers, such as Ana Jones, as well. This theme demonstrates a form of Crenshaw's (1991) concept of structural intersectionality. Namely, these Black females felt as though they were discouraged or dismissed in the mainstream golf realm due to being both gender and racial minorities. This speaks to the overarching structure of golf and its overemphasis on reaching the White male demographic. As such, there appears to be a need for spaces where women of color can learn the game in an environment that both appreciates and affirms their belonging in golf. The Ladies' Night clinics serve as such a space. Next, I explain through the participants' quotes and my personal observations how this safe space is created.

## Ladies' clinics are a safe space

As demonstrated by the first theme, the participants' experiences establish that there is a need for a safe space within the golf realm where Black females can be amongst their peers and learn the game in a comfortable environment that is free from

pressure and prejudice. The Ladies' Night clinics serve as such a space through several ways, each of which serves as a sub-theme to the main theme of *Ladies' clinics are a safe space*. These sub-themes are: a) *The instructor is relatable*; b) *TopGolf contributes to a relaxed environment*; c) *I belong, it's a sisterhood*; d) *Empowerment*. Next, each of these sub-themes are described in detail.

**The instructor is relatable**

The ability of Tammy to relate to Black females was evident through my observations as well as interviews with both Tammy and the participants of the ladies' clinics. During both formal and informal interviews, Tammy explained that she does not look like the average golfer. She described her look as, "Tattoos, piercings, the latest shoes that everyone is wearing, I don't look like a traditional golfer. You don't see that on the golf course, and that is what is so appealing to minorities especially." In addition to her look, she also says that, "I'm good because I speak the language of the urban community. I grew up in it." Furthermore, she describes how she has been able to, "merge my culture and where I was raised, and where I was brought up, and the people that I've been brought up with, and merge it into a sport that is, you know, otherwise not known to be played by many African Americans." Finally, Tammy is somewhat of a celebrity in her community. She has been interviewed on local hip-hop radio stations, TV news programs, and local newspapers for her fashion sense, business acumen, charity work, and most often her impact on the minority community in golf. She uses this celebrity status, as well as the connections she has with other celebrities in the Black community, such as athletes, rappers, and actors, to attract her clientele to her Ladies'

Night clinics. She states, "It gives me more credibility in the community when they see my posts and who I know." Having provided this description, the commentary provided by the participants is examined next.

Transitioning from Tammy's statements, concerning her ability to relate, to the participants' explanations, Cassandra states:

> Yeah because she comes from where we (minorities) come from. You know, we grew up together, it's kind of like she was like, in that, it's not like she grew up in that majority (Whites). So for her to grow up in the minority with us, you know, it's kind of like support. You know, um, it's not that many of us doing it (Black women in golf).

Jona expresses the same sentiment when she states:

> I think because Tammy has grown up, in, you know, that society, you know, that type of environment, you know, minorities mainly, you know, um, African American. You know all of her, most of her friends that we know, you know, are like her. So she relates to us because she has grown up the way we've grown up. She's gone to the same schools and lived in the same neighborhoods.

These quotes demonstrate that it is important for these Black female participants to have an instructor who grew up in the same community as them. There is a common bond that is understood that would likely not exist with a White male or female golf instructor. This is captured by the following statement by Ashley:

> I think especially with, um, African Americans, we tend to, um, draw to people that look like us, or, um, dress the same as us because we feel as if those people

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kind of understand where we're coming from. They understand the whole, "We don't want to get our hair wet, we don't want to sweat." We want that type, so we draw near more to somebody who understands, who looks like us for us to understand. So I think if a White male instructor in all golf (attire), we wouldn't be drawn to that because we'd be like, "What does he? He doesn't have any interest in what I have interest in, we don't have anything in common." And you wouldn't feel as comfortable, because of, an African American woman doing something makes you very, "Oh, I didn't know I could do that. If she can do it maybe I can do it." And so it's more appealing I would say.

This quote by Ashely highlights the importance to these Black females of having a golf instructor who can identify with their participants on a deeper level than golf. To further build upon the importance of this concept, Cattelya says:

So um, it made it, it was very much intriguing to see, um, to see a woman that looks, she doesn't look like me, but she is of the same background as me. And that's what it's about, if you invest in something because you can identify with the person. And since it's already been known that certain races, very much so are more prominent in the sport, it felt good to be a part of that small percentage that was, you know, starting the change.

Concerning how Tammy's look is different from the traditional golfer, Cattelya states, "I think what it is, is obvious. A Black woman in the game (golf). And you know it's not an extension of many examples and images of Black women." In addition, Ashley builds upon this concept when she says:

Tammy is doing an awesome thing. I think it's, um, exceptional. It's different, and that's what people are attracted to. I think they see this beautiful woman doing a sport that no one really gives a lot of attention to, especially in the African American community, nobody sees that. And so I think that is very attractive and people love that, and that draws people in.

Crishell highlights the importance of Tammy's gender, race, and education in attracting Black female participants when she says:

Tammy is a triple threat, she's not only a woman, she's a minority woman who's educated. I believe any female who is able to pick up the game of golf is a minority. Add on top of that your education followed by your race, that's what makes you unique and makes people take notice.

While Tammy explains that she leverages her celebrity status to gain credibility and attract participants to her clinics, Ashley explains that even though Tammy is a celebrity, she is still relatable:

I think that draws people in because she's relatable. She's not so, um, I don't know what the word is, but umm, not so celebrity to where she's better than you, and has all this stuff, it's more of a relatable natural type connection you get with her. Just with her posting things and um, um, quotes and funny videos and just, like you know, just like a normal person to me.

These quotes demonstrate that Tammy has the ability as an insider, in that she is a fellow Black female who grew up in a similar community to her participants and is able to speak their language, to relate to these Black female participants in a way that another

instructor might not be able to. My observations during the ladies' clinics also revealed this theme. For example, even though the majority of the ladies present at the first, and all of the ladies present at the second clinic I observed were first time participants, they seemed at ease with Tammy. This was especially evident at the conclusion of the clinic when each participant asked for a personal picture with Tammy. In addition to requests for pictures, hugs were exchanged between Tammy and her participants, and the ladies thanked Tammy for teaching them the game of golf. As these findings suggest, it is important not to dismiss the role of gender, race, and life experience of the instructor in creating a safe environment to learn golf amongst participants who have historically been underrepresented in the game, in this case Black females.

This theme presents an example of a form of representational intersectionality as described by Crenshaw (1991). Namely, the manner in which Tammy represents herself is attractive to the participants of her ladies' clinics. The fact that she can relate to them as an educated, middle-class, Black woman who "comes from where we come from" seems to contribute to the safe feel of the clinics. Perhaps this would not be possible if the instructor were a male, or a White female. Furthermore, the manner in which Tammy presents herself seems to discourage other racial groups from participating in the ladies' clinics. Specifically, I observed no White or Asian females at the clinics I attended, and aside from one White female on a social media photo of the ladies clinics, they are all but nonexistent at the clinics.

**TopGolf contributes to a relaxed environment**

Another key factor that creates a safe space in these clinics is the location in which they are held. As previously described in the methodology section, TopGolf is a relatively new creation that merges the bowling alley/sports bar atmosphere with a driving range. The participants spoke of this unique environment and its role in creating a relaxed feel that reduced pressure for them. Felicia highlights how the TopGolf environment made her feel safe when she said, "And uh, two, it's just a fun environment. Um, it's not a threatening environment. I mean playing at TopGolf is kind of one of the easiest I think places that you could play in." The emphasis on TopGolf being non-threatening aligns with the first main theme concerning the different experience in golf for Black females, namely the unspoken pressure associated with being both a gender and racial minority in the sport. As Ana Jones said:

> But yeah, it's (TopGolf) just a fun place, so I think it was definitely um, had a lot to do with um, the introduction to the ladies' clinic and why it was such a dynamic impact at the beginning. Especially for people who are just learning, it takes off so much of the pressure and, you know, just the stress of learning how to play golf.

Cattelya discussed the importance of the TopGolf environment in breaking down barriers and stereotypes associated with golf when she said, "So it's great that you see all (races), it's a melting pot. And TopGolf, it's just a melting pot of people, that, and people that are made up of all of these different races and backgrounds." This was a key element of the TopGolf atmosphere that I observed during my visits to two TopGolf

facilities prior to this research. I noticed the widespread diversity present at the facility. All ages, races, genders, and income levels were present at both TopGolf facilities I observed, and it was evident that this environment created a relaxed avenue to learn and practice the game.

Several of the participants specifically spoke to the feel of the TopGolf environment and how it created a relaxed feel. For example, Cassandra described TopGolf as:

But when you're at TopGolf, like I said before, it's all about, it's all about you're going to a social. I mean you would notice some of the girls would come out in their jeans, some of them would come out like they're really going out to play golf. It was just that versatility that TopGolf had. You could come out and really work, like you're hitting golf balls, or you could go and dress up and go from hitting balls at the girls clinic to having cocktails at the bar. So I think that contributed a little bit to the atmosphere.

Also worthy of note was how the participants contrasted TopGolf to a traditional driving range. Namely, the presence of highly skilled golfers can be intimidating and create pressure for new golfers. In contrast, the TopGolf environment reduced this pressure and made learning the game more relaxed. For example, Jona said:

I think that it (TopGolf environment) was very inviting. Because it's more, it's more, it looks more like a lounge than, you know, a professional driving range. So I think that contributed a lot to the feel, the overall feel of, you know, not, you

know, um being so timid, or you know, discouraged about your surroundings.

Because it was more of a lounge.

Ashely also spoke to this when she said:

I think what helps with that, well especially being at TopGolf, it's more of a

social scene. It's not like a whole bunch of professionals working on their craft,

that I would say. I would say the atmosphere and the environment is very laid

back. It's music and food and just drinks.

In addition, Ana Jones captured the sentiments of Jona and Ashley when she described

the environment as:

Oh yeah, I mean it was fun! It's TopGolf, you know, it's music and cool lights,

and (laughter) it's such a relaxed atmosphere there. So I mean, yeah absolutely. It

was fun, that's what brought out so much of the fun in golf, you know, people

just being able to sit back relax. It wasn't, you know, um, uptight and (laughter),

you know, it wasn't a lot of people like that you'd find at a regular driving range.

You know, all these professionals, and you know, banging the balls next to you

(laughter), so it was really relaxed. So no pressure on any of the ladies, and it was

lots of fun.

Finally, when asked if the TopGolf environment contributed to the relaxed atmosphere

of the clinics, Tammy said:

So when I came up with the idea for the ladies clinics, you know number one

golf is already an intimidating sport. Um, number two a lot of women are, they

feel like they're going to be judged, or you know, "I don't want to embarrass

myself." So why not use what I have access to which is a complex of entertainment and golf (TopGolf), and use it to really dilute that whole intimidating factor. You know, it's a party! People come here, if you weren't taking lessons, you're in here on a date. You're in here having fun! Or you're here with your girlfriends having fun! So why not create that same atmosphere and at the same time getting quality and effective instruction at the same time.

