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Abstract

Collared Men:

Ethnographic Essays on Navigating Race and Status in Everyday Live

Craig Lapriec Holloway

2022

The demands of the American society are changing as it develops into a more plural and diverse society that is characterized by an increasingly specialized economy. Many are willing to say that we are in both a post-industrial and post-racial society that renders equal opportunity for all people. Yet, black men continue to be in relatively peculiar circumstances as people from varied statuses. Status is fluid. And their narrations of their everyday lives and the lives of their counterparts through their own status can at times be strikingly different from mainstream society. These men navigate the demands of race, family and economic life as they are presented in context. Thus, substantive understandings on the life course of this social group must acknowledge and appreciate the context in which it occurs.

Collared Men:
Ethnographic Essays on Navigating Race and Status in Everyday Live

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of
Yale University
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Chapter One

ENCOUNTERING SETTINGS

The preface to this dissertation research is contained in the conceptual analysis and ethnographic fieldwork that was done as a member of a research team during the 2010-2012 academic years at the Yale Urban Ethnography Project. This work sought to explore the current conceptual frames and narratives of race relations in the 21st century from the perspective of local cultures. The historical framework for race relations was a major part of the development of the project and served as an empirical guidepost for the subsequent research and writing.¹

While I'll insert this work more directly into one of the subsequent chapters of this dissertation, it is worth noting that this analysis began the analytical thinking for my own research interests that continued to evolve over the course of years. And I became particularly interested in understanding how Black/African-American men understand their position in society in the face of both substantial social progress and conflict. I was also curious to understand how and if this has in any way influenced how these men navigated everyday life throughout different contexts. Finally, is this local knowledge leveraged in any particular way to nurture the social development of others, whether that is their own children or young people and mentees that are a part of their social network?

The latter emphasis on the translation and transmission of lived experiences in the form of local knowledge unto others, especially children, was the premium theme of my research interest for this project in its initial phase. However, ethnographic research that is approached well takes on a grounded theoretical approach to the work. And sometimes encounters in the field leads to other questions and empirical directions that weren't initially anticipated during the proposal of the research.

Field research also requires as much objectivity as possible, which requires the ethnographer to be aware of his/her own biases and assumptions and worldviews about the participants in the field and how these things can unduly drive the research and analysis of the study. In any setting, there can be interactions and narratives that one come into contact with where an observer has already formed opinions which preclude them from fully apprehending and comprehending the complexity of the social issues. This can also prevent them from acquiring understandings of such social issues that the people themselves have constructed (Anderson 1999).

My work as a graduate research assistant at the Urban Ethnography Project helped to sharpen my sociological imagination, along with the caveat of being aware of these preclusions in mind. This was not my natural inclination, nor is it natural for anyone to be this way at all. The framework from which we conduct ethnographic research requires an appreciation for the development the ethnographer must have before entering the field and that which takes place as they are immersed in the field. While there is no faultless scientist (given that we are all imperfect human beings and that science itself is prone to error), the ethnographer must be diligent to present knowledge production which emerged out of a refined scientist. And I have done my best as a social scientist to remain keenly

cognizant of my own development in an effort to present work that is reflective of a researcher who has undergone the requisite training and reflection to produce such research.

GRAND CONCOURSE

The majority of my fieldwork occurred on the west side of Manhattan in the Harlem, with observations also conducted in the Bronx and occasionally in Brooklyn. Other field encounters and immersion took place throughout other parts of New York City as I travelled along with participants for social and leisure activities. Manhattan, like all of the other Boroughs of the city, is experiencing steady and rapid transformation in its neighborhoods and it remains a very transient city for those who like me have transported themselves there in an effort to seek or start a new opportunity. There are others, however, who are lifelong New Yorkers who are very proud to announce their borough roots as well as their life histories, experiences, and forecast of what they understand is happening to the neighborhoods they were raised in, New York City, and America in general. I consistently interacted with all such dwellers through various social contexts of both Harlem and the broader urban space.

My entrance into this urban scene began before the official research launched through trips to the City via the Metro-North rail out of New Haven, Connecticut. From New Haven, I travelled into Harlem 125th Street or Grand Central Station where I ventured off to different parts of the neighborhoods for leisure and social events. But it was not until my departure from New Haven to become a resident of the City years later that I was

persistently immersed into many of the opportunities for social interaction and direct observation that were available to me.

During the initial months of my time in the City the day typically began with a walking survey of various parts of a respective Borough (usually Bronx and Manhattan). In the Bronx, I frequently travelled along a major thoroughfare known as Grand Concourse. This route runs through the heart of the area and connects the borough to Manhattan. This fact has not gone unnoticed by the residents of the area given the demographic and economic changes that are rapidly taking place in this part of the Bronx, which some people never thought would occur so aggressively in this area of New York City given the substantial proportion of black and brown residents that have dominated and characterized the borough for decades.

Walking through Grand Concourse brings you into the direct observance of many people from all walks of life. Many of these individuals are originally from the City and some, like myself, are not. The ones who are from the City are not always from the Bronx borough. Others hail not only from outside the Bronx and New York City but also from the United States. This particular part of the Bronx has a significant number of Dominicans and Puerto Ricans who are spread among blacks and relatively few whites. It was an interesting immersion for me as an ethnographer given my roots in the Deep South and the fact that though this was not the first time I have lived in the Northeastern region of the U.S., it was the first time in my life that I was a language minority in a neighborhood.

I searched throughout this area for a barber given my residential status in the area and came upon a barbershop within walking distance from my apartment. This was my my

first time in the setting and I knew none of the barbers in the place; I was only there to do my own personal assessment of their work with other clients to determine if any of them had the requisite skills to cut my hair according to my own precise desire. Thus, I sat in the waiting section as I watched each one of the barbers cut the hair of their respective clients. And after identifying the barber I perceived would cut my hair accordingly I awaited the availability of his chair.

Upon being seated in the chosen barber's chair he inquired what type of hair cut I wanted. I explained the details of what I was looking for but he had some difficulty in understanding what I was saying. After another attempt, it was clear to me that English was not his first language nor was he fluent enough to always understand all of the details of my communication with him. I pulled out my phone and showed him a picture taken of me after a haircut from another barber. This was the hairstyle I was aiming for with him. He looked at it and said, "ok." All of the barbers in the barbershop spoke in Spanish the entire time I was in the space. Unlike my barber, some of the others were fluent in both languages given that they were nurtured by their families in the City. After listening to them converse and laugh for a time, I became curious in knowing the origins of my barber and inquired of him as to where he was from. He responded saying that he is originally from Dominican Republic and moved to the City to live with an extended family member.

There was one young black man in the shop who was also fluent in Spanish. He grew up in this area and had spent much of his time in this part of the City immersed in Dominican and Puerto Rican culture as a neighbor to many of them. And such were many interactions I observed throughout the area at local restaurants, grocery stores, public

spaces, such as parks and basketball courts, and many other settings. There is the collegiality and understanding of their own backgrounds. But most importantly, they all are keenly aware of the economic position they all share and were nurtured in. Growing up in the same urban tenements, attending the same public schools, and experiencing the same neighborhood dynamics and tragedies of the streets have facilitated a bond between them over time. Their shared understanding of this personal and proximal lived experience is reflected over and over again in their conversations with one another. And direct observations of this social interaction energized my sociological imagination to want to know and understand more about this local knowledge (Geertz 1983). I didn't spend most of my time in the field in this space and neighborhood. Most of my ethnographic research was further organized and developed in other settings I frequented in the City, particularly in Harlem.

THE WESTSIDE SPOT AND SIDE STREET TAVERN

As previously noted, much of my work occurred on the Westside of New York City, in Harlem. Established in this urban area are two restaurant and bar businesses that I encountered as a patron. My initial contact with these settings came as a result of leisure and social events that I was invited to; the intent was not empirical at the time. I was invited by an acquaintance to come to a party at this particular place on the west side of the area one evening on the weekend and made plans to attend. I came into the area early to hang around the broader scene of the neighborhood. Like the areas of the Bronx where I walked and interacted with residents and patrons, I spent a considerable amount of my time among people in Harlem in different settings.

The Westside Spot and Side Street Tavern are 4-star level eateries amidst a mixed neighborhood of white-collar, blue-collar, and what I conceptualize as “orange-collar” (see chapter 3) residents and families. People frequently walk and carouse throughout the streets leading to these two locations and the surrounding establishments. In this setting, there is a mix of ethnic and racial groups in the apartment complexes, albeit predominantly black. A significant proportion of the housing is under the rent control system of New York City. It is not uncommon, therefore, to have living spaces with a combination of tenants who represent a socioeconomic spectrum. It is for this reason, among others, that people are freely conversing with one another, even occasionally strangers from different walks of life. This is not to say that there is not a level of discomfort among certain individuals with this scene, particularly among the occasional aggressive person who “cat calls” women as they pass by. And it is not uncommon in these cases to notice the nonverbal communication that exudes caution, especially among women. Some of the women I talked to were explicit about these occurrences but understand them to be something that comes with the territory. There is the understanding that for these men, “that’s what they do”.