The preceding quotes demonstrate the importance of a relaxed non-threatening environment in learning the game of golf, specifically amongst a group that has described their experience in golf as consisting of pressure and challenges due to their race and gender. The TopGolf environment served as a key component in creating this safe space for these ladies clinics, as it was distinctly different from the traditional golf setting, namely a driving range or golf course. This is likely due to the large amount of racial, gender, and age diversity present at TopGolf. Also, the overall feeling is that of a social gathering, with the loud current music, alcohol, food, and televisions in the facility, as opposed to a quiet and relatively non-racially diverse traditional golf setting. While the participants agreed that the TopGolf environment was key in the introduction to the game for the participants of the Ladies' Night clinics, several noted that they would feel safe wherever the clinics were held, as long as they were with Tammy. Such was the case with the clinics I was able to observe.

As previously described, since their inception, the clinics have transitioned from the TopGolf facility to a First Tee facility, which resembles a traditional driving range. At each of the clinics I observed, the ladies seemed relaxed and at ease with the

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environment. This was evident through my observations of the participants laughing, joking with one another, and smiling throughout the clinics. Thus, while the participants who were interviewed in this study spoke positively about TopGolf and its role in creating a relaxed environment, my observations also demonstrate that this relaxed environment, while likely not identical, can also be created in a traditional golf setting. Through the presence of similar others, namely Black females, and specifically Tammy at the clinics, the encouraging and supportive interactions among the participants, and the lack of internal competition, the overarching relaxed feel of the clinics was created at the First Tee facility.

This theme highlights the importance of social spaces as described by Warner et al. (2013). Specifically, the role of TopGolf in creating a relaxed atmosphere where the participants felt at ease should not go unstated. Furthermore, the utilization of a nontraditional introduction to golf for an underrepresented group speaks to the structure of the program. Namely, the participants contrasted the TopGolf atmosphere to that of a more traditional driving range. Thus, the relaxed atmosphere provided a structurally different experience for these participants that they felt they would not experience at a traditional golf facility.

**I belong, it's a sisterhood**

The participants also shared a sense of belonging to the clinics. This primarily emerged from: a) being amongst other Black women who shared a common goal of learning golf, b) lack of forced internal competition, and c) the supportive and reassuring nature of the instruction. First, the participants explicitly stated the importance of being

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around other women, in general, and Black women specifically, who wanted to learn the game of golf. For example, Crishell said, "Of course I did (felt a sense of belonging). Anytime you get a group of positive ladies together, all trying to achieve the same goal, you're going to feel a sense of belonging." Ashley also stated, "I do (feel like I belong at the clinics), I feel, because the majority of the women that she brings out are African American women, so I do feel comfortable." Cattelya spoke of the relief she felt when she first attended the clinics and saw another Black female:

> And then you show up with it and you're wondering who's looking, you're expecting someone to look at you, because of the fact that you can identify with someone. And I'll be honest, when I did see someone of my race, you know, as a minority I was like, "Oh! There's a Black person! Awesome!

In addition to being around similar others from a racial and gender standpoint, the participants also acknowledged the importance of being around those with similar golf experience, namely beginners. For example, Cattelya said, "You know, because it's like a sisterhood. You got women around you that are on the same, uh, level as you." Furthermore, Jona said:

> I think that everyone was there to learn. Everyone was, golf is foreign. I didn't feel like the only one, you know, that has never played golf before. So, we all shared a common bond of not knowing anything about golf. So that kind of like, "Well I'm not the only one who doesn't know what I'm doing." So it's, that contributed a lot to it.

In a somewhat lengthy but powerful quote, Ana Jones summarized the
overarching concept of sisterhood when she said:

I mean, I just like being around other ladies playing golf for one. That's, you

know, foremost the most important thing. I love to meet new people on the golf

course, so… I love to interact with ladies on the golf course because it's really

dominated by men. So for me, being a professional, always, you know,

practicing, playing with men, they're just everywhere. To actually be around a

group of women and we're playing golf or practicing golf, it's like a refresh, it's

a refreshing feeling because it's so rare for me. So it's really, those clinics are my

only time to be around other women playing golf. So, you know, that's definitely

a bonus for me.

She further explained:

Like I told you before, it's refreshing. You know, um I play a sport that there are

rarely any Blacks, and if there are (laughter) they are so spread out that I rarely

see them, because I don't really get to interact. So when you find one person that

you can actually sit down and talk with and just express, "Hey, this is what I've

been going through." Somebody that goes through the same things you go

through. You know, and you can, you know, talk about your experiences and

how they overcame theirs and how you are overcoming yours, and maybe what

they did that you could have done. You know just, just, it's just another outlook

on the life in golf for minorities, it's just good to have someone that you can talk

to… You know, I just felt like an outcast in golf, and this is supposed to be fun,

and I felt like an outcast, and you know, it's so unfortunate, but at the clinic, it's

amazing I'm not an outcast, you know, I'm with my peers. You know, it's other

ladies who are doing the same thing.

Given that women, in general, and Black women specifically are underrepresented in

golf (National Golf Foundation, 2010), these clinics serve as a space where similar

minded Black women who are interested in golf can converse and engage in numbers

that are difficult to find anywhere in golf. Thus, this sisterhood is a key component to the

safe space created by these clinics.

As demonstrated in the sport SOC research by Warner and Dixon (2011), internal

competition has been shown to be a detriment to SOC in sport settings among women.

This finding was also cited by several of the participants in this research. For example,

Jona described Tammy's teaching style as, "Um, she's not really hard on you. She

makes you feel comfortable, she doesn't make you feel like you're competing or that

you have to be perfect on the first try." Also, Cattelya said, "And um, you know, there's

no competition and we all want to learn." Rather than competition, the environment

created by Tammy is one of reassurance and teamwork. Cassandra spoke to this

environment when she said, "Well what she does, um, I think that what it appeals,

what's more so appealing to the minority population is the fact that she gives

reassurance." Also, Ana Jones described the role of teamwork amongst the participants

when she said:

And you know, the really cool thing about her clinics, is you know, most of them

are beginners. But you'll see the beginners, once they learn something, you know

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and maybe they'll see someone else doing it, then you see the beginner helping another beginner. You don't see that, you know, often. It's like everybody is helping everybody, so I think that's so cool. And I think that's where the bond starts to develop, because it's like, "Hey, we're out here doing the same thing, let me help you, or hey I think you did this, or.." You know, it's fun, even if it's not the exact thing that they did, it's just the fact that, hey, we're all out here helping each other. So, yeah I think it's great.

This was also evident in my observations of the clinics. After Tammy gives instruction to one participant, she continues on to another participant. This can often leave 5 to 10 minutes in between personal one-on-one instruction time between Tammy and a participant. During the time Tammy is away, the participants will ask each other to watch them hit a ball and ask for help. This develops a sense of teamwork and unity amongst the participants, as they all share the common goal of improving, and the lack of internal competition leads to the willingness of the participants to help each other succeed in the game. While the majority of the participants enjoyed the lack of forced internal competition, one participant did enjoy competing. Cassandra stated that she is a competitive person by nature, and she would often compete against the other participants internally. Her unique perspective on internal competition, while different from the rest of the participants', was interesting. Future research should further examine these types of cases within female sport settings.

In summation, Tammy explained the origin of this reassuring teaching style:

Um, well a lot of my teaching style comes from, and I guess a lot of it has to do with the fact that I deal with a lot of children (in individual lessons aside from the clinics). Um, not to compare women to children, but, you know, children are typically your beginner golfers who have never picked up a golf club. Also, most women have never picked up a golf club. So the fact of the matter is that they still are beginner golfers. So what I've taken from teaching children is, you know, not trying to intimidate them or not trying to make it seem like they couldn't do it, you know, you always want to reassure children, you know, "It's ok, you can do it! You'll do better next time." You know the positive affirmation. So when it comes to women golfers, at the same time they are still beginner golfers, you know, positive affirmation, especially with a sport like golf, it's very very important. Because it's so easy to give up on it because you can't hit the golf ball. A lot, I mean a lot of people even say, you know, "Golf is so easy, until I tried it, you know, it's really hard." Well that's because it is a really hard sport. So for me, positive affirmation and telling them, you know, "That's ok, let's pick up what you did right in that swing." You know, "Let's think about the positives about it." You know, "Let's hold our finish so that we can have confidence." You know, "Let's have confidence in our shots no matter where the ball goes." You know even if it is a bad shot, the fact of the matter is that the ball went forward. Ok. So you're going somewhere, the ball's not coming backwards so you're doing good. You know, it's just positive affirmation throughout the lesson, you know, that number one, everybody there looks just like you as a beginner golfer.

You're not the only one that may look goofy, you know. Everybody is going to

look like that. So I may even laugh with them from time to time, you know, if

they completely miss the ball, it's ok to laugh at yourself, it's funny. You know,

it's not a bad thing, so, you're a beginner. So, you know, I'll either, you know,

tell them, you know, uh, "Let's pinpoint what you did right. You can't, you

know, you're a beginner golfer, let's focus on what you did right so you can keep

at that and not focus on how goofy you look." Or, I may make it a funny thing

and, you know, laugh with them, or you know, make them laugh at themselves so

they're not so tense, or, you know, not so uptight, you know. Number one, the

reason why I'm not playing golf is because I was thinking too much. So I try to

make it a relaxed environment to where you're not thinking too much, you know.

"I'm thinking about how I look, I'm thinking about..." You know, just have fun!

Enjoy yourself and just, you know, that's making it fun for both of us. So number

one is definitely the reassuring and positive affirmation that is sustained. Um,

and then two is just being relaxed and having fun with it.

In a powerful quote that demonstrates the sense of belonging and community that

is developed at the ladies' clinics, Ashley said:

I do think that (women see themselves as a community). I think that to develop

just, um, a community amongst people doesn't have to take very long. And I

think with her two, the two and a half hour clinics we, you know, we build this

sense of, um, common ground. We're all entering this situation not really

knowing what is going to happen. We're here to just, either support Tammy,

learn from her, or whatever our reason is that got us there, and then by the end of the night we're all, I mean because when I went I didn't know anybody. I didn't know anybody, um, that she had brought out to these, to this clinic. So going into that I'm like hesitant, I don't know anybody. But we walk out of there, and I wouldn't say we're friends, we're more comfortable with each other, we're associates. If I saw them out in the city I would say, "Hey, I remember you from that (clinic)." So I think we build, it's because when you walk into something and you're hesitant and you don't know what's going on, and then once you feel that everyone has that hesitant feeling, then you all come and everyone walks out of there like they've accomplished something, you do grow a sense of community and a sense of belonging, "We belong." If I'm not a part of anything outside of my job, I know that I'm a part of Tammy's ladies clinics. It's like a sense of belonging. I feel like everybody wants that and longs for a sense to belong to something. You can say, "I'm part of Tammy's school of golf."

From the preceding quotes, it appears that the shared common goal, lack of forced internal competition, and reassurance by both Tammy and the participants' peers contribute to the sisterhood that exists in this relaxed safe environment. Specific to SOC theory, the shared common goal of building confidence in golf and the lack of forced internal competition within female sporting programs are evident in these ladies' clinics.

**Empowerment**

Empowerment was another key component that contributed to the clinics serving as a safe space. Empowerment manifested in several ways. First, Tammy's uniqueness

and exceptional skill as a Black female in a White male dominated sport was empowering to the participants. As Jona explained, "So I think she's (Tammy) contributed a lot to the overall, um, appeal to golf. Especially in minorities. She's made it more of an empowering, you know, sport." She continued by highlighting the role of the clinics when she said, "But the way she's, you know, constructing her clinics, she's making it empowering for women and she's making it look fun, and you know, something new to do." Felicia also spoke to the role of Tammy in empowering Black women. Specifically, she described how Tammy was not only a minority in golf (i.e., Black female), but also a minority in the TopGolf company:

> Um, oh that's (Tammy is appealing to minority females) the main thing. That's the main thing. Um, I'm not really sure if there's any other female pros at um the facility that she teaches at. But one, you know, I think that she is one of the only, um, women definitely, a minority. So that's (minority female golf instructor) empowering for the women as well.