Residents in this neighborhood include white-collar individuals from corporate offices, blue-collar people in positions such as baggers in grocery stores or drivers for transportation or cab companies, and orange-collar men who labor through precarious work opportunities and/or by “hustling” as members of the underground economy. This latter group is where the positioning of the individual can get complex as some of the men have experienced more than one of these statuses. There is the blue-collar man, for example, who may have been involved in an altercation or situation which led to

incarceration, immediately relegating him to a criminal status. Upon his release, he is able to reconnect (and in some cases, connect) to jobs in blue-collar settings which afford employment opportunity to him, despite this status. Others are not so fortunate and are navigating every day through what is a rather precarious life (Goffman 2014).

People from these complex histories frequent The Westside Spot and Side Street Tavern. There was undoubtedly a divergence in perspectives and point of departure in expectations among these diverse groups. While the white-collar women were open to discourse, laughter, and other interactions such as dancing and the consumption of libations with men of diverse status, they adhered to personal preferences and social standards concerning relationship and family formation. Though orange-collar men are the most precarious among them all, this code was not exclusive to them. But relative to white-collar men, they possess less social apparatus to negotiate beyond their status with women of the white-collar class (and in certain cases with blue-collar women). Through immersion in both of these spaces I became very intrigued by the interactions of the different people that I observed. And through these observations I was interested in comprehending the understandings held by these individuals, of diverse positions, as it concerned their everyday lives, perceptions, and beliefs as black people and how this translated into the way they gathered together as patrons in these urban spaces to interact in a seamless and synergistic way.

IN THE SPOT

The West Side Spot is an energetic and inviting space to socialize, dine, and relax. On occasional evenings, there is a DJ that plays a range of music for patrons as they drink at the bar or dine at the tables. They also have floor space for people to dance should they

choose to. I walked into the Spot and immediately went to the bar to sit down for drinks. It is typical for many of the customers and regulars to be as interactional as the waiters and waitresses in the area. I ordered my drink and began to converse with a few of the people at the bar. Starting with the basics of learning their name, where they are originally from, and their work in the City, we talked about general topics of the day. In the Spot, you have a significant proportion of white-collar people who come to “chill” after a long day of work in corporate settings during the week. For them, coming here allows for a mental break before heading home. Blue-collar workers are also present for drinking, dining, and dancing. And they all intermingle with one another in a very socially organic way.

My conversations with the patrons range from cultural topics of the day to work life and relational pursuits with romantic interests. With the women, they are interested in my background, particularly what I do. For most people in the City, you are curious also of the geographic area people are originally from given the transient nature of New York. Thus, I’m always open to identifying myself as a PhD student who originates from the Deep South. The African American men and women either express their family roots in the South or they became interested in my experiences as a northern resident. Not only did I find this to be a great starter for further dialogue, but it influenced subsequent talk on a range of different issues.

My time in the Spot coincided with that in the Tavern given their close proximity to one another on the same block. The conversations and observations in the Tavern were with a more diverse range of people from different backgrounds. And patrons from the Spot also spend time eating, drinking, dancing, and conversing with other customers in

addition to their friends.

KICKING IT AT THE TAVERN

Side Street Tavern is a nice cozy space set next to the West Side Spot. Years prior to my move to the City I went there to socialize with an acquaintance I've known for years. It was a relatively slow day during this inaugural visit and we decided to eat, drink, and "chill" for a moment as we caught up with one another on life experiences. After I moved to the City years later I returned there after leaving the Spot. It was a more energized place on this visit and subsequent ones given the day and time of those entrances.

The Tavern is a trendy restaurant and bar gathering that is very attractive for emergent young adults. People from all walks of life come into the area casually and formally to "kick it" and relax, even if it is for a moment. It is known and constructed for this type of interaction. The atmosphere is as inviting as the Spot, but with a different culture and structural setting. And my time there allowed me to further observe and learn from people of the broader community about life in the City, particularly in neighborhoods. It was often the case that we talked about social life in New York City and the U.S. These conversations took place very organically during drinks and over meals and in the majority of the occasions it was with those who were strangers to me. Many of these people were black. But the customer base appealed to other racial and ethnic as well and I interacted and talked with them as much as I did the black of the Tavern.

One day as I was listening to music, drinking, and conversing with other patrons at the Tavern I took notice and began to compare the differences in the environment between this setting and the one at West Side Spot. Again, they are relatively similar but with a slight twist- "street" individuals are far more likely to inhabit this space than the Spot

(Anderson, 1999). Seated more closely to the door, I had access to the social interactions of these people with others as they came in and out. Their presence among the working class and white-collar people was of no threat to anyone nor did they in any way alter the chemistry inside the Tavern. This observation became intertwined with my own understandings of the background of many blacks as it concerns our intragroup diversity. African Americans have for some time been incorporated into many facets of society. They are janitors, doctors, lawyers, investment bankers, teachers, industrialists, and participants in the underground economy. I understood this as an individual from this spectrum and as a researcher (Anderson, 2000). But, I tabled my own perceptions to further apprehend what was going on in this space and how the people saw themselves and understood their own situations. This further guided my work as I patronized the Tavern and at times other settings throughout the City.

What was key for many black people in this setting, I discovered, was the sense of solidarity of status. This solidarity was obviously not economic or educational as there were differences in these aspects of their lives comparatively. A common theme among them is the lived experience of blackness irrespective of where that blackness exists. My time in the Tavern facilitated an acquisition of this local knowledge (Geertz, 1983). Through their own understandings, the notion of being born black and having to navigate life through their racial status is one that is shared consistently as I spent time in the field. This narrative is an offshoot of the blacks' experiences and belief that by virtue of being born black you have a social deficit that cannot be erased from your record. The fluidity of educational, socioeconomic, and professional status can in certain cases mitigate this deficit for some, but it will not cause even those who experience such shields to be

immune from what can occur in the environments that comes with their elevated status. Black people are keenly aware of this possibility whether they work in the grocery store as a cashier, on Wall Street as an investment banker, or as a “hustler” in the streets (Anderson et. al, 2012). And this shared sense of blackness brings people together in the Tavern, West Side Spot, and similar settings throughout the City to interact, drink, dance, and engage in discourse about various topics. This was a socially organic process among the different groups. But with it came boundaries that some would not cross.

The ladies in the Tavern are more often than not from white-collar or blue-collar status. These women not only “ball and parlay” with their own male counterparts in the urban space but also with men who are labeled with a criminal status. For a significant number of the white-collar women here who are single and interested in relationship formation with men, there are preferences for men whom are like-minded and are of the same status. These women work on Wall Street, are corporate attorneys, or in other similar positions. Their explicit questions and nonverbal cues sends messages of their peaked interest beyond the purely social if the man presents himself in an approved fashion. This is witnessed as some white-collar men and those who are from the street attempt to push the envelope, so to speak, to go beyond casual conversation and enjoyment. This is not to say that there aren’t women who would not engage such men of diverse statuses, but the preference for white-collar men increases along with the status of the woman in the Tavern. The women in the Tavern are not monolithic, as is the case with the men. Their experiences and preferences differ from one another. There are those who have been through a previous marriage (or marriages), others who come from prior relationships with children, and those without children. The age and phase of life of the

men and women are reflective of seasoned adults and thus there is the tendency for these women to think more intently about future relationship goals given their age and sometimes their “biological clock.” Other women are more focused on their careers and life in general and don’t share the same desires for a relationship or a structured family.

For many of the men, this was not as much the case since they did not have the same pressure of forming relationships. Their status identity as a white-collar or blue-collar man often came with different expectations. The street men and those with a criminal status likewise have an understanding of their own status both in society and in relations to women. Irrespective of the status they hold, they felt less inclined to form relationships in the same timeframe as many of the women. “I still need to live a little bit before I jump the broom or start popping out kids” is a common narrative among them. Thus, they are mostly eager to engage in conversation, casual entertainment, sex, and/or dining with women from settings such as West Side Spot and the Side Street Tavern throughout the City. And they come together week after week in fellowship with one another as strangers and acquaintances.

STATUS REUNION

Black families and communities are structurally complex. They are comprised of people from different socioeconomic, educational, and criminal backgrounds- from “different strokes of life” so to speak. And as a result, black people are accustomed to intragroup interaction that is reflective of this diversity. They are also accustomed to concomitant social interaction with the wider society. It is therefore imperative for them to not only have to navigate the relations of their own social group well but also with the white racial group who dominates the businesses, institutions, and systems that they will

inevitably encounter. Therefore, learning how to journey through this complex path of everyday life as successfully as possible is something that is considered a necessary and important element of the human development of African-Americans (Anderson 2000; Patillo 2013). Black parents transmit this knowledge on to their children in an effort to prepare them for what they see as the facts of life (Anderson et al 2012). Once they become emergent young adults and young professionals this social reality is typically confirmed and reinforced through their own lived experiences across different settings such as the local grocery store, investment bank, and at an institution of higher education where they are the minority (Anderson 2015).

The African-American men in Side Street Tavern and West Side Spot, along with their female counterparts, consistently expressed their shared identity and the knowledge of their status in wider society and amongst themselves. I empirically explored this understanding further through my ethnographic research over period of two years, one of those years as a resident of the City. *Collared Men* qualitatively explores the personal narratives and lived experiences of urban black men around the four themes: Family, Race, and Education and Socioeconomics. It builds upon the foundation of classic urban sociological works such as *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Dubois 1899), *Black Metropolis* (Drake & Cayton 1945), *Place on a Corner* (Anderson 1978), *Slim's Table* (Duneier 1992), *Streetwise* (Anderson 1990), *Code of the Street* (Anderson 1999), and *Sidewalk* (Duneier 1999).² I've leveraged the ethnographic method and in-depth interviews within naturalistic settings (i.e., bars, restaurants, trains) to access and apprehend how these men understand family formation and social life, along with their working conceptions of race. Drawing primarily from a pool of men of different

education levels and socioeconomic and criminal statuses in various settings of the Harlem neighborhood of New York City, along with other settings, I explore this sociological inquiry in an effort to understand the similarities and differences between the groups around their narratives of race, family relations/formation, and their social and economic life in the inner-city. And from this project specific research questions emerged.

How do these men meet the exigencies of their everyday life within the boundaries of their status (educational, socioeconomic, and criminal)? How do they narrate family (family relations/formation and fatherhood)? How do they narrate race as black men in a supposed “post-racial” society? Do these narratives and lived experiences align or depart from the discourse of mainstream society about urban black men? The sociological issues that emerge from these questions are ethnographically unearthed through this dissertation. I’m ultimately interested in how these men navigate these themes within urban settings. And I posit that the most provocative contribution to the field from this work will be delineating the complexities of the lived experience of their status as it is explicated by these black men vis-à-vis public and political discourse and the current social and economic realities. With the exception of race, status is a very fluid social reality. And the men in this research often reflected this fluidity.

The central question that weaves all of these things together is as follows: How do these men navigate and understand race and status both among and apart from each other? This overarching question surfaced as I spent time in Side Street Tavern and West Side Spot. The fieldwork I engage in over the next year further explored the local knowledge of the communities as it was presented to me by the men (Geertz 1983).

Chapter Two

Same Shit, Different Day

THE STRIKE OF BLACKNESS

The experience of race relations for Black people in America has a long and persistent legacy that is rooted in the institution of slavery. Following the emancipation of slaves by President Abraham Lincoln during the nineteenth century there were white people, particularly those in the South where virtually all of the plantations consisting of slave labor existed, who constructed a way to maintain the racial dominance of whites and the racial oppression and inferiority of blacks. The Jim Crow laws that were subsequently imposed on the Southern region of the U.S. served as an attempt to overcome what they believed to be an erosion of white power. And over the next one-hundred years following the end of slavery blacks endured racism, segregation, violence, and disparities that were a direct effort of white businessmen, politicians, clergy, educators, doctors, mobs, and law enforcement (Drake & Cayton 1945). The racial status and racialized experiences of blackness was engraved into the psyche of African Americans from that point until this very day.

Like the broader dissertation, this chapter is an offshoot of the collaborative work that I did as a graduate research assistant at the Yale Urban Ethnography Project. I worked along with two post-doctoral associates and the Director of the Project to explore the issue of racial caste in contemporary America. This post/pre-doctoral research team consisted of an Indian woman who is from a high-status family in the country, a white

man from the Southwest whose family were of working-class background, and myself who is an offspring of parents who lived de jure Jim Crow in the Deep South. I was also nurtured in the same geographic area, rural Alabama, that my parents were nurtured in and brought this experience to the table to be conjoined with the experiences of my colleagues to critically think and analyze the existing knowledge production on race and to plan the research project that culminated into an article entitled *The Legacy of Racial Caste*. Building on the analyses of the team we hypothesized that while there has been undeniable progress in respect to race relations in America there remain a persistence of inequality and status differentiation that warranted further empirical investigation (Anderson et al 2012).

To begin this project the research team leveraged classical literature from authors such as Allison Davis, Burleigh Gardner, Mary Gardner (1941), John Dollard (1937), William Lloyd Warner (1936), Oliver Cox (1942, 1945, 1948), and Gunnar Myrdal (1944). This body of work frames the discussion of how racial caste is conceptualized, understood and debated among scholars. It also points to the social reality that serve as lenses by which both whites and blacks view the world in which they inhabited historically and reside in today. Anderson et al. (2012, p. 38) noted, “from the research we have already done, we posit that, at least heuristically, the association of race with caste is a useful way to approach the analysis of contemporary racism, and it is with the race-caste idea that we propose to investigate the structure of race relations in America.” I continued this proposal in my own independent research in an effort to further explore how both race and status is narrated and lived out in everyday life among black men in urban settings.

The social rule understood and communicated by blacks is that you are “born with one strike against you.” By this, they refer to the social deficit that blacks enter into the world with. They navigate society through an understanding that their blackness will at times be marginalized, mistreated, stereotyped, and excluded. There is the possibility that they at any particular moment could experience deferential treatment when it comes to access to economic and educational opportunities. This is not only due to their racial status but also to disproportionate representation in low-quality conditions that yield racial inequities. Many blacks are relegated to these conditions in the City. However, this is seen throughout other urban areas and America writ large.¹

The contemporary American narrative of race relations acknowledges the progress that has been afforded in society to blacks as it concerns their incorporation into mainstream opportunities that once were not accessible to them. You have an increasing number of blacks who were once barred from access to economic and educational attainment that eventually became more incorporated into positions through Affirmative Action legislation. And both blacks and whites in the wider society agree that the social needle had been moved forward as this advancement was being witnessed by the nation. But this newly accessed prosperity for a proportion of the group did not end their experiences with racism and discrimination. Despite the fact that a few blacks were elevated in positions in academia, government, business, and the military there was no doubt in the minds of black people that their path was yet marked by the suspicion of whites as to whether or not they were good enough and would serve as a competing social force in the workplace and society.² The one-strike rule does not end when the status of blacks has been elevated in any way and in any setting. And this is known by white-collar men and

women who have attained the ranks of society that many in their communities believe they can only dream of experiencing. I noted this understanding as “the black working conception of race” in the *Legacy of Racial Caste* (Anderson et al. 2012, p. 36)

publication with the following example from the biographical narrative of Condoleezza Rice, the first black woman Secretary of State:

Condoleezza Rice, former U.S. National Security Advisor and Secretary of State, reiterates this notion through her account of growing up in the segregated South and in Denver, Colorado. She noted how teachers would remind their students that they would have to be “twice as good” if they wanted “to succeed.” The segregated public school system in her home state of Alabama was far below the quality of others throughout the country, and both blacks and whites were placed at a disadvantage. However, the “one strike” rule was manifested in that the black schools received fewer resources compared with the white schools. She and her family would later discover that the South is not the only place where the one strike concept was in operation.

Rice’s father moved the family out of the South to Denver after receiving a job in higher education administration at a local university there. As soon as they arrived and began to look for housing, they encountered racism. A local real-estate agent conjured up every excuse possible, except their race, to not rent them a house; “she was finding an excuse not to rent to us because we were black,” Rice stated (2010, 155). The Rice family came to understand through various interactions that race relations in the North were similar to the South, albeit more insidious and not manifested in the same way as in the South. These interactions reinforced for Rice that as a black individual she would have to be “twice as good” to get half as far.

Rice’s father, John Rice, like other black men who had emerged out of de jure or de facto Jim Crow segregation, racism, and discrimination, understood that his status as an educated administrator and his relocation out of the Deep South did not shield him, his family, or African Americans from the experiences that accompanies the one-strike rule. They knew why this real-estate agent did not want to rent to them. John knew his educational status as white-collar man. And the agent also knew this status and the reason for their move into the city of Denver. Yet neither his educational, professional, or socioeconomic status could wield enough authority to mitigate the racial status that reflects the “strike” he and his family bore (Pattillo 2013).

The legacy of racial caste follows the conceptual framework of social positioning. Individuals construct their own hierarchy of status based on who they are vis-à-vis others. It marks how they believe the caste-like relations should function. Any deviation from that norm sends the message that a transgression has been committed and therefore ought to be rectified. This is undoubtedly the perception based in the minds of the dominant group- white people. For whites, you are continuously aware of who you are as a member of this dominant by the inferior group that you oppose. For blacks to be “in their place” they must present externalized behaviors that do not signal to whites that their status is being challenged in any way (Blumer 1958; Bobo 1999).