Crishell also described how most golf instructional videos are made by males, and seeing the instructional videos Tammy posts on social media was empowering:

> But one thing that I always thought is that she'll post not just pictures, but also videos, of how to self-correct (in golf). And most times when you see videos or tutorials (golf-related) out there, it's primarily of men. Um, I thought it was a nice touch to see somebody of myself that I felt like I could relate to…um, out there. And be like, "Hey. If they can do it I can do it to."

While the previous quotes demonstrate the role of Tammy in empowering the participants, several of the women also mentioned how learning the game of golf was empowering, as it challenged the stereotypical notion of what a golfer looks like. Cattelya best summarized this concept when she said:

But um, but I think that she's created that sense of unity, and an array of women that are all shapes and sizes and colors, showing that we are, you know, made up of this world, and we're not going to be what this world is telling us you have to be to play the game (golf). And since it's already been known that certain races, very much so are more prominent in the sport, it felt good to be a part of that small percentage that was, you know, starting the change.

The Ladies' Night clinics help to empower the participants as they change the mindset of what a golfer is or should be. First, being taught by a fellow Black female, who has played the game and had success at a high level, is empowering, as it demonstrates that Black women can have success in a sport that is White male dominated. Second, by learning the game and building skill, the participants themselves can be a part of the small percentage of Black females who do golf. This in and of itself serves as empowerment to the participants, as they are challenging the dominant stereotypes of golf, such as who should and should not be participating in golf.

When I shared the main themes with Tammy and asked for her insights and commentary, she summed up these themes with a lengthy but thorough and encompassing statement:

I definitely think that it is, you know, especially from my end, I'm kind of like that, that, that…you know, the "it girl" when it comes to the African American, to the minority golfers. So I can definitely see the empowerment when they say they look at me that way, um, but at the clinics specifically, you know, it is a group of us (Black females). It is a group of women who look alike and can encourage each other. You know, like they said, you don't see "us" (Black females) on the golf course. So when we are on the golf course, it's like a sisterhood, like, "Yeah, we can do it, we can play. And we are pretty good! And not only that, but we're having fun and we're enjoying it." Because you don't see that anywhere. So yeah, sisterhood, absolutely. Empowerment, absolutely, because we are, we're together as a group. Not only that, but when I break off, but when I broke the groups off into teams, now we are a team, a team of sisters against another team of sisters. So, but at the end of the day, we're encouraging each other, you know, there's a competitive factor but within that small group we are encouraging one another. And so, that was one of the also one of the focus of playing games with them at the end was uh, creating a sense of um, team camaraderie, you know. You all look the same and you all are beginner golfers, now cheer each other on, root each other on, you know, these guys are teammates now. So, there's that sense of empowerment in telling each other, now you're encouraging one another. You know, and now you are you know, I'm not the one doing it anymore, y'all are giving each other positive affirmation and helping each other out and looking at each other's swings and telling each other what

y'all are doing wrong. You know, I'm just sitting back and keeping score. You know, so, that definitely empowerment is definitely a key word, um, as far as the clinics go. The sisterhood and feeling like they belong, not feeling like they are an outcast, they're not feeling like, you know, they're not supposed to be playing. Because they are! And they can!

In this quote, Tammy specifically speaks to the role of the clinics in helping the women to challenge the notion that they do not belong in golf.

Finally, in a powerful critique of mainstream depictions of Black females, Ashley describes how Tammy and the clinics empower Black females to challenge the dominant discourse and encourage themselves to pursue other avenues:

That is (seeing a Black female excel in golf is empowering), because it makes you feel like, "Oh, you know, I haven't tried this avenue yet." And it makes you feel like, "I can do something different. There's more trades I can have as an African American woman." And I think, um, even just, you know, with social media and television today, they limit those opportunities with those reality shows, and young girls only see, you know, African Americans now on TV just acting out of control, getting into fights. And so, you know, we're just seen as "basketball wives,"and so limiting what we're showing our young girls. Now what we have is when you see an African American doing something so out of the ordinary and out of our culture, and our own culture is, you know, being an athlete, but not golf, it's basketball, football, basketball. And so when you see someone doing something, it's like, "Oh wow! There's a chance!" And it kind of

draws you near to that because it's so different. And so I think that's a great thing that Tammy is doing. Because, especially in African American culture, we have so many stereotypes and so many things that we actually stick to doing, and when someone does something different it's kind of like an adrenaline, "Oh that's different, and let me try that." And it makes you want to strive to be different, because, I think in our culture we are so, um, over sticking to what we're used to that people want to branch out now.

This theme demonstrates that these ladies' clinics are helping to create an environment where empowerment can take place. By challenging the dominant ideology of who has the right to exist in golf and subsequently self-defining, these participants are engaging in a form of political intersectionality. While this challenging of the status quo might not be having an impact on the overarching golf power structure, the positive experience it is creating for these participants should not go unstated.

### Building confidence and networks

The third main theme that emerged from the data was *Building Confidence and Networks*. This is accomplished in several ways. First, these clinics help the participants to build confidence in golf by learning the game and building skill. Second, these clinics serve as an avenue for networking with other professional women in the area at the clinics, as well as utilizing the skills learned to network within their respective fields. The use of golf and the clinics for networking varied amongst the participants. For example, several such as Ana Jones and Cassandra, enjoyed merely networking with other women who enjoyed golf. Others, such as Ashley, specifically spoke to their use of

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golf as a means of networking within their respective fields. It is important to note, however, that without the confidence and understanding that is built through the clinics, the participants would previously miss out on networking opportunities through golf. This is discussed in detail next.

As described in the methodology section, the participants of these clinics are primarily middle-class Black women. Several participants work in real estate, one was a school teacher, another a nurse, one a professional golfer, and one worked for a non-profit organization. As such, many of the participants sought to learn golf in order to leverage the game for networking purposes in their respective fields. Cattelya described the role of golf in networking when she said:

I'm learning the game because it is one of those networking tools that um, is becoming necessary to know (laughter). So when you're in business, you have to pay attention, you have to have your ear to the street. And if you want a certain type of clientele, golf is expensive (laughter). So, if you want to rub shoulders with a certain clientele, you know, uh, you got to learn the game (golf). Because, that is very much so the type of people that are invested in that, is individuals that are willing to pay, you know, go to some of the finest golf courses, and the attire is very expensive, can get expensive, you know. So it's very much so one of those things that you realize that to run with a certain group, to identify with a certain group, you have to do the things that interest them, and you need to learn it (golf) (laughter). So that's what she's giving us the best. Because we're all

business women, when we come to the clinics. She's definitely marked that as business professionals, um, that have been amongst her clinics.

Ana Jones furthered this sentiment:

There's a lot of ladies that, you know, they work in the corporate world and their bosses, or you know, fellow coworkers are always like, "Hey, you guys want to go play golf?" And they're (participants of the ladies clinics) always like, "I don't know how." And so, um, coming to these clinics has brought them to the realization that hey, you know, "I can actually play golf!" I don't have to be the best to go out and have fun, you know, it's just all about connecting and it's just so much fun and you meet so many people on the golf course, and you end up networking on the golf course. So yeah, that's definitely a, um, benefit that a lot of them are looking into. I mean, there's so many business deals that can take place on the golf course, and instead of turning down all of those invitations (to play golf with coworkers), you can say, "Hey yea, of course, I'll go!"

Furthermore, Cassandra described how the participants observe Tammy leveraging golf for networking and, in turn desire to do the same:

It's important, because what a lot of people do is they'll see her (Tammy), and then they'll realize like, she can, she's one of us (minority) and she's on TV, she's meeting all these different people and then they want to get exposed (to golf) for the networking, you know. Some people play golf for, you know, leisure, stress relieving, or either it could be just a networking thing for them.

In order to leverage golf for networking purposes, the participants need to build basic golf skill and confidence in the sport. According to these participants, this is a need that the clinics meet. For example, Ashley described how prior to the clinics, she would not have felt comfortable playing golf amongst a predominantly White clientele:

Um, with my golf experience, of course I don't think I can go up against, um, anybody that obviously has been playing for a while. But I'm at least confident enough to go and be at a golf course with a majority White clientele, I guess you could say. I don't feel as uncomfortable as I would (before attending the clinics). And since my parents are part of the _____ Country Club, which is a majority White, um, establishment anyway, so if I were to go out there I would feel a lot more comfortable, and that has a lot to do with Tammy and her, um, and her clinics in general. Just she, her goal is to expose it to us, and get us comfortable, and just, "Hey, you can do this regardless of what you look like." It's not just a White male only sport, it's a sport for everybody. And so like, with her clinics and stuff like that, I will now be able to go and be in an environment like that more comfortably.

Cattelya shared these feelings when she said:

You know, that's what you're getting with the clinic, is solid fundamentals. Once you get the fundamentals, you know, you are good to go. Uh, at least you can exist and sustain a platform. You know, you can at least partake in it. You may not have the best form but at least you can keep up. So it definitely made it, it gave you the confidence that you needed. So now if I do walk on the course, and

maybe a predominantly certain race, I built that confidence through Tammy, like, "Hey, you to. You can play the game, there's no need for a divide, that, you know, society has painted that picture."

Finally, Felicia describes how the clinics allow her to go from being a bystander and an observer to an active participant:

> And so I think that it's definitely, you know, it kind of takes you just from being in the golf cart watching and cheering everybody on and being like, you know, "Hey, I actually been learning how to do this", and then you can get on the field, or the course with the guys.

What is evident is that these clinics are meeting the need these women have of learning and building confidence in the game of golf in a safe space, such that they can leverage the networking potential of the game in their respective fields. These clinics meet this need by providing a relaxed pressure-free environment where the participants can learn the game amongst their peers, and can then, in turn, take their confidence in the game and participate in traditional golf settings with co-workers, clients, and friends. This was one of the goals Tammy set forth for her clinics:

> Um, like I was saying, I started the clinics, you know, of course even to this day…..the common denominator was African American women. So, um, I just kept on promoting it until African American women were showing up. So then the concept came of, well let me start making a note of how, you know, there's not a lot of African American women that are on the golf course, especially young girls. So if I want to introduce them to the reality of it, the fact that, you

know, there's a lot of business deals and business transactions that are done on the golf course that a lot of people don't even know about, so, you know, let me introduce it to them and get them interested in the ladies clinics, and not only that, but, you know, especially teach them the fact that, you know, showing up and showing out. You don't have to turn down an invitation. So that came together as I started to figure out, ok, a lot of these women are college (educated), a lot of them are African Americans, let me let them even know more so that this is a very important game to play.

This theme represents the rewarding aspect of membership in SOC theory as described by McMillan and Chavis (1986). Specifically, participating in these ladies' clinics is rewarding in that it meets the need these women have of building confidence in golf. Furthermore, this confidence can then be used to network within their respective fields, if applicable. Also, several of the participants felt as though participation was rewarding as it provided them the opportunity to network and socialize with other like-minded sisters who were interested in golf.

## The clinics make golf appealing

The final main theme that emerged from the data was that the ladies' clinics help to make golf appealing to the participants. According to the participants, the pictures placed on social media greatly contribute to this. These pictures make golf look fun, relevant, and intriguing to both current and future participants of the clinics. Furthermore, the pictures capture the experience of the participants and serve as a positive memory of the clinics. Finally, the pictures serve as word of mouth marketing

for Tammy. This is achieved when participants of the clinics post pictures of the clinics on their own social media pages, thus attracting more potential participants to the clinics. Next, I explain this theme through quotes, my personal observations, and my analysis of the pictures on social media.

During my observations of the ladies' clinics, I took special note of how frequently the participants stopped hitting balls to take pictures of each other. Every two to three minutes at least one of the participants would stop to take a picture of a fellow participant, have their golf swing filmed, or ask Tammy to take a picture with them. The style of pictures ranged from candid and fun, to serious attempts at hitting the golf ball. The pictures appeared to be just as, if not more, important than the actual act of learning golf. Also worthy of note was the importance placed upon capturing a successful golf swing on camera. During one particular observation, a participant asked a peer to film her swing as she attempted to hit a ball. After asking if the camera holder was ready, the participant lined up her shot and made a perfect strike on the golf ball. Immediately after hitting the ball, the participant turned to her peer and asked, with excitement, "Did you get that one?" When her peer acknowledged the successful capture, the participant proclaimed that she would post the video on her social media page. It appeared as if the participants wanted to capture their experience at the clinics and advertise to their friends and family that they were learning the game of golf.

Concerning the importance of the pictures, Ana Jones provides a very detailed explanation of the purpose the pictures serve for the women at the clinics:

We want to capture all the moments, the good, the bad (laughter), and the ladies

having fun. Because that's what we really, you know, we definitely want to

capture, and you know be able to send them, because a lot of these ladies it's

their first time, so we capture tons of pictures for everyone. So we can send them

to the ladies, and they can be like, "Hey this is my first experience!" And you

know, what they're going to do is they're going to end up posting that, and so

then all of their followers will see that and they're like, "Oh wait! You learned

how? When did you learn how to, I didn't know you were playing golf!" And

then that's when you get other people finding out, just word of mouth. And then

the ladies, they get to see themselves actually, because they can't believe that

they actually hit a ball, and you'll catch one of those action shots, and they'll be

like, "Oh my gosh! I did it! You caught it! (laughter)" So it's like, or you catch

the video and you'll see that, and you know, they'll want to share that video with

all their friends, like, "Look at me hitting a golf ball!"

The pictures placed on social media portray the game of golf as fun, which to

many of the participants was a foreign concept. Jona speaks to this when she said:

Um, before the first clinic I attended I never took any interest in golf. I just

thought that, you know, it was a sport, um, that just didn't really interest me. I'm

not really into sports at all, but I thought golf was just like way off (laughter). I

think that Tammy has made this game…look fun. Like it doesn't look as serious

as we've seen on TV, and, you know, we see Golf Channel and, you're like, "Oh,

it's the golf channel." We just automatically turn (away), but the way she's, you

know, constructing her clinics, she's making it empowering for women and she's making it look fun, and you know, something new to do. And then she's kind of, you know, brought, you know, social media to it. So it's just you know, social media is kind of, when you see someone doing something and it just looks so fun, and you're like, "Oh I want to try that!" Or I see a lot of people post videos or pictures and I want to try it, so…She's done a good job with making it more appealing.

Several participants spoke to the importance of seeing fellow sisters in the pictures, and how that helped to make the game relevant and appealing to them. For example, Cattelya said:

Yeah (pictures are important), because how people operate is from a visual stance. And, what it does, it shows that all walks of life are in this (golf). Um, and it's not a certain type of individual. And, you know, that is what is very beneficial, and that's what helps grow, the uh, clinics for Tammy.

In addition, Cassandra explained how the pictures challenge the dominant ideology of who can play golf when she said:

For some women they've never played golf, so that picture lets them know that, you know, you know, golf is for anybody, anybody can pick up a club and hit the ball. All you have to do is take out the time and effort. So I think it's more so for inspiration.

Furthermore, Felicia shared this sentiment when she said, "Probably (the pictures/social media contribute to minority women coming to clinics), um, you know when you see

people that look like you and then you're like, "Ok. Well that's maybe a group that I can participate with." Finally, Jona also emphasized the importance of seeing similar others having fun as changing the mindset when she said, "So, when we see people that look like us (minority females), you know, having fun and playing golf, and you know, Tammy is kind of motivating them, it kind of makes you want to get involved."

Through my analysis of the pictures of the clinics, which consisted of a collage of both action shots and a group shot of all the participants with Tammy, placed on Tammy's social media page, I also observed these claims by the participants. The following comments made on these photos demonstrate this finding. One poster commented, "I need to come to the next women's session!" In one comment, another poster includes a list of friends and states, "We need to do this soon!" One poster claimed, "I'm coming to _____ just to learn! You inspire me!" Another poster asked if Tammy holds clinics in her city. One poster recognized several of the participants in the picture and posted, "Those are my girls!! _____ and _____....why didn't y'all tell me y'all were going!!! Both of y'all fired!" Another example of such comments is, "I should of came _____. Next time count me in."

Through my observations of the women taking pictures at the clinics, the participants' commentary on the importance of the pictures, and my analysis of the pictures and commentary on Tammy's social media page, it is clear that these pictures contribute to the specific demographic, namely Black females, attending these ladies' clinics. The pictures show Black women not only learning the game of golf, but having fun doing it. Also, they demonstrate that participation in the clinics will ensure that the

participant will not be the only Black female at the clinic, as each picture shows at least four (depending on the size of the clinic) and often more Black females as participants. Thus, the pictures contribute to the relaxed and pressure free environment that the participants spoke to, in the safe space theme, prior to the participants attending the clinics. Furthermore, several of the comments posted on the social media page demonstrate that the pictures depict empowerment, as described in the earlier main theme of the clinics serving as a safe space. For example, one poster commented, "I (heart symbol) this post! #Power." Another such post states, "Keep up the great work. #changingthegame #growthegame #BlackGirlsGolf"

Since Black females are underrepresented in golf (National Golf Foundation, 2010), pictures that depict Black females learning the game and having fun can change the mindset amongst Black females about the game. Specifically, it can help to change the stereotypes associated with the game, for example "golf is boring" and "golf is a rich White man's game." Jona provides a summation of this theme when she says:

> I think that Tammy has made this game…look fun. Like it doesn't look as serious as we've seen on TV, and, you know, we see Golf Channel and, you're like, "Oh, it's the golf channel." We just automatically turn (away), but the way she's, you know, constructing her clinics, she's making it empowering for women and she's making it look fun, and you know, something new to do.

Cattelya also speaks to changing the mindset when she says:

> She's changing or shifting the mindset. And for that, um, we can only be grateful for it, because, as a minority you felt like it could only be one person, and for us

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it was Tiger Woods. But now everyone is saying, "But why? Why just Tiger? Why not someone else?"

As demonstrated, the pictures placed on social media depicting the ladies clinics are a key factor in not only growing the clinics for Tammy, but also changing the manner in which golf is viewed amongst Black females. They are making the game look fun, appealing, relevant, and empowering and continually attract new participants to the ladies clinics. This demonstrates an example of representational intersectionality. Specifically, the pictures of the clinics represent an underrepresented group in golf participating and enjoying the game. Thus, it challenges the dominant portrayals of golf, in which predominantly Whites and males are depicted as golfers (Apostolis & Giles, 2011), and allows the participants to self-represent to their family and friends. Also, these pictures represent a form of shared history as described in McMillan and Chavis's (1986) conception of SOC. The pictures placed on social media serve as a tangible item that the participants can share with one another and remain connected. The pictures serve as a lasting memory for the participants, which also helps to attract new participants to the clinics.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the previous section, I discussed the findings of the data analysis and provided examples from the interviews, observations, and analysis of the social media pictures that bolster these findings. In this section, I discuss the findings in relation to the two research questions, as well as how they converge and diverge from the previously reviewed literature and theories in Chapter II. Also, I discuss practical implications of the findings. Finally, I discuss the limitations of the study, as well as examine future research directions that can be built from this study.

The first research question asked, "How do gender, race, and social class interact in the participants' experience in these clinics?" The findings revealed many insights into this specific research question. First, it is important to note that the majority of the participants earn an income in the $50-75,000 range. Also, social class was not explicitly mentioned by the participants to be a factor in their experience. This could potentially be due to the participants taking their social class status for granted. As mostly middle-class professional women, it is possible that they do not acknowledge the role of their social class in their experience in golf. Had the participants come from a lower class, there is the possibility that this dimension would have been more salient. Furthermore, as I also earn a middle-class annual income, I too could have taken this component of intersectionality for granted during both the data collection and analysis. As such, while

it does not appear as though social class affects the participants' experience in a negative way, it is still important to discuss this dimension of intersectionality.

First, it should be noted that the cost of the ladies' clinics is relatively inexpensive in the realm of golf instruction. At $20 for a two hour clinic, this is a relatively cost-effective method of learning golf, which is needed in minority communities (Bruening et al, 2008; Wilbur et al., 2003). Considering my one hour individual lesson with Tammy cost $65, and many other instructors charge more per hour, the cost of golf lessons can be a deterrent to those with minimal discretionary income. Furthermore, the fact that the majority of the participants of the ladies' clinics are professional women speaks to the nature of the clientele that feels as though learning golf would be beneficial. As mentioned by several of the participants, many of the ladies who attend the clinics are learning the game for networking purposes within their respective fields. Thus, it appears that even within the Black female community, golf is a middle to upper-class investment made by professional women, and it is possible that those with less household income either cannot afford to invest in these clinics or do not see the value of learning golf. This is a finding that is consistent with Bruening (2004b), in which the participants who participated in non-traditional Black sports came from middle-class families.

The "Black lady" stereotype presents another example of how social class manifests in these participants experiences at the ladies' clinics. According to Lubiano (1992),a Black lady, who is often middle-class and college educated, obtains a level of achievement that stands as a strange and stark contrast to the stereotypes commonly

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associated with Black females (e.g., matriarch, Jezebel, hoochie mama, etc.). While many would consider this to be a positive association, Hill-Collins (2000) states that this stereotype can be just as damaging as the more commonly associated negative stereotypes of Black women. For example, Hill-Collins (2000) states that many White men feel as though these Black ladies, whose credentials are questioned, are taking jobs away from them in a form of reverse discrimination. Furthermore, this stereotype assumes that these hard working middle class Black women are consumed by their work and have no time for their families. While the participants of this study did not refer to themselves in this manner, due to this stereotype, the fact that the majority of the attendees of the ladies' clinics are middle-class, college educated, professional women could lead to the limited number of lower-class Black women from participating in the clinics. However, Tammy, while acknowledging her class status and college education, presents herself in an urban manner when conducting her clinics and portraying herself on social media. By advertising her tattoos and clothing style, which consists of the latest in athletic footwear by Nike (e.g., Jordan's, LeBron's, etc.), she still presents herself as she described as "urban". As such, it appears as though she is attempting to capitalize on both her middle-class educated status, while still staying connected with others in her community who do not share this same level of status. Whether consciously or subconsciously, she is appearing to challenge the Black lady stereotype and self-define as one who has achieved much while still "keeping it real."