Black people understand this group positioning that results in racial prejudice from a different perspective. They are nurtured by parents, family, and the reinforcement of their own lived experience that you are positioned in American society to an inferior status because of how you were born and the dominant culture views you. For them it is not knowing who you are by your opposition to the white racial group (Blumer 1958). The conceptual development of one-strike is built upon the understanding that you acknowledge your status through the construction of those who oppose you. And it doesn't matter how you are situated in the socioeconomic, educational, or criminal status spectrum. Your racial status maintains a powerful social solidarity with the diverse parts of your own group. The black man working as a Wall Street banker is as aware of his racial status before his white colleagues as a black man working in a restaurant is of his. This social psychology of status between whites and blacks persists as the “[strongest] contrast among the races” (Thomas 1980, p. 7). The diverse men in the Tavern and the Spot come together for a moment of escape from the “white space” (Anderson 2015) to

have a respite from those environments and interactions. White people patronize both of these spaces but are among those who have been vetted as one who is not opposed to blacks in the same way as whites in society are in aggregate. But there are moments when the knowledge of one's status can reach a boiling point after consistent racial injury over time (Anderson 2011, Anderson et al. 2012).

Students throughout the nation at various colleges and universities during recent academic years began to confront their respective administrations with demands for changes in the institution that they believed would alleviate the affront to their place at the school and in society. At Harvard, law students protested the shield of the Law School due to its connection to slavery. The school began through financial benevolence from a rich slave holder. And the symbolism that this represented increasingly became a point of contention with the school and its history. Law students planned and facilitated sit-ins at one of the main buildings of the campus. They wanted to send the message to the faculty and broader administration of the university that this should not be something that is heralded, though it is based on the historical accuracy of the place. And with the sweeping social movements across the country on the issue of race in America and institutions they would not acquiesce to any demands from anyone that would cause their demands for regress to cease. I was tuned in to this while in the City through alumni emails from various Harvard media sources. It was, like other similar movements, consistently disseminated through mainstream media who took notice of what was going on among student groups in the country. The nation took notice. And the students took notice.

Students at the University of Missouri rose up to confront the racism on its campus. They were wearied by the interactions that a number of them had with white students. And after confronting the faculty and administration they did not believe that they had given them a requisite response. This led to protest on campus. Black players on the football team joined in to boycott the institution by their refusal to play in any game until the president of the school resigned. This brought a national alert to America and the alumni of the school given its love for college football. And the students understood this and leveraged it to remained unwavering until Missouri leadership hearkened to their voices.³

Yale also became a part of the discourse on race through its own movement. I was in the midst of this uprising as a student in the Graduate School. Students, mostly undergraduates, were displeased with the name of one of its residential colleges. The particular public figure for the whom the building was named had a controversial social history. This is not particular to Harvard, Yale, or any other elite institution in historic America. A significant number of these institutions were built off of wealth that was acquired through the enslavement of blacks in America. Though they are located in the North where the institution of slavery did not exist as it did in the South, they nevertheless were benefactors of the capital that came from it. This is the narrative, melded with current social realities and experiences, that ignited the students who internalized all of this to seek to coerce the institution to rectify its stance on these symbols and this history by turning a new leaf and becoming more assimilated to where the culture is at the time.

The latter statement caused some spectators and commentators to give a rebuttal. Their position is that history is not always pretty and we cannot undo the past or simply make symbolic gestures to change history. We can learn from it in an effort to not repeat these things. But the demands that were being brought before administrations were analyzed as being more surface level transformation than it was substantive, especially for institutions of higher education that supposedly appreciated and eagerly engaged intellectual debate about these types of issues. But many black people refute this notion with an alternative lens by which they view race.

Blacks worldview on these issues throughout society reflects the understanding that they are not purely symbolic, but rather a manifestation of much broader problems. For an institution to hold dear to the symbols that represent the oppression and marginalization of black people while also creating or allowing an environment to be hostile towards blackness reveals the degree to which the space and those in it may be socially invested in the continuity of racial group positioning and of the legacy of racial caste. Whether it's a professor, administrator, teaching assistant, or classmate it appears to them that the dominant group doesn't feel as if their interaction with them are of any consequence. And the "symbols" and public figures that they are protesting likewise shared the same ideology during their own existence in American history. The shared understanding among African Americans is that the current reality is nothing but the "same shit" in a "different day!"

THE DENIAL CARD

The white conception of race relations, as it was explicated by the Yale research team (Anderson et al. 2012), rests on the notion that America in aggregate should not deny the overt and structural racism of its past but should not erroneously perceive, believe, or declare that racism exists today. For many whites, the narrative is that they are not racist. And the notion that racism still exist as a major problem is only a figment of black people's imagination. To speak of the extant reality of racism as a persistent social reality today is considered "playing the race card." The race card is considered by many whites, and select blacks, to be an impediment to racial progress in America. According to their perspective, it is difficult to "move on from the past" if we continue to focus on things that can't be changed and use race as an excuse in contemporary America for the problems of black people across different domains.

There is also the tendency of those from this ideology to "blame the victim," attributing most of the problems that beset black communities on the people themselves (Anderson 2012). To further attempt to strengthen their ideological stance, whites quickly point to certain public figures such as Barak Obama, Condoleezza Rice, Clarence Thomas, Colin Powell, and Oprah Winfrey to demonstrate that blacks have "arrived" and become elevated into mainstream and that if most of those from the same group desire to become knitted into the American fabric of society, they need only to use these individuals and others in the local community who are also successful but less known as a model of success. Yet many blacks know that this argument is weakened because they neglect to understand the lived experience of blackness even when they have escaped what Anderson (2012) calls "the iconic ghetto." They will have to work twice as hard to

prove that they are deserving of being in spaces that define upward mobility.

Furthermore, the one-strike rule does not cease simply because a proportion of black people are incorporated into the mainstream society. This promotion to a higher educational, professional, and socioeconomic status does not void the racial hierarchy or the need to navigate it.⁴

There was an emergence in America that exist to this day where blacks became more educationally, socially, economically, and professionally complex due to what Anderson (2000, 2012, 2014) notes as “the incorporation process.” The legislative gains of the Civil Rights Era led to an increased proportion of black people being launched into the middle class. It was more common, relative to the not so distant past, to see black doctors, lawyers, business owners, bankers, professors, and executives in professional positions across America. Virtually all of these professionals were familiar with the struggle of African Americans and with the plight of the poor, working class, and underclass given the reality that their life history and former status within this spectrum was not that distant in the past. Additionally, the incorporation of blacks that began after the civil rights movement brought to the fore the persistence of a caste-like society regardless of how far up the professional ladder black people climbed. The perception and experience that blacks have to work twice as hard to get half as far followed them from the industrial factories to the boardrooms of corporate America.

Clarence Thomas, a conservative and controversial figure for many people, grew up in the Deep South. Undoubtedly, his lived experience as a young black boy was characterized by de jure Jim Crow segregation and laws. He did not come from a family of impressive means and had to navigate the South and America like virtually every other

black man in society. After finishing secondary school, he enrolled in the College of Holy Cross in Massachusetts. “Holy Cross,” he writes, “was a microcosm of America, with separate rules for blacks and whites” (Thomas 2007, p. 57). The turbulent experiences of blacks on the campus and across the country stirred up much resentment towards social life. The encounters with wider society they were afforded did little to virtually nothing to shield them from the realities of racism, discrimination, and segregation. Ignorance or negligence of this reality is a deficit of the white working conception of race.

Thomas and his colleagues understood and endured this social reality in their everyday lives. And as a young man from the South he found the North to be very much akin to his regional origins as it concerns his “place” in society. Blackness in the North brought as much weight on the psyche of black men (and women) as it did anywhere else. This is a quandary for some people given the history of this region which blacks once flocked to in order to access jobs and escape the oppression that was peculiar to the southern states. As a black man and ethnographer with roots in Alabama, I was engaged by blacks in the field on the topic of race relations in the 21st century. These men came from white-collar, blue-collar, and orange-collar backgrounds. Many of them have been through at least two of these statuses and a few of them had lived all three. From our conversations in the City I apprehended the psychological perception and lived experience that yielded a narrative that said while there has been significant progress in a positive direction concerning contemporary black-white race relations there is still the constant reminder of the one-strike they possess, even if in subtle ways. This is the position of blackness that they as black men are marked by in society.

The display of blacks in high ranks within the broader society can be inspiring for sure but their ultimate position in society still position them as inferior in status. Colin Powell rose to such ranks as an inner-city black boy from New York City to becoming a military general and former Secretary of State. With this remarkable resume of achievements, he is yet acknowledged as the “first black” person to become the latter. And he is respected as a black man for having arisen to his respective rankings in the U.S. military. Clarence Thomas went on to become a Supreme Court Justice of the United States. His impressive resume also includes having attended Yale Law School. But this credential did not always help him to access opportunity subsequent to his graduation. The strike of blackness relegated him to a lower status than his white colleagues who also attended Yale. He thought that being in this network and holding this educational credential which generally open doors into the white-collar professional class would elevate him despite being a person of color. He discovered that this notion was far from the truth.