Concerning the intersections of race and gender, the participants' experiences share similarities with those of Black females in other sport settings. The theme *Do we*

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*Belong?* best captures this. For example, mirroring the participants' responses in Corbett and Johnson (2000), who spoke to the notion of stereotypes contributing to sports that are appropriate for Blacks, which subsequently affect participation patterns, several of the participants spoke to the overarching stigma and stereotypes surrounding the game of golf, and how these contribute to a different and more pressured experience for Black females in the game. The participants in this study also acknowledged that the game is dominated specifically by males, and that it is rare to see women of color in golf. Not only are Black females underrepresented in golf, but, when they do participate, they have to fight for inclusion and prove that they have the right to participate. This was also evident in other sport settings in Bruening et al. (2005).

The participants in Bruening (2004b) described the lack of Black female role models in non-traditional Black sports during their youth. As such, they explained that, in order for more Black females to be interested in these sports, there is a need for more Black female role models. Tammy also recognized this need, as she described herself as, "that 'it girl' when it comes to the African American to the minority golfers," and how without the different opportunities she was afforded through golf growing up, she would be in the same position as her clients, namely unaware of the positive aspects associated with golf. Thus, she leveraged her expertise in the game and her celebrity status within her community to serve as such a role model. Furthermore, as described in Carter (2008), McDowell and Cunningham (2009), and McNabb et al., (1997), the importance of a relatable instructor for these ladies' clinic participants should not go unnoticed. According to the participants of this research, her competence and valuing of their

culture, as well as being a member of the community, contribute to the safe, relaxed, and non-intimidating environment of the ladies' clinics.

This need for Black female role models in non-traditional Black sports speaks to the overarching stigma that there are sports where Blacks belong and do not belong. Furthermore, there are sports, such as golf, where gender and race interact in a manner that Black females are even further discouraged from participation. This is a theme that has existed since the inception of golf on American soil, as well as in other sport settings. Currently, leading golf commentators such as *Golf Digest* portray the game as appropriate for White heterosexual males, and all but exclude women of color from their publications (Apostolis & Giles, 2011). Also, powerful and influential private country clubs, such as Shoal Creek and Augusta National, have a history of denying memberships to females and minorities (Daddario & Wigley, 2006). Furthermore, this comes not only from White golfing establishments, but also from within the Black golfing community (Johnson, 2010; Sinnette, 1998). As described by Crishell and Cattelya, their family members either discredited their interest in, or discouraged participation in golf. This overarching promotion of golf as a domain for Whites, in general, and White males specifically presents an example of the previously described representational and intersectionality. Namely, the mainstream promotion of golf all but excludes Black females, and furthermore, critical commentary concerning this exclusion is all but non-existent. This lack of attention to Black females' specific experiences in golf demonstrates that the power holders in golf, who both promote the game and investigate strategies for growing it, devalue and ignore this specific demographic in the

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game. The social media images of the clinics, commentary on the pictures, and the ladies' clinics themselves also present an example of representational intersectionality. Namely, they provide a counter discourse to the dominant portrayal of golf and golfers. Thus, there is a need for supportive family members in the introduction to and support of Black females' in golf (Bruening et al., 2008; Carter & Hart, 2010; Carter & Hawkins, 2011).

Concerning the need for safe spaces in golf, Philipp (1999) demonstrated that middle-class Blacks feel the least comfortable in the country club setting, which is subsequently commonly associated with golf. This is likely due to the historical and continued explicit and implicit exclusion of Blacks, in general, and Black females specifically. This exclusion is largely structural in nature. In many ways, the manner in which golf is made accessible excludes and eliminates Black females from participation. Since the Black females are more likely to live in poverty than their White counterparts, the high cost associated with golf can present a structural barrier. For example, green fees, range balls, and personal instruction are all costs associated with both learning and playing the game of golf. Furthermore, the high cost of golf equipment presents another structural barrier. Also, the upper-class culture associated with golf presents another barrier. The game of golf has long been portrayed as a sport that is appropriate for wealthy White heterosexuals (Apostolis & Giles, 2011). This culture is not only portrayed through golf media, but also through the existence of private country clubs. Private country clubs largely operate on an invitation only basis, in which new members are only allowed to join after recommendation by pre-existing members. This leads to

the continued exclusion of women of color in prestigious country club settings. The overarching power holders in golf, such as the PGA, USGA, have done little to challenge this exclusion aside from provide lip service to the issue. It is only when social pressure from activist groups and media that highly influential golf courses are pressured into diversifying their membership. As such, one must question whether or not these power holders truly desire to change the game to be more inclusive of minority females.

In addition to the previously mentioned structural exclusion of Black females in golf, it is important to examine avenues where the power holders in golf have attempted to make the game more inclusive to racial minorities. The First Tee program initially began as a program for increasing minority involvement in golf. However, as the program grew and funding from external sources increased, the program depoliticized its initial goals, and now the main goal is to teach life lessons through golf. This is important to take note of, as the first version of the First Tee was highly influential in providing many Black youth with the means necessary to develop high level golf skills. Several of these first version First Tee participants are now pursuing professional golf careers with the hopes to make it on both the PGA and LPGA Tours. The changing of the goals of the First Tee presents a structural issue of power. One must question if the power holders in golf truly desire to make the game more inclusive by providing more avenues and opportunities for golf participation amongst minorities. As the first version of the First Tee had great success in achieving this, the sudden change in goals leads one to believe that this goal was not truly a priority. Even though the goals for the First Tee have changed, their portrayal and advertisements of the program still include many

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images of minority youth. Thus, it appears as though lip service is being paid to the issue, and the images and portrayals of minority involvement in the program are to appease the public into believing that the program is still committed to diversifying the golfing pubic.

As previously demonstrated, these ladies' clinics serve as safe spaces for the Black female participants. Safe spaces have a long history in the Black female community. As described by Hill-Collins (2000), safe spaces contribute to Black women's empowerment through self-definition, and help them, "resist the dominant ideology promulgated not only outside Black civil society but within African American institutions" (p.101). These clinics serve to empower the participants as well as provide them with a space to self-define as Black female golfers in an institution that all but excludes them.

In addition to challenging the status quo and defining themselves as golfers, Black women attending these clinics also empower one another through, as they described, the sisterhood. Hill-Collins (2000) describes this when she says, "African-American women as sisters and friends affirm one another's humanity, specialness, and right to exist" (p.102). Furthermore, as was demonstrated in Carter-Francique et al. (2011) in a different sport setting, the participants of these clinics spoke to the ability to be relaxed and transparent with their fellow sisters at the clinics. As such, the role of these clinics in empowering Black women in golf by building confidence in the game and changing the mindset of who can exist as a golfer cannot be understated. Through the use of social media and pictures depicting Black women having fun and learning the

game of golf, as well as the actual experience of attending the ladies' clinics, Tammy is growing the game of golf among a demographic that has historically been excluded in the game. In addition, she creating an environment where these participants can develop confidence that they can exist in an institution that has historically marginalized them on account of both their gender and race. This is a strong example of representational intersectionality, in which these clinics and the pictures placed on social media serve as counter narratives to the dominant discourse and portrayal of golf.

Similar to the program Black Girls RUN!, these ladies' clinics serve as a safe space where Black females can learn how to play golf in a non-intimidating and non-threatening environment. Thus, it is apparent that in non-traditional Black sports, there is great utility for programs where like-minded sisters can come together and support one another, as this support and encouragement might not be available in mainstream instruction or settings associated with instruction in these sports. This can help to minimize the intimidation factor, and ultimately lead to increased participation in these sports amongst Black females. Thus, as is evident in the existence of social programs that address the unique needs of women of color (Crenshaw, 1991), these ladies' clinics are an example in the sporting realm of the conceptualization of structural intersectionality.

It is important to note, however, that even though skill and confidence is developed through these clinics in golf, negative experiences still do occur for Black females in the game. Ana Jones, who is the participant with the most golfing experience and confidence aside from Tammy, detailed the negative experiences she encounters

when participating in tournaments as a professional golfer. Thus, even though she has great skill and confidence in the game, she still experiences the negativity associated with the intersection of being both a racial and gender minority in golf. As such, she uses the safe space of the clinics to prepare her fellow participants for such potential negative experiences in golf and to relax amongst her peers.

In sum, the intersections of race and gender manifest for the participants of the clinics in a myriad of ways. First, there are challenges associated with being both Black and female in golf, which was captured by the theme *Do We Belong?* This is largely due to the overarching stigmas and stereotypes associated with the game, as well as the historical and current power structures that discredit and discourage Black female involvement in golf. Second, these ladies' clinics serve as a safe space for these Black females to not only learn and build confidence in golf, but also to be amongst sisters who have a common goal of learning the game. Third, these clinics serve to empower the participants in the game and self-define their worth and existence in golf. Finally, these clinics allow for dialogue amongst the participants concerning their experiences in the game, which can serve as experiential knowledge that can prepare them for potential negative experiences in golf.

It is also important to examine if these clinics are challenging the power structures of golf, which have historically and currently exclude women of color. The argument could be made that these clinics are actually assisting the mainstream golf realm in excluding minority females by creating a niche environment that is predominantly comprised of women of color. Furthermore, it could be argued that these

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clinics are taking potential women of color away from participation in current

introductory programs, such as *Get Golf Ready*, from the PGA. While there may be

merit to these stances, it is important to emphasize the power of safe spaces and self-

definition that are present at these ladies' clinics. The Black community, specifically, has

a history of creating such spaces out of necessity. The existence of these types of

programs speaks to the failure of the power holders in golf in providing spaces and

programs where women of color feel welcomed, safe, and appreciated. As such, it would

be faulty to devalue or deemphasize the importance of these ladies' clinics. Should the

power holders in golf truly seek to increase minority female involvement in golf, as they

claim, they should leverage influential members of the community, such as Tammy, who

are already having an impact on this demographic in the game.

The second research question asked, "Does as sense of community among these

Black female participants exist? If so, what contributes to this?" From my observations

of the clinics, analysis of the social media pictures and commentary, and the interviews

each element of SOC, as described by McMillan and Chavis (1986) does exist, albeit

some more so than others. Recall that these authors describe four components of SOC: a)

membership entails two groups of people, namely those that belong and those that do not

belong; b) for members to be attracted to the group, they must be able to influence the

group in some way; c) membership must be rewarding in some sense, such as meet some

need; d) members feel connected through shared history. Each of these components and

how the findings relate are described next.

The first component of SOC states that there are those who belong to the group and those who do not belong. While Tammy stated that her initial and current concept for the ladies' clinics did not specify only Black females, rather specifically females, through the previously discussed findings, the overwhelming majority of the participants are Black females. Even when there are other females present at the clinics, as was the case at the first clinic I observed, the females were still racial minorities. For example, at the first clinic I attended, I observed two Hispanic women, who were mother and daughter. At the second clinic, all of the participants were Black females.

Even though Tammy is an entrepreneur who desires to grow her brand, she does emphasize these clinics as ladies' clinics. Thus, there is a group who does belong, namely minority females, and a group who does not belong, namely males. Furthermore, the clinics are designed to help introduce minority females to golf, as they are underrepresented in golf relative to White females. Finally, once Tammy realized that her predominant participants were Black females, she embraced her role as the "it girl" in the Black community and felt the need to introduce golf to this demographic through the clinics.