Thomas entered and finished his legal training at Yale shortly after the culmination of the Civil Rights Movement in America. This movement led to the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 1965 Voting Rights Act, and 1968 Fair Housing Act. The subsequent transition period for society was inevitable. And America should know that change does not happen overnight. The Emancipation Proclamation was enacted in 1863. And it was not until a century later that these aforementioned civil rights developments occurred. Between the years of the emancipation and civil rights laws whites, in an effort to maintain their dominant status, imposed a de jure and de facto caste structure upon blacks in this country. And Clarence Thomas’s intellectual and professional development was caught right in the social thicket of all of this. He realized that his professional and

educational status would not be sufficient for him. “I’d learned the hard way that a law degree from Yale meant one thing for white graduates and another for blacks, no matter how much anyone denied it” (Thomas 2007 p. 99). But blacks understanding of the white working conception of race is that they will nevertheless deny this positional status of blacks and their own superior status in society. They will inevitably work to maintain and protect their own position against any perceived challenge to their authority (Blumer 1958; Anderson et al. 2012, Anderson 2015).

There has been an undeniable racial imprint with respect to educational inequality, job discrimination, and housing segregation in America. The denial card, as I have conceptualized it, refers to a lack of acknowledgement of one’s racist attitudes and behaviors. This conceptual category is often explicated by black people from their own social interactions, where moments of slight by some whites are subsequently met with no admission of guilt. And there are whites who form defensive postures and mechanisms to explain away such interactions. Saying “I’m not a racist” (Anderson et, al 2012) and giving self-selected examples in which they have either interacted with blacks collegially or announcing the black friends that they have is for some blacks a meaningless or worthless response of why they should adjudicate the racial assailant as innocent of any social wrongdoing. Others within the black community count the denial as an additional slight against them, adding insult to what Anderson (2011) noted as “racial injury.”

The white working conception of race functions dialectically with the black working conception on race. The lived experience of blacks across intragroup status presents a very different picture for them and the group as a whole. They acknowledge the progress that blacks have attained and know the struggle and time it took to access such progress.

Furthermore, the reaction of the white racial group to this progress is deeply embedded in their mind. Being cognizant of the race card label that could be placed on them leads many of them to seek refuge from the “white space” (Anderson 2015) in places such as Side Street Tavern and Westside Spot. They believe that you just have to “pick and choose your battles” and that sometimes the denial card conversations with whites aren’t worth their emotional energy.

ISLANDS OF REFUGE

Patronizing refuge spaces, such as the Tavern, is a way for blacks to come together and enjoy social interaction with a diverse group of people they know share their understanding of race. They will also gather in “hood spots” to have fun and express themselves among certain blacks that even other black men of all collars would ignore. Hood spots, unlike the relatively more diverse and centrally located spaces like the Tavern, are located in or near the black ghetto. Though all blacks have not lived in the ghetto, there are white-collar, blue-collar, and orange collar men who originate from them. And they typically maintain the family and friendship networks developed there over the years. Their elevation to a higher status professionally, for the white-collar and blue-collar men, provides little incentive for them to abandon their social roots. And it is a relief to patronize these places for foods such as fried fish and, barbeque, and burgers, alcoholic beverages, and “black music” that is either played by a local disc jockey or from a playlist over the speakers.

In addition to bars and restaurants, barbershops located in or near the ghetto are among the most popular of hood spots for black men. The clientele is typically the same for the facilities that are established further into main areas of a city. Wall Street, main street,

and street men are a part of the same space. The men in the shop primarily come to be served as a client by their respective barber. But they also come into the barbershop to converse with other black men about a range of topics. Some of the men are “regulars” who hang out multiple times each week just to interact with the people in the space. Others come in as street vendors, selling food, clothing, and other items to both barbers and the customers. This is not unusual in black barbershops and the barbers welcome these men into their operations. Some of them are orange-collar men who are hustling to make ends meet for themselves and families and others are blue-collar and marginally employed black men who are likewise attempting to sustain themselves outside of the underground economy. And the barbers understand their plight, which was significantly influenced by the post-industrial period that economically ravaged urban America (Wilson 1978, 1987). Some of them have emerged or are emerging out of the same plight themselves. They know many of these men personally and are from the same neighborhoods and/or social conditions in the City.

I spent time in barbershops in Harlem. Black men undoubtedly talk about race relations in this space. But conversations also range from the news of the day around major sports teams, politics, relationships, incidents in the community, and music. In virtually all of these barbershops popular music, mostly from rhythm and blues, hip hop, and soul are played over the speaker. For more equipped settings, there may also be set-ups on the wall for clients to watch cable television and movies. In addition to being a place to serve clientele needs, the barbershop is an additional haven for black men to come and temporarily escape the cares of their lives and the white space. It is here that they have the social bond of other men who understand what they are facing in their everyday life

and are willing to hear them out without the constant rebuttal that comes from some whites. New York City is a transient urban space, with people moving in and out for professional positions, academic training, and change of scenery. Some of the men in the shops are from other areas throughout the country originally, but many of them were either natives of the City or had lived there for many years.

Like many African Americans in the North, they have “roots” down South and extended family members who still reside in their respective southern neighborhoods. Their perspectives of race relations and social life between the regions differ when understanding the issue historically. But they are not persuaded that the North provides a safer space for black men. It is not unusual to hear them speak of their desire to move down South for a change of lifestyle and scenery. Some of this is due to the economic forces of the North given the gentrification of the urban spaces and the subsequent increase in cost of living (Anderson 1990, Wilson 1978/1987). The period of deindustrialization had pernicious effects on black communities and the nature of the economy today has become increasingly more specialized as advancements in technology and science continue to occur. But other than being influenced by the economics of northern life in the City they are in search of a territory with different social opportunities.

The Old South and whatever remnants remain there is not a deterrence from their plans to settle down in the region in states such as North Carolina, Texas, and Georgia. For them, the North really did not offer much more of a better life away from racism. The “same shit” that is in the South is in the North. Comparative narratives on race relations in different regions of the U.S. is relatively more cogent among those who have lived for

years in both the South and the North than others who have only spent time in the North. Going down South, therefore, is a way to access a similar and sometimes better economy with a better cost of living. They are cognizant of the possibilities of encountering racism and discrimination in certain spaces and settings and have become accustomed to dealing with it up North, albeit in a more insidious way. They actually prefer the more frontal racism of the South because “at least you know where you stand.”

SILENT RACISM

I had to go out of state for a trip for Yale and scheduled a driver to transport me to the airport. My driver, an African American native of New York City, came to my apartment, loaded my stuff and we were off on the road on our way. We struck up casual conversation initially as he asked me how my morning was going and where I was headed particularly. I told him that I was well and travelling out of state on the behalf of my part-time job at the university. He then inquired about my work. I told him about the nature of my position and the Office I worked for and also that I was a doctoral student at Yale who was conducting research in the City. He was impressed and responded with a sense of pride about my academic pursuits and the goals that I have as a black man.

As we continued through traffic while listening to music we conversed further about topics of the day. He was very comfortable with talking and I observed his nonverbal cues as to let me know that he understood that I was a “regular brutha.” I inquired of him of his geographic origins. “I’m from New York City,” he said. I then asked “what part of the City are you from?” “I’m from Hell’s Kitchen! Raised right in the City all of my life,” he asserted. With that door of communication open he then asked in reciprocity where I

was from. I told him that I was originally from down South, by way of Alabama. With that noted he informed me of his extended family's roots in the South. "I got family down South too." I was curious if he had ever been down South to visit this family at all. He told me that he went down there to visit when he was growing up and goes down there from time to time when he is able and want to get away. Knowing his experience in both regions of the U.S. I talked with him more about his immersion in the South along with a discussion on the current affairs around the presidential politics that was sweeping the nation during this time. He found, like a significant number of people in the nation, the political race taking place in the nation to be a debacle that was like a seesaw on the playground- going back and forth about the "same shit." He spoke in depth about his perspective on the issue and we then returned back to his experiences down South.

"I like the time spent when I go down South. It's different though- the vibe of the people is different. I remember going in this store one day and all of the white people were just staring at me. It was this weird feeling ya know. I can't say it was just race because I'm from New York and so people can see me as someone with rough edges when I speak and how I carry myself. Black people down there can do that too sometimes," he explained. We talked more about that and I told him about my shift in the inverse of coming from the South and moving up Northeast for school and residential stay. I also talked to him about my first encounter with social relations in the North as a graduate student in the Boston, Massachusetts area. But I didn't go into extensive details as I was increasingly interested in understanding his view on the difference(s), if there were any for him, in race relations between the North and the South. "What do you think about white folks up North compared to people down South," I asked? He responded, "I

mean, like I said down there they are very noticeable with their shit when they got a problem with you like they were in that store.” And then after a short pensive pause he declared, “Up North, we got what I like to call silent racism! These white folks aren’t up front about their shit like the ones down there. They’ll have you thinking they’re down for you and with everything but they slick with it. Up here we got silent racism!”

The North has long struggled, dating back as far as the post-Emancipation period, with distinguishing itself from the South as it concerns black-white race relations. In their classic work, *Black Metropolis*, Drake and Cayton (1945) sociologically and historically delineated the life course of blacks (then called Negroes) in the northern city of Chicago. As noted by Wright in the introduction to this text, blacks did not truly escape Jim Crow life when migrating to the North:

All three of us have lived some of our most formative years in Chicago; indeed, one of the authors, Horace Cayton, still lives there. Drake and Cayton, like me, were not born there; all three of us migrated to Chicago to seek freedom, life.... Drake came from the South; Cayton from the Northeast; and I went to Chicago as a migrant from Mississippi.... The Jim Crow lives that Negroes live in our crowded cities differ qualitatively from those of whites and are not fully known to whites.... But the American Negro, child of the culture that crushes him, wants to be free in a way that white men are free; for him to wish otherwise would be unnatural, unthinkable. Negroes, with but minor exceptions, still believe in the hope of economic rewards; they believe in justice, liberty, the integrity of the individual. In the heart of industrial America is a surviving remnant, perchance a saving remnant of a passion for freedom, a passion fanned by their national humiliation (1945, pp. xvii, xx, xxv).

The state of affairs for black people concerning their incorporation into the ideals of American freedom was not a settled issue upon their arrival in the North. Their journey out of the South wasn’t simply to escape de jure Jim Crow, it was also to seek economic opportunity and to leave the region in hopes that they would have a better psychological state of mind to attain the liberty and freedom that the Founding Fathers had imposed on

the nation through the Constitution. Yet Chicago served as a microcosm of what was actually occurring in this region of supposed newly discovered freedom.

Blacks still held a similar racial inferiority status to whites in the North with its concomitant caste relations as they did in the South. It wasn't always expressed brutally like it was done by the acts of whites in the South. But even the Negro in the North, according to W.E.B. Du Bois (1898, p. 20), were nevertheless in a "peculiar social environment" that many people in America at that time did not fully understand or appreciate. He was a social scientist and historian who set a major precedence as to how one should go about empirically understanding the vicissitudes of social groups. Three decades following the Emancipation Proclamation he set out to do sociological research on the "Negro Problem" in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Blacks of this era are identified as former slaves, first generation descendants of former slaves, and migrants from the South. Many of these families were centered at the core of the city near the industrial complex. Yet this same group were not found to be actively engaged in the local labor market. How could this group, being so close to the headquarters of urban industry, be excluded from the economic structure of this urban space? This was undoubtedly a result of the racial caste status that black people were born with that followed them to northern cities (Dubois 1899; Hunter 2013).

Taking a historical approach to the development of liberty for black people Drake and Cayton (1945, p. 41) notes that while whites were eager to assist in the freedom of blacks they were reluctant to incorporate them into the life of the North. "Indeed, many abolitionist hoped that once the Negroes were freed, the bulk of them would either remain in the South or emigrate to the West Indies or Africa." Yet following the Civil

War there was a generation of blacks who began to progressively migrate to the North. Their arrival in mass served as a challenge to the status position of the white European immigrants and as an increase in competition for both economic and political power. While the blend of ethnic whites was working through their differences among each other the blacks were not as fortunate to be incorporated into these social developments. The “badge of color,” explicated by Drake and Cayton, precluded African Americans from participation in the political and economic life of the city. This “suggests that in a vague but nevertheless decisive sense they were thought of as having a subordinate place” (p. 45). Chicago served as a proxy for other major cities in the North during that time and the persistence of the social life of the North continued throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

The Civil Rights Movement culminated into the legislative developments of the 60’s. However, preceding this yield was the 1954 Supreme Court decision known as *Brown v. Board of Education*. This ruling declared that “separate but equal” educational systems were unconstitutional. This particular case corrected the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case that was decided decades earlier. Much of the emphasis for this ruling had immediate implications for the Jim Crow South. And white freedom fighters and progressive media in the North applauded this unanimous decision by the Warren court. It appeared that America was taking positive steps forward in improving race relations in the South. But this very case tested the progressive and evolving North at its core.

Relatively fewer people have heard of the subsequent case that challenged *Brown v. Board* and illuminated the presence of the racial strike of blackness in the North as a social reality that was not exclusively an article of the South. Twenty years following *Brown* the Supreme Court case known as *Milliken v. Bradley* was decided. *Milliken*

originated in the city of Detroit. James Ryan (2014, p. 23), a legal scholar, summarized the tenants, implications, and potency of this case for both public education and race relations:

In 1970, there were 290,000 students in the city of Detroit, about 64 percent of whom were black. By contrast, in the surrounding districts just outside of Detroit, there were 490,000 students, 98 percent of whom were white. Stephen Roth, the district court judge in *Milliken*, realized that busing within the city limits of Detroit would be futile and instead devised a busing plan that encompassed both Detroit and school districts in three surrounding counties. Roth's decision was affirmed by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, which warned that "if we hold that school district boundaries are absolute barriers to a Detroit school desegregation plan, we would be opening a way to nullify *Brown v. Board of Education*." But in 1974, the Supreme Court reversed the court of appeals, ruling that school district lines could not be crossed to desegregate schools absent proof of an interdistrict violation. In short, poor, minority students would stay in the cities, and the suburbs would be spared from busing.

The *Milliken* case should not merely be understood as a divide between socioeconomic classes. The "silent racism" described earlier from the field is noted as effectively being as much a part of the social life of the North as it was in the South. As I walked through the streets of Harlem, Bronx, and Brooklyn I see the accoutrements of this social and legal history even today. Rent control laws and school reform efforts only slightly mitigate the educational, housing, and economic inequities in view throughout the City. I rode with a New York City native name Xavier on the way to a social event on one day and as I was driven throughout various neighborhoods he spoke to me about his life as a young boy, pointing to different streets where he grew up and socialized and also where he attended school. During one part of the trip I inquired of him something I observed as a migrant dweller in the City. With his native credibility, I was curious of his perspective and understanding of the black-white community dynamics of Harlem today.

OUTSIDERS

I talked with Xavier about my experiences walking through the streets of Harlem, Brooklyn, and other areas throughout the City where the black and white people, among other ethnic groups, spend time in the same public spaces and live in the same neighborhood vicinities. I noticed that some whites refuse to make eye contact with you as you walk by them on the streets of these diverse neighborhoods. Others give off an imperceptible stare with the nonverbal communication as if they wanted to know why you were present in the area. It happened numerous times to me while in the streets of various “cosmopolitan” areas of the city (Anderson 2011). I perceived that they were born and raised New Yorkers who were spotting out an “outsider” in the area, particularly a black outsider. After I explained these social interactions to him I asked if he has had any experiences with this or is this particular to non-natives such as myself. He responded:

Oh, these motherfuckers walk around this place like that all the time! Come staring at me like ‘what are you doing here?’ No motherfucker, what are YOU doing here!? I’m from here! I was born and raised here! Get the fuck outta here with that bullshit! ... And they just moved in this motherfucker like yesterday! They get on my nerves with that shit!

This reaction from the field sparked my sociological imagination to explore more of this issue with other people in the City. Time and time again their shared understanding acknowledged the changes occurring in certain areas of the City and what that means for black dwellers in those spaces who live near the white newcomers. The Bronx, once considered the most unlikely spot that will undergo such transformation, is also in the early phases of gentrification and the social experience of change in race relations that ensue amidst changing communities (Anderson 1990).

Most whites on the subway trains were widely known to have exited by the 125th street stop in Harlem. Now you can see a significant number of them on the train yet sitting pass this stop and this signals to blacks that the process of gentrification has entered this borough, particularly in the parts bordering Manhattan. I had a conversation with such an individual, a young white man, while on the train headed to the Bronx. I inquired where he was headed and he responded that he was on his way home. I then asked how long he has lived in the area and he stated that he recently moved there from Manhattan because it provided a cheaper cost of living and he was able to access Manhattan easily. Economic configurations such as this are consistently occurring throughout this part of the City. It's an exclusively objective choice on the surface. But some blacks do not apprehend this to mean that this is a signal of any improvement in race relations or that this is reflective of the northern white people who aren't opposed to living and interacting with them in a genuine fashion. It, on the contrary, is a precursor to what they saw happen in Harlem and neighborhoods in the Brooklyn. "We are about to be priced and pushed out by these white liberals setting up shop in our hood" is a sentiment among a significant proportion of native blacks who grew up in the City all of their lives.