It should also be noted that while the clinics do not explicitly exclude other racial groups, for example White and Asian females, from participation, the question must be asked if the social media pictures, which depict predominantly minority women, in general, and Black women specifically, contribute to the relative non-existence of White and Asian female participants. Ana Jones felt as though Tammy's race is potentially discouraging more women from participating in the ladies' clinics. In one scenario, the

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fact that Tammy is a fellow Black female attracts Black female participants because she is relatable to them and makes them feel comfortable. Conversely, Tammy's race is potentially discouraging other females of other races from participating in the clinics. This presents an example of representational intersectionality. Namely, Tammy's representation of herself, as a Black female, and the ladies' clinics, in which pictures placed on social media depict predominantly Black women, can both attract fellow Black females to the group, while at the same time discouraging other racial groups from participating. As the focus of this study was on the experiences of Black females who attend the clinics, and other racial groups were not interviewed, this question cannot be accurately addressed. In sum, there is a group that belongs, namely minority females and specifically Black females. The group that does not belong at the clinics is males, in general. Finally, for reasons unknown, some racial groups do not attend the clinics, such as White and Asian females.

The second component of SOC states that members need to be able to influence the group in some way in order to be attracted to the group, and that the group's influence must be felt by its members. While only two participants specifically spoke to their role in influencing the group, the data revealed examples where participants did in fact influence the group in tangible ways. For example, during my observations I witnessed the ladies influencing their peers frequently throughout the clinics. This came primarily through encouragement and assistance in instruction. As previously mentioned, while Tammy instructs other participants, the women often stop hitting their own golf balls to assist their peers by providing tips and critiquing their golf swings.

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This assistance and teamwork ensured that even when Tammy was not available for direct one on one instruction, the participants could still receive help on their technique. During my second and most impactful observation, which Tammy themed a Mother's Day clinic, three mother-daughter pairs were present. Tammy paired the mothers and daughters together and encouraged them to teach and encourage each other during the clinic. Throughout the clinic, I observed mothers and daughters laughing, high-fiving, and praising one another. Even though most were beginners, these ladies paid specific attention to the instruction Tammy gave, and were able to teach the basics of the golf swing to each other. Thus, as observed by both Tammy and myself, while not explicitly mentioned by the majority of the participants, the women attending the ladies' clinics do influence the group by assisting their fellow golfers when Tammy is unavailable.

Concerning the group's influence being felt by its members, the theme of *I belong, it's a sisterhood* is the best demonstration of this concept. As discussed in detail in the findings section, the participants felt as though they belonged at the clinics due to the safe relaxed atmosphere, as well as the existence of fellow Black females. Since Black female golfers are rare in most traditional golf settings, these clinics serve as a space where the group's influence is felt by its members, particularly in that it is a safe space to learn the game.

The third component of SOC states that membership to the group must be rewarding and meet some need that members have. The theme *Building confidence and networks* demonstrates this concept. The majority of the participants shared a common goal of wanting to learn and build confidence in golf. This was primarily due to the

participants acknowledging the utility of golf for networking purposes in their respective fields. The clinics met this need and served as a space where like-minded sisters can come together, socialize, and network around the sport of golf. As best described by Ana Jones, this is a rare experience outside of these clinics for Black females.

The fourth concept of SOC states that members feel connected through shared history. Within these ladies' clinics, the shared history manifests through the pictures of the ladies' clinics placed on social media. These powerful images serve as reminders of the experience that the women had at the clinic, and attract new women to future clinics. The pictures posted on social media also capture many of the participants' first experience hitting a golf ball. Since the game is particularly challenging to learn, the pictures and videos of successful swings capture the positive experience for the participants, who in turn post them to their own social media pages and share them with their followers.

My analysis of the comments made on the social media pages also captured this theme. The following quotes represent the comments posted on the social media page: "Had a lovely evening and I got a few good swings in. Thanks Tammy." "I so enjoyed myself thank you!!!" "Thanks so much! I had a blast!" "You were awesome! I learned quite a bit today and had a blast! Come back soon! Thank you so much!" "Had an awesome time. Beautiful ladies taking on the golf game!" The combination of the pictures depicting Black females enjoying themselves at the clinics and the affirmation by the comments posted on the social media pages creates a lasting memory for each clinic. By capturing the positive experiences at the clinics through the pictures, the

participants have a tangible object that serves as a reminder of the fun and empowerment they experienced while attending the ladies clinics.

Having demonstrated examples of each of the components of SOC, as described by McMillan and Chavis (1986), it is important to provide an additional analysis of these clinics and their relation to SOC. First, as previously described, the ladies' clinics have a limited number of available spots for participants, namely eight to 10 per clinic. Given the growing interest in these clinics by Black females in the surrounding areas, these available spots often fill quickly. This, in conjunction with the nature of many of these participants' work schedules, does not lend itself to participants who can attend multiple clinics on consecutive weekends. Also, since the start of this year's clinics, Tammy has not offered clinics every week. Furthermore, there was a large gap between the original ladies' clinics at the TopGolf facility and the clinics at the First Tee facility. During this break, Tammy opened her own tax return branch. Due to the time constraints of tax season, she did not hold any ladies clinics during this time. As such, the SOC could potentially be stronger with more consistent offerings of the clinics, such that women could attend more frequently and potentially build more friendships and networks with their fellow participants.

To address this issue, Tammy described the need for an extra helper, so that she can offer more slots for the clinics. Ana Jones has served in this capacity, albeit to a limited extent, in the clinics to this point. While she identified herself as another mentor to the ladies at the clinics and Tammy identified her as a helper, it was interesting to note that Tammy did not formally introduce Ana Jones at the start of either of the clinics I

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observed. Also, starting in July, Ana Jones will be out of state competing on mini-tours and pursuing her own professional golf career. Tammy's lack of a consistent helper speaks to the larger challenge of finding a Black female golf instructor who has credibility and status within the Black community, who is also invested in growing the game amongst this demographic. A potential future strategy that Tammy could employ would be to leverage the surrounding universities, in particular HBCUs, to identify fellow Black female golfers who might be interested in and willing to assist her in the ladies' clinics.

In sum, each component of SOC, as described by McMillan and Chavis (1986) is observed by these ladies' clinics. A sense of belonging, which was described as a sisterhood, the participants influence the group by helping their fellow sisters with their golf technique, the participants' needs are met through the clinics, and the pictures placed on social media serve as permanent reminders of the positive experience of the clinics, all contribute to the SOC for the participants of the ladies' clinics.

In addition to the aforementioned specific examples of SOC, research concerning the importance of social networks in Black females' participation in exercise and recreation was also reviewed in Chapter II (Banks-Wallace and Conn, 2002; Dunn, 2008; Kirchhoff et al., 2008; Nies et al., 1999; Richter et al., 2002; Wilbur et al., 2003). The women in these examples described the importance of having other women to participate with, supportive families, and social networks. In this study, the participants reiterated these findings in that they explained the importance of having other sisters at the clinics, which served to make the environment relaxed and comfortable. Also, the

importance of supportive family members was observed during my visits to the clinics. Finally, the ladies clinics and the pictures posted on social media served to contribute to a SOC via both in person and electronic social networks.

There are also examples of convergence in the findings of this study and the SOC literature in the sporting context. For example, as in Lyons (2003), Stevens (2000), and Warner and Dixon (2011) the participants in this study spoke to their experiences in sport as females. Of specific importance was the emphasis on lack of internal competition amongst the participants of the ladies' clinics. Recall that Warner and Dixon (2011) discovered that internal competition was a detriment to SOC amongst female athletes. Such was the case in the participants' of this research experience as well. Furthermore, Stevens (2000) examined how an overt focus on competition led to the diminishing of SOC in Canadian women's hockey. In the current research, my interviews and observations led me to conclude that, if Tammy were to change her teaching strategy and focus her clinics solely on internal competition among the participants, SOC would be diminished. Furthermore, the participants specifically described the relaxed environment as a contributor to the safe non-threatening feel of the clinics.

Also worthy of note is the similarity of Tammy's rationale for bringing the game of golf to the Black female community to the individuals described in Glover and Bates (2006). Both Tammy and the founders of *The First String* described the role of nostalgia in their rationale for creating their respective sporting programs. Namely, their valuable experiences and the positive aspects associated with participation in their respective

sports led to their desire to attempt to give those same attributes to the participants of their programs.

Finally, the findings of the current study provide examples of the factors described the sport-specific SOC scale developed by Warner et al. (2013). Recall that the authors developed six reliable factors: administrative consideration, common interest, competition, equity of administrative decisions, leadership opportunities, and social spaces. Concerning "administrative consideration," which is the expression of care and intentionality by administrators, both Tammy and her participants highlighted Tammy's authenticity in her desire to bring golf to the Black female community. The authenticity and genuine nature of Tammy proved to be a key component in the rapid growth of her clinics amongst the Black female population.

The factor "common interest" was evident in the participants' shared interest in learning the game of golf. While the participants cited various reasons for attending the clinics, such as networking or building confidence in golf, the common interest of learning the game was evident. Even though it is not guaranteed that lasting friendships among participants of the ladies clinics will be created, which can be due to a variety of reasons the most evident being the inability for the same women to attend multiple consecutive clinics, there are instances where participants do invite their friends to attend future clinics. Furthermore, I did observe several of the ladies conversing and exchanging contact information during the first clinic. Thus, while it may not happen at every clinic, it is apparent that networking does take place at the clinics. I discussed the "Competition" factor in detail in Chapter IV, but a brief summary is warranted. First, as

in other sport-specific SOC research (Warner & Dixon, 2011), the participants in this study emphasized the lack of forced competition within the ladies' clinics. This contributed to a relaxed and non-intimidating environment. Thus, this finding supports previous research and the role of internal competition in diminishing SOC among female sporting participants.

"Equity of administrative decisions" is achieved when all community members are treated equally. While the interview data did not reveal specific examples of this factor, during my observations I did not observe participants who felt as though Tammy was spending more time with other participants, or that her distribution of instruction was unfair. In fact, the overwhelming gratitude from the participants towards Tammy at the conclusion of both clinics I observed, as well as the commentary on social media, demonstrated that the participants enjoyed their experience and were satisfied with the instruction. "Leadership opportunities" refer to the formal and informal opportunities for community members to guide other members. I observed numerous examples of this when the participants would assist each other in critiquing swing technique or providing insight into what could be improved. These occurred both formally and informally. For example, while Tammy was instructing other participants, the ladies would ask the individual closest to them to watch them hit a ball and provide feedback. Also, Tammy directly instructed the mothers and daughters at the second clinic to help by instructing each other after she provided the initial instruction. Thus, both formal and informal leadership opportunities were present at the ladies' clinics.

Finally, "social spaces" refer to the common area or facility in which participants can interact with one another. As in Swyers (2005), who described the role of social spaces, namely Wrigley field, in creating a SOC among sporting consumers, the physical construction of the TopGolf facility played a similar role in the experiences of the participants of the ladies' clinics. While not an exact comparison to the nostalgia and community created in Swyers (2005), it is important to note the impact of a physical structure in creating a relaxed and non-intimidating environment for beginner golfers, and its subsequent effect on creating an atmosphere where social interaction is encouraged. For example, the participants in this study specifically noted the social and relaxed aspects of TopGolf and how they contributed to the non-intimidating environment. Furthermore, this environment could contribute to the participants' interactions with one another, as the atmosphere seems to lend to social interaction.

An important finding from this study that does not exist in Warner et al.'s (2013) SOC scale is the role of race in the participants' experience of SOC in sport settings. It was evident through the interviews that the relatable nature of Tammy, which was largely due to her race and the fact that she "came from where the participants came from," was influential in the specific demographic attending the ladies' clinics, namely Black females. Furthermore, the influence of similar others, namely other Black females, as participants in the clinics contributed to a relaxed social environment for the participants. As such, one must question if the SOC experienced by the participants of the ladies' clinics would exist if the demographics of the participants were more diverse. For example, if instead of 8 to 10 Black female participants at the clinics there were only

four, with the remaining participants being of other races, would the sisterhood described by the participants still exist? While it could be argued that the overarching minority status of females in golf could lead to a similar bond amongst the participants, given the history of oppression against Black females in society in general and in golf specifically, the importance of having fellow Black females as the majority of the participants at the clinics should not go unstated.

In sum, the findings provided many examples of convergence with previous literature in both the experiences of Black females in sport, as well as SOC in general and sport specifically. Concerning intersectionality, the data suggests that, for these participants, being both Black and female in golf is challenging, which is largely due to overarching power structures that dictate who has the right to exist in the game. As such, the need for safe spaces within the golf realm is evident, and it appears that these ladies' clinics serve as such spaces for Black females to learn the game in a relaxed non-threatening environment. Furthermore, tenets of McMillan and Chavis' (1986) conception of SOC as well as Warner et al.'s (2013) SOC scale are evident in the findings. In my view, the main challenge for creating a stronger SOC among the participants of the ladies' clinics is providing more opportunities for the ladies to attend clinics. While there is only one Tammy, another similar Black female golf instructor could certainly help to continue to grow these clinics and provide more opportunities for continued participation for the attendees.

It is also important to discuss how SOC differs from the concept of safe spaces. The main difference between the two is that safe spaces are a specific description of

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spaces where marginalized and oppressed groups come together to empower one another and resist the negative dominant discourse concerning them (Hill-Collins, 2000). SOC does not specifically discuss race within the theory. Furthermore, SOC does not emphasize empowerment or self-definition amongst community members. Also, it should be emphasized that while all elements of SOC were evident in these participants' experience at the clinics, it is not certain whether the majority of the participants of the ladies' clinics experience SOC. The structure of the clinics, in which it is difficult for participants to attend multiple consecutive clinics, often leads to a new group of participants at each clinic. As such, one must question whether true SOC is being experienced by the participants of the ladies' clinics.

### Practical implications

First and foremost, the findings demonstrate the powerful influence of safe spaces within the Black female experience in golf. Through a combination of strategies, Tammy's clinics help to serve as a safe space for the participants of this study. This is an important implication for golf organizations who state that they wish to increase female and minority participation in the game of golf. These organizations should consider seeking to utilize the contributing factors that create this safe space, namely a golf instructor that is relatable, a nontraditional/nonthreatening environment, such as TopGolf, and an emphasis on sisterhood and empowerment in the game. If golf's large governing bodies are serious about reaching this demographic, serious consideration needs to be given to the recruitment and leveraging of Black female golf instructors, and the utilization of social media as a means of depicting, on a large scale, this demographic

engaging in and enjoying the game of golf. Several of the participants, including Tammy, foresee a large growth for these clinics to the national level. Whether Tammy and her clinics are specifically leveraged, or similar clinics are created, the power of these findings should not go without further examination by the power holders in golf.

The findings also have practical implications for practitioners across a variety of sporting settings who seek to engage underrepresented groups. For example, when a particular demographic is disinterested in or devalues a specific sport, it would be beneficial to leverage celebrities who do participate in the sport, as these role models and relatable individuals can potentially serve to change the mindset around the sport. Furthermore, it would likely be advantageous to change the manner in which the sport is introduced to the underrepresented population, as was the case with TopGolf in this study. By utilizing a fun, relaxed, and nontraditional environment, the introduction to the sport can potentially be less intimidating and more appealing.

Finally, the findings demonstrate the importance of community among Black females in sport. Specifically, the lack of internal competition and use of teamwork and reassurance within the ladies' clinics should be applied across similar sport settings. For organizations whose mission is to engage and retain female participation in physical activity, it is important to understand what contributes to a sense of belonging and community amongst various participants. For the Black females in this study, the relaxed, nonthreatening, and noncompetitive environment served an important role. As such, practitioners who engage this demographic should consider applying these findings to their specific setting.

## Limitations

In this section, I discuss the limitations of this study. First, while rich descriptive data was collected from the sample, the small sample size potentially limited additional insights from being gained. Due to the reliance on the instructor to identify and gain access to participants, this is a limitation that was unavoidable. As previously stated, all but one of the participants identified by Tammy participated in the study, and the findings that emerged from the data reached a point of saturation. While there were slight variations in each participant's interview, rich descriptive representative quotes emerged to support the main themes. However, I recommend that researchers conducting future studies on a similar topic seek to obtain as large a sample as is needed to reach a point of saturation within their study. Also, only one of the participants interviewed aside from Tammy attended the clinics I observed. While each participant interviewed stated that they intend to continue participating in the clinics, family and work conflicts did not allow for them to attend the clinics I was able to observe. As such, I was unable to witness their claims in person through observing their participation in the clinics.

In addition to the small sample size, the limited number of observations and clinics attended was a limitation to the study. While my initial goal was to attend and observe as many clinics as possible, Tammy only held two clinics during the time frame I collected data. An increased number of observations would likely have served to provide additional support for the findings. However, Yin (2009) explains that since a case study, "does not depend solely on ethnographic and participant-observation data," the study need not take a long time to complete (p.15). To this point, I was able to

triangulate several data sources, namely interviews, observations and field notes, and social media pictures, as well as commentary on said pictures, to triangulate the data and provide support for the findings, which can make up for the lack of time spent specifically observing. Since the scheduling of the clinics was outside of my control as the researcher, I was only able to attend as many clinics as were offered. As such, future researchers studying a similar topic should seek to spend as much time in the field as possible.

Also, I was not able to observe clinics held at the TopGolf facility. Due to the rapid growth of her clientele and her subsequent need for a larger practice facility, Tammy transitioned her clinics to a First Tee facility, which includes more driving range space, putting and chipping greens, and nine golf holes. While I was not able to observe the clinics in the TopGolf environment, I was able to observe tangible examples of the findings that did not concern the TopGolf environment. Furthermore, there was an overwhelming consensus amongst the participants interviewed concerning the impact of the TopGolf environment in creating a relaxed atmosphere for the original clinics.

Another possible limitation is that the study only sought the insights of Black females from professional backgrounds. As mentioned by several of the participants, the game of golf is highly male-dominated. As such, the insights and experiences of females from other racial and socioeconomic backgrounds are warranted. While this study provided a rationale for specifically seeking the insights of Black females, future researchers should seek to include other female groups. In addition, the lack of investigation into the insights of females who attended a ladies' clinic but decided not to

return also limited the scope of the study. Their rationale for not continuing participation could have added an additional important layer of data. Furthermore, this study only examined one case, namely Tammy's clinics and their participants. A more thorough examination might seek to study another similar golf program, in order to compare and contrast the experiences of the participants.

In conclusion, while there are limitations to this study, it provides an important examination of a program that is creating an interest in and sisterhood for Black females in the game of golf. This study can serve as a building block into future works on the experiences of racial minority females in golf, as well as provide practical strategies to golf organizations seeking to increase participation amongst women and minorities. Next, I discuss future research directions that can build from this study.

**Future research directions**

The previously discussed findings lend themselves to several future research avenues. First, I recommend that scholars continue to investigate SOC amongst underrepresented groups in sport. This is a topic that has both theoretical and practical applications, as the benefits of SOC have been demonstrated across a variety of sporting settings. Second, as demonstrated in Warner and Dixon (2011), several of the participants specifically mentioned the lack of internal competition in the ladies' clinics, and how this contributed to a relaxed environment. This is a topic that deserves further investigation, as it has the potential to benefit both formal, such as girls and women's organized sports, as well as informal sporting bodies, such as neighborhood group fitness clubs. The emphasis on a lack of internal competition within the team or

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sisterhood could lead to more positive sporting experiences for females, and help to increase and sustain female participation in athletics and recreation.

As discussed in the findings section, the role of the atmosphere of the sporting setting should also be investigated. As previously discussed, the interview participants spoke highly of the atmosphere created by the TopGolf facility. In their view, this relaxed environment was influential in attracting ladies to attend the clinics as well as reducing the intimidation factor associated with learning golf. Several specifically contrasted the TopGolf setting with a traditional driving range. However, the participants I observed at the traditional driving range facility appeared to be relaxed as well. Thus, future research should examine the effect of a non-traditional facility, as well as other factors, compared to a traditional facility in the introduction of golf, as it was evident that both were able to create a relaxed environment for the participants of this study.

In addition to the previously mentioned directions for future research, quantitative and mixed methods studies could seek to describe, in larger quantities, the importance of the golf instructors' gender, race, and life experiences in attracting participants to golf clinics. As several of the participants described, being able to relate to Tammy on account of her gender, race, and shared experiences was crucial to their experience and interest in the clinics. Also, Ana Jones noted how Tammy's gender and race may have detracted from other racial groups' participation in the clinics, namely Asian and White females. Thus, quantitative and mixed methods studies could gain the perspectives of multiple gender and racial groups in the choosing of golf instructors. The findings could have practical implications for golf organizations seeking to grow the

game to women and racial minorities. Furthermore, quantitative studies could examine the effect of confidence in golf skill in the experiences of racial minority females in golf, as was alluded to by several of the participants in this study. Also, future research could examine the role of social class status and occupation in the sporting choices of minority communities, as this was not detailed in this study.

While this study examined if SOC was experienced amongst repeat customers of the ladies' clinics, it did not examine the experiences of those who did not continue to attend. As such, future research should examine the experiences of both participants of sporting organizations who do experience SOC, as well as those who do not. The findings could reveal strategies and implications for increasing perceived SOC in a variety of sporting settings.

Finally, the findings demonstrate that the experience as a Black female in golf is often one of pressure and dismissal. Future research could also examine the concept of structural intersectionality in the specific experiences of Black females in golf. Concerning their coping strategies for dealing with these negative experiences, which was a topic examined by Carter and Hawkins (2011) in the collegiate setting, a structural intersectionality analysis could examine other programs where Black females can learn golf in a safe and supportive environment. For Ana Jones, having the support of her fellow sisters at the golf clinics served in a coping fashion. However, other Black female golfers who are not participants of these clinics may utilize other forms of support. Insights into these strategies would be beneficial for upcoming Black female golfers, as well as organizations seeking to improve the experiences of this underrepresented group

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in golf. Also, a representational intersectionality analysis could examine media portrayals and the discourse surrounding not only Black females, but women of color in general in golf.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, given the historical and current marginalization of Black females in golf, there is a need for safe spaces and communities where Black females can learn the game in a relaxed non-threatening environment. Tammy's ladies' clinics help to serve in this manner for the participants in this study. This is achieved through a variety of ways, each of which has important implications for both theory and practice. While the findings of this study are contextual, this research provides a valuable look into the experiences of Black females in golf and can potentially serve as a building block for future work that examines strategies for increasing minority female involvement in non-traditional sports. Furthermore, it builds upon the SOC literature in sport, as well as adds another component worthy of further investigation to this literature, namely race. Also, it adds to the literature on the experiences of Black females in sport, in general, and in golf specifically, with the additional emphasis on how gender, race, and social class interact in these experiences.