There were a few times during my fieldwork that I travelled out of the City for leisure. Nearby Philadelphia was one of those spaces where I socialized and enjoyed a short break from the research. On one trip to the area I travelled to an event hosted by an alumni network to which I belong. I met an African American man, Bobby, who like myself has geographic roots in the deep South. He is an educated person who moved up North decades ago to pursue higher education. I also discovered later in our conversation that he was also from the same state as I. With this precursor, we talked about his life history and what it was like moving from the South during that time and establishing a base in this northern city. Our talk ventured from why he decided to come to what life has been like since then. We also chatted about the politics of the day and what that means for black people. He didn't perceive that there would be any major changes in a positive direction coming out of either candidate of the two-party system.

SINGING DIXIE IN BEETHOVEN

We went to a nearby fast-food restaurant where we continued our conversation. Bobby was elated, as was I, to meet a fellow black man from the South with a similar background. He too was an Ivy League-educated man. And as he talked more about what he thought of the social life of race relations in the North versus the Jim Crow South he lived through he mentioned something I had to ask him to repeat. “Up here,” he said, “it’s just the same shit! Same shit! These white folks can’t fool me. See down South it’s right there for you to see cuz they don’t care....” I interjected causally to concur with him through my own experiences in Boston where I first learned about the difference in the race relations of the North where racist whites are convinced they are not in any way like the racist whites in the South. He then interjected me to add, “they sing Dixie in Beethoven.” I initially didn’t ascertain what he said so I asked him to repeat it. Very calmly and confidently he stated again, “they sing Dixie in Beethoven.” He then explicated this statement by saying that you deal with the “same shit” in the North as you do down South, albeit in a more insidious way. The Dixie anthem and the culture of the South that came with it is effectively effectuated in the North through a different tune. While there is a different social arrangement of racist manifestations, it is nevertheless the “same shit!”

The North has struggled to live up to its ideals of being a major part of the experiment to ensure that black people are guaranteed the same liberties and opportunities as whites. It became understood as a region of the country that didn’t practice what it preached. And there is perhaps no better example of this than the racist riots of the Boston busing story

(Sokol 2014). Justice Thomas (2007, p. 78) recounts the quandary and reality of this turbulent time in our nation's history:

[At that time, there was] the ongoing controversy over the use of busing to integrate Boston's public schools. I wasn't surprised by the explosion of white rage that threatened to rip the city in two. It was in Boston, not Georgia, that a white man had called me nigger for the first time. I'd already found New England to be far less honest about race than the South, and I bristled at the self-righteous sanctimony with which so many of the northerners at Yale glibly discussed the South's racial problems. Now that their own troubles were on national display, I was unsympathetic. The water moccasins, it seemed, were biting themselves.

The presence of the one-strike rule and the denial card is still in existence in the North. As a proxy for America writ-large it demonstrates that while individuals and social groups have come a long way in making progress for a more inclusive and less racist environment there are remnants from the not so distant past that blacks of all classes and statuses have to persistently navigate across various social contexts. This is how black white-collar, blue-collar, and orange-collar men make sense of the "legacy of racial caste" (Anderson et al. 2012) in their everyday lives. And as communities evolve and the economy becomes increasingly more specialized, global, and transformed, facets of their lives, such as social and family life, have to be rearranged. This is imperative for them as they navigate through American society in an attempt to solidify and incorporate themselves into mainstream society. They remain cognizant of the "strike" that is against them all, a "badge" (Drake and Cayton 1945) which gives them a continuity of solidarity. Other dimensions of the lives of these men illustrates intragroup differences that gives some of them more privilege and negotiation power than others. These differences are a part of the social planning of their lives as they not only make sense of the group, but also of themselves.

Chapter Three

Fatherhood Decoded

The life of black fatherhood in the context of society is a field of inquiry that is yet developing. Both public and political domains have disseminated, even caricatured, information about the marital and relationship status of black fathers in a very opinionated way that were more representative of their opinions and stereotypes than of facts. And much of these efforts are presented from a deficit-oriented model. The image of the “iconic ghetto” has influenced some people in mainstream society of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to believe and perceive black men to be in aggregate as they appear in discourse (Anderson 2012). Yet the complexities of status that black men have is either unknown, ignored, or underappreciated (Anderson 1978). Intragroup diversity is true of all groups of men. But the historic and contemporary American psyche has been hesitant to allow the same type of humanity to be afforded to African Americans as it has for whites.

The Spot and Tavern revealed the complexity of black men that exist in society. It was normal to have conversations with white-collar, blue-collar, and orange-collar men at the same time. And this was also true in other settings in the City. They were just as approachable with me as they were with another. Walking down the street you hear men asking “how you doing my brutha” and the subsequent response for many of them was “same shit, different day.” They were not always referring to race when responding in this way but race was always a constant for them, implicitly and explicitly. These men

gathered together in spite of their differences and also gathered among men of their own status as well to converse, drink, and for other leisure activities such as watching a football game or playing pool together.

The white-collar men are often from the same neighborhood or type of neighborhood as the other men in the collective group. They know the struggles of street life, poverty, inner-city schools, and economic instability. They've seen a lot of the same social interactions and conditions and understand what that means. Xavier, the native from Harlem, is a proxy for men whose lived experience is currently characterized by a white-collar status but who is from a working poor/working class background. And like Xavier, they can take you to their old "hood" and show you where they were born, went to school, and "the block" where they used to "kick it back in the day." They are also up front about "the shit that used to go down in the hood." Their narrative indicates that life was not without faults, danger, or necessities. As is the case with many white, Hispanic, and Asian men, they too had their problems from time to time in life and yet have emerged to be who they are in the present. The major difference is that they had a "strike" against them that their counterparts from these other groups did not have. Due to segregation, this effectively meant that their residential communities and school systems were also marked by the subordination that comes with being black (Massey & Denton 1993; Anderson et al. 2012).

The men of the City, including those that frequent the Tavern and the Spot, have different desires when it comes to getting married, when to start a family, whether to commit to their dating partner through the legal institution of marriage, or to remain single until they have figured life out or are more prepared for what they see as the best

time to begin family formation. Many of the fathers have connections with their children even if they are not married to the mother. In the case where there are multiple children with different women they either have managed to establish positive and effective co-parenting relationships with each mother or are in conflict with one or all of them; this was true for men of all statuses. And these men were sure to point out the “dead beat dad” who had abandoned his responsibilities as a father when there was ample opportunity to be present when there was a collegial “baby momma” that allowed this not to be the situation. There was little difference in the views on this type of man relative to the wider society and they proudly distinguished themselves from the “dead beat.”

The role of father and husband can be seen as a challenge and/or “blessing” depending on the person you approach. Being married and becoming a dad is a turning point for many men. Once the family and marital status change, many of them change along with this new status. The usual hangout time they had with their friends and “homies” is not a part of the schedule as it once was. I heard men speak on numerous occasions about this social and psychological transformation in their lives. It is narrated by these men as “being on yo grown man shit.” Partnership, marriage, and fatherhood is an added status. And it is as complex as other forms of status as it concerns how the men themselves understand and navigate everyday life. The classic sociological work, *A Place on the Corner* (Anderson 1978), is an empirical model of how researchers can address the knowledge deficit concerning the apprehension and comprehension of fatherhood, relationships, and family through the narratives of the men themselves. Scholars in the field of family life and the social development around the family in the city are

continually building new knowledge where there once existed an empirical dearth in the field, especially for black men.

EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS ON BLACK FATHERHOOD

In addition to the public and political domains of American society, the scientific community is also complicit in our lack of comprehensive and extensive understanding on the black family. The knowledge production for a long period of time provided scant literature on the black father. And when they were written about it was often in a way that allowed them to be only tacitly apprehended. An understanding of the ideal family, according to mainstream American values, includes a father, mother, and child/children. The parents coexist within the context of a marriage and dwell in their own residential space. As a traditional consensus in society, the father is seen as the “head of the family” and the wife the assisting partner to the husband and nurturer of the children. Even if this is not an agreed upon ideal among some individuals and groups, the notion of the family as an important institution (perhaps the most important institution) is extant. According to Bobo (2003, p. ix) “the family is arguably the core institution of human social existence. For this reason, those interested in understanding the conditions, status, and prospects of any ethnic-racial group typically make the family a central topic of concern.” The ideal “nuclear family” is essential to understanding the empirical work that has been conducted on family functioning and structure. As it concerns black families, the research data dates back to the institution of slavery and gradually develops into contemporary conceptions and lived experiences of fathers, mothers, and their offspring.