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A Case Study of a Grassroots Golf Program for African American Females

The purpose of this study is to gain the perspectives, experiences, and insights of Black females participating in a grassroots golf program aimed at increasing Black female involvement in golf, with the ultimate goal of further understanding how to re-engage underrepresented groups in golf. The findings may provide insight and information concerning strategies for achieving this goal, as well as provide the participants with an avenue to share their voice. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to engage in a face-to-face interview/focus group pertaining to the subject matter. Furthermore, you may be asked to participate in a follow-up phone interview.

Please note the following characteristics of the study:

- There are no risks associated with this study that are any greater than the risks encountered in daily life.
- You may receive no direct benefit for your participation. However, your dialogue may lead to a greater understanding of Black female participation in golf.
- You are in no way required to participate in this study. You may decide to withdraw or not to participate at any time with no repercussions. You may also refuse to answer any question at any time with no repercussions and still continue to participate in the study if you wish.
- This study is confidential and the records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research notes and records will be stored securely by the primary researcher (Anthony Rosselli) and advisor (Dr. John N. Singer); they will be the only ones with access to them.
- If you choose to participate in this study, you will participate in a face-to-face interview. All responses will be stored securely, and only Anthony Rosselli and Dr. John N. Singer will have access to the notes. Any completed interview notes will be kept for no more than five years and then will be disregarded and shredded/deleted.
- If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study you many contact Anthony Rosselli at (PEAP 239) and/or trosselli@hlkn.tamu.edu, (832)-692-6207.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. In the event

that you have any questions or concerns pertaining to your rights as a research participant, you may contact these offices at (979) 458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction.

If you agree to the above information, please provide the demographic information requested below, and sign and date the form where indicated.

Name (Print):_____ Pseudonym: _____

Previous golf experience: _____

Race/Ethnicity:_____ Age:_____

Gender:_____

E-mail address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Annual Household Income (circle one):

≤ $25,000 $25,000-$50,000 $50,000-$75,000 $75,000-$95,000 $95,000+

Number of Ladies' Night clinics attended: _____

I the undersigned agree to participate in this research on my own accord and reserve the right to remove myself from participation at any time. Furthermore, I consent to allow my interview (and any follow-up interviews) to be tape recorded for analysis by the researcher. Also, if I am chosen for/agree to a follow-up interview, I give permission to the researcher to contact me via e-mail or telephone at the address/number provided above. Finally, any pictures that include me from this clinic can be used for purposes of the research.

_____ Date: _____
(Signature)

APPENDIX B

RECRUITING SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Anthony Rosselli and I am currently conducting research examining the experiences of racial minority females who are participating in golf clinics. I have a strong passion for increasing the introduction to and involvement in golf among racial minorities and women, and I believe your expertise and experience on this subject will be an excellent resource enabling me to gain a better understanding of how practitioners can better improve the landscape of golf to be more inclusive and inviting to all. Basically what I want to do is just have a conversation with you and gain your insights on a few questions. Your participation is strictly voluntary and you can choose to stop participating at any time. All that is required of you is to engage in a face-to-face interview/focus group, which will take anywhere from 30 minutes to 1 hour. Any help you may be able to provide will be of great assistance to me as I conduct this research. Finally, I would like to tape record your responses to the questions. If you would like to help me out by participating, all you have to do is fill out this short information sheet, and then we can have a great conversation.

E-MAIL FOLLOW UP INTEVIEW SCRIPT

Dear _____,

       Hello again. My name is Anthony Rosselli and we discussed your experiences at the Ladies' Night golf clinics. Your insights were of great help to me in my research. During my analysis of the interviews, I came across some very insightful responses from you on several questions. I would really like to ask you a few more questions to really get some more detail and allow you to expound upon your thoughts. If you would like to help me out by conducting a follow-up interview, please feel free to contact me anytime by replying to this email or by calling me anytime at (832)-692-6207. Your participation will be of great assistance and I am eager to learn from your insight and experience. Thank you for any time and/or consideration you give this matter.

Sincerely,


Anthony Rosselli

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. (Introductory question)

   -What brought you to the Ladies' Night golf clinics?

2. (SOC)

   -Is participation in Ladies' Night golf clinics rewarding? Why/why not?

   -Do you feel a sense of belonging to the Ladies' Night group? Why/why not?

      -What specifically contributes to this?

   -Does a common bond or goal exist among the participants of the Ladies' Night clinics? Why/why not?

3. (TopGolf)

   -Was TopGolf important to you coming to the original clinics? If so, why? If not, why not?

      -What specifically contributes to this?

4.) (Pictures)

   - Do the pictures placed on social media contribute to the specific demographic coming to the clinics? If so, why? If not, why not?"

5.) (Intersectionality)

   -How do you think your experience as a Black female in golf is different to White males' and females'?

      -What contributes to this?

6.) (Concluding questions)

   -Is there anything that I have not asked that you feel I should ask?

   -Is there anything you would like to share to conclude?

APPENDIX D

TABLE 1 – QUOTES, MAIN THEMES, AND SUB THEMES FROM FINDINGS

| Quotes from raw data | Main Theme | Sub Theme |
|---|---|---|
| Well see, you (Black females) can't just enjoy the game (golf). You, unfortunately have to be, uh, haunted by the pressure.<br><br>Because let's be honest, it (golf) is a divider. And it is a, you know, what it's being, what you know it as is only particular races playing the game (golf). So it makes it feel as though you can't exist in the game<br><br>Um, it's (experience in golf as a Black female vs a White male/female) probably different because you, you kind of know that you're the minority out there (in golf).<br><br>You know, I just felt like an outcast in golf, and this is supposed to be fun, and I felt like an outcast, and you know, it's so unfortunate<br><br>You know, because I'm already set apart, as soon as I walk out there (on the golf course). People already have a judgment about me and that's just from the way I look.<br><br>So, you know, when we step out of the box and decide, "Hey, we're going to go try golf." It's like, "No, that's not for you, that's not your area. You stick to your zone." | Do We belong? | |
| I think they see this beautiful woman doing as sport that no one really gives a lot of attention to, especially in the African American community, nobody sees that. And so I think that is a very attractive and people love that, and that draws people in.<br><br>She comes from where we (minorities) come from. So she relates to us because she has grown up the way we've grown up. She's gone to the same schools and lived in the same neighborhoods. | Ladies Clinics are a Safe Space | Instructor is relatable |

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| And uh, two, it's just a fun environment. Um, it's not a threatening environment.<br><br>I think what helps with that, well especially being at TopGolf, it's more of a social scene. It's not like a whole bunch of professionals working on their craft, that I would say. I would say the atmosphere and the environment is very laid back. It's music and food and just drinks.<br><br>Um, yeah. I think that it (TopGolf environment) was very inviting. Because it's more, it's more, it looks more like a lounge than, you know, a professional driving range. So I think that contributed a lot to the feel, the overall feel of, you know, not, you know, um being so timid, or you know, discouraged about your surroundings. Because it was more of a lounge. | Ladies Clinics are a Safe Space | TopGolf contributes to relaxed environment |
| I do (feel like I belong at the clinics), I feel, because the majority of the women that she brings out are African American women, so I do feel comfortable.<br><br>And I'll be honest, when I did see someone of my race, you know, as a minority I was like, "Oh! There's a Black person! Awesome!"<br><br>Yeah I felt like I belonged. I didn't feel out of place. | Ladies Clinics are a Safe Space | I Belong, It's a Sisterhood |
| She's made it more of an empowering, you know, sport.<br><br>I would most definitely participate in future clinics, because I think it's very empowering and motivating.<br><br>That is (seeing a Black female excel in golf is empowering), because it makes you feel like, "Oh, you know, I haven't tried this avenue yet." And it makes you feel like, "I can do something different. There's more trades I can have as an African American woman."<br><br>And since it's already been known that certain races, very much so are more prominent in the sport, it felt good to be a part of that small percentage that was, you know, starting the change. | Ladies Clinics are a Safe Space | Empowerment |

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| And so I think that it's definitely, you know, it kind of takes you just from being in the golf cart watching and cheering everybody on and being like, you know, "Hey, I actually been learning how to do this", and then you can get on the field, or the course with the guys.<br><br>That's what you're getting with the clinic, is solid fundamentals. Once you get the fundamentals, you know, you are good to go. Uh, at least you can exist and sustain a platform. You know, you can at least partake in it. You may not have the best form but at least you can keep up.<br><br>So it is rewarding. She makes you feel good. And you don't leave there without hitting the ball really far. And she will make sure you hit that ball far, or where you want it to go.<br><br>So it definitely made it, it gave you the confidence that you needed.<br><br>It's (participating in the clinics) rewarding because I can learn the game (golf), and you know, and really a lot of people get into it more so now because it's a great networking, um, tool. And um, it feels good to be able to bring something to the table.<br><br>Oh I mean, um, just further networking with more, each time I go I end up meeting somebody who, uh, is someone that I could potentially network with. So um, definitely the networking, and just being mentors for more women. | Building Confidence and Networks | |
| Most of the time when she posts that (pictures from clinics), if you ever check like some of the messages under, they're (ladies) are like, "Oh my God I should've went!" Like, "Dang I shoud've went to this, I didn't know it was gonna be like this!"<br><br>She's changing or shifting the mindset. And for that, um, we can only be grateful for it, because, as a minority you felt like it could only be one person, and for us it was Tiger Woods. But now everyone is saying, "But why? Why just Tiger? Why not someone else? Why is it always the sports of basketball and football, can only identify with a strong minority group?" | The Clinics Make Golf Appealing | |

TABLE 1 CONTINUED

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| She's, you know, constructing her clinics, she's making it empowering for women and she's making it look fun, and you know, something new to do.<br><br>So it's just you know, social media is kind of, when you see someone doing something and it just looks so fun, and you're like, "Oh I want to try that!" Or I see a lot of people post videos or pictures and I want to try it, so…She's done a good job with making it more appealing.<br><br>Because I can tell you about it, but when you see it, it's like, "Man it looks like they have a fun time." She takes candid pictures, you know, nothing is like, you know, always, you know, posed so it can be perfect. You know, she really has a way of capturing the experience, and that's what you get to see through those pictures.<br><br>So, when we see people that look like us (minority females), you know, having fun and playing golf, and you know, Tammy is kind of motivating them, it kind of makes you want to get involved. | The Clinics Make Golf Appealing | |

TABLE 2 – PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

| Pseudonym | Race/ethnicity | Gender | Age | Annual Household Income | Occupation | # of Clinics Attended |
|-----------|----------------|--------|-----|-------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| Tammy | African American/Asian | Female | 26 | $50,000-75,000 | Golf Instructor | All |
| Ana Jones | Black | Female | 29 | $25,000-50,000 | Professional Golfer | 12 |
| Cattelya | African American | Female | 28 | DNP | Real Estate | 8+ |
| Cassandra | Black | Female | 26 | $50,000-75,000 | Nursing | 4 |
| Felicia | Black | Female | 31 | $75,000 – 95,000 | Real Estate | 4 |
| Ashley | Black | Female | 25 | $50,000-75,000 | Middle School Teacher | 3 |
| Jona | African American | Female | 26 | $50,000-75,000 | DNP | 3 |
| Crishell | Black | Female | 31 | $50,000-75,000 | Non-Profit Event Coordinator | 1 |