The research on black families during the twentieth century, according to Furstenberg (2007), focused on differences in social class among blacks and whites and between

blacks. During the mid-60s the research was redirected to focus heavily on black families living in poverty, which he attributes to the publication of the Moynihan report (Moynihan 1965). In response to the significant percentage of black children being born out of wedlock Daniel Patrick Moynihan addressed the state of the black family in his “now-infamous” report *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action* (Edin, Tach, & Mincy 2009). Massey and Sampson (2009, p. 6) notes, “The Moynihan Report is probably the most famous piece of social scientific analysis never published.” At the time, Moynihan was working in President Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration in the area of labor policy. The issue of children being born outside of marriage was not particular to African-Americans. White children were also subject to being reared in single-parent homes primarily headed by women (Wilson 2009). Moynihan’s interest in the family and the abandonment of fathers was something that was both a personal and scholarly interest. Massey and Sampson (2009, p. 11) recounts that he himself had been a product of a matriarchal household:

More than most, Moynihan was also personally aware of the disadvantages of poverty and of the difficulties associated with growing up in a single-parent family in a bad neighborhood. His father had abandoned the family, and as a child, he grew up shining shoes for money in some of New York City’s tougher neighborhoods before graduating from high school in Harlem. He also personally knew what a critical role government could play in moving someone from poverty to affluence, as he and his family directly benefited from many of the programs of the New Deal and he owed his education at least partly to the GI Bill.

While some people and scholars took offense to Moynihan’s report, others affirmed his sentiments. Wilson (2009, p.34) stated that “the Moynihan Report is an important and prophetic document. I still stand by that statement. The report is important because it continues to be a reference for studies on the black family and low-skilled black males.”

Central to the discussion of this section of the essay is how urban black fathers have been positioned in the scholarly literature and the historic, economic, and social forces that have shaped their participation in black family life and structure.

It was the case for decades that any search through peer-reviewed articles or virtually any publication on the black family or black fatherhood will yield an acknowledgement on the lack of substantial attention to the black father. Taylor, et al. (1990, p. 996) noted that “in contrast to the volume of work focused on the position of black women, the role of black men in families is one of the most conspicuously neglected areas of family research. The absence of a reliable knowledge base on the role of black men in families has resulted in a portrayal of black men as peripheral to family and as performing poorly in the family roles of spouse and father.” Nelson (2004, p. 427) echoes these words: “Once it was customary to begin an article on fathers with a complaint over their relative absence in the sociological literature.” Though there have been recent developments in research over the years to address the deficit acknowledged by these two scholars (and others) there is still much to be explored with the effort to better understand all the dimensions of fatherhood in American society, particularly adult and adolescent black fathers. The latter has been more scantily explored empirically. Though my ethnographic work focuses exclusively on adult men in the City, their adolescent counterparts are worth a brief note.

Until recent developments, adolescent African American fathers have also been “conspicuously neglected” in social science literature. There is less known about this particular subgroup of fathers than their adult counterparts (Connor 1988). According to Miller (1997, p. 61), the field on black adolescent fathers is “nearly devoid of research

specifically focusing on black adolescent fathers... An extensive search of research literature between 1975 and 1990 reveals that less than twenty sources- book chapters, dissertations, and journal articles- for example address the issue of black adolescent father.” Like the literature on adult parenthood, most of the studies on adolescent parenting focused specifically on the mother, with references to the father and his involvement with the child. This has led to scholars identifying these young males as “invisible men” (Miller 1994; Miller 1997; see also Coley 2001). The reasons for their absence in the social science literature could have been due to a lack of knowledge of the history and plight of African Americans in the U.S. Without an appreciation for and understanding of the root causes of social group differences in historic and contemporary America, a rich representation of the people will be precluded.

SEEING FATHERHOOD THROUGH HISTORICAL LENS

The legacy of black family life is not fully understood if the institution of slavery is not revisited. The black family existed as a unit, albeit in the midst of oppression, during this historic period in America as it would continue to exist subsequently after the emancipation of slaves. Black families had to work within the constraints of the times. They had to “play the hand that they were dealt,” so to speak. There was no agency for black people over their own bodies and the idea of being afforded the same opportunity to advance or live at any requisite level was elusive. During slavery, the black families were persistently under scrutiny and at high risk for separation. They became accustomed to seeing their children, fathers, mothers, husbands, siblings and fellow slaves torn apart by the slaveholders who ripped these enslaved communities apart to sell or auction them

off to interested buyers. Social life during this time period also involved families with the same subjugated experience adopting and caring for other children on the plantation as their own (Gutman 1976).

The black family was tight-knit given the structure of the institution of slavery and the social dynamics that took place in the system. It was not only in the best interest of the slaveholder to maintain this bond in his effort to economically benefit from their labor, but the fathers and mothers of each slave quarter were purposed to nurture and care for their families in the context of what was an extremely hopeless situation. The latter was not based off of what was in the best interest of the slaveholder but rather on what was in the culture of Africans who consistently were stripped of their tribal identities by whites once they entered America as slaves among a group who came from a different way of life. The importance of family was central to black people even during slavery. One former slave recounts a naturalistic part of his upbringing as an enslaved child that helps to illuminate slave households during that time:

Of my ancestry, I know nothing. In the slave quarters, and even later I heard whispered conversations among the [black] people of the tortures which the slaves, including, no doubt, my ancestors on my mother's side, suffered in the middle passage of the slave ship while being conveyed from Africa to America.... She, I remember, had a half-brother and a half-sister. In the days of slavery not very much attention was given to family history and family records- that is, black family records. Her addition to the slave family attracted about as much attention as the purchase of a new horse or cow. Of my father, I know even less than of my mother. I do not even know his name. I have heard reports to the effect that he was a white man who lived on one of the nearby plantations. Whoever he was, I never heard of his taking the least interest in me or providing in any way for my rearing. But I do not find especial fault with him. He was simply another unfortunate victim of the institution which the Nation unhappily had engrafted upon it at the time.

The early years of my life, which were spent in the little cabin, were not very different from those of thousands of other slaves. My mother, of course, had little time in which to give attention to the training of her children during the day. She snatched a few moments for our care in the early morning before her work began, and at night after the day's work

was done. One of my earliest recollections is that of my mother cooking a chicken late at night, and awakening her children for the purpose of feeding them (Washington 1995, pp. 1-3).

This account, by Booker T. Washington (1995), went on to acknowledge that he did not know where the chicken that his mother prepared came from, but presumed it was from the owner's farm. He also noted that many would consider this to be theft. And in the Post-Emancipation life he too would have judged it to be so. But under the system of slavery his mother could only rightly be counted as "a victim" (p. 3).

Researchers on black family life, well-intentioned or not, have neglected to account for the "peculiar social environment" Du Bois enshrined (Du Bois 1898). Additionally, Washington (1995, p.115) elucidated the "peculiar conditions" that must be acknowledged in order to fully understand the social, economic, educational, and political situations of black people in the South during Jim Crow. Black fathers, along with mothers and children, were relegated to the subordination of this era. Their lived experience in each respective position of the household was confronted by the everyday realities of their existence as slaves. To render the sociological processes of the people is to apprehend what life as a black person in general and father particularly was like during this time. They navigated their status accordingly, as was the case with Washington's mother as aforementioned. She was not a thief, nor was his unknown father a "dead beat." They were a social product of their life and times during slavery. While many in public and political discourse would find this to be extremely plausible, it became increasingly less cogent for them to accept this type of analysis as time went forward beyond Emancipation.

CONTEMPORARY DELINEATIONS OF FATHERHOOD

The transition of the black people into freedom and the transformation of American life into the Jim Crow era had pernicious effects on their family structure. Black men were not fully and equitably incorporated into the economic opportunity that existed in the South and were influenced by the industrial developments of the North to move near the core of where the industries existed and were emerging. This pull to the northern region for work indicated that migration was not exclusively based on an escape of Jim Crow law. They also left to seek better opportunities for themselves and their families.

Sociological studies have been undertaken to better understand the conditions of the black family. Qualitative studies revealed a decline in marriage and increase in nonmarital births among blacks (Furstenberg 2007, 2009). In the wake of Moynihan's report and the social thought of the fragile black family, scholars began to devote a considerable amount of time investigating and describing the lives of single mothers and their children. This was great in the sense that the field was expanded with the analyses from these studies. However, the problem with this focus is that they left out a concentration on fatherhood, leaving the field with a dearth of knowledge about this issue.

Some studies on urban fathers painted a distorted picture in which they were not interested in marriage or being involved in the lives of their children. They were only interested in sexual relations with women. However, subsequent studies began to represent fatherhood, particularly black fathers, in a different light that was contrary to this "broad stroke" representation. One empirical account revealed that black fathers were more likely than other racial and ethnic groups to be involved in the lives of their

children, even after the relationship with the biological mother has ended. This could be due to the “greater institutionalization of the 'baby father' role among African-Americans than among other U.S. racial and ethnic groups. It may be that stronger norms guide unmarried African American fathers as they enact the father role, which sustain their involvement with the child even after the relationship with the child's mother ends” (Anderson 1989; Edin, Tach, & Mincy 2009).

Urban research has focused on the impact of inner-city context on the family structure. Wilson (1987; 1996) traces the fading of the traditional family to joblessness and poverty among urban black families. The impact of disadvantage extends to all racial and ethnic groups. However, blacks are disproportionately affected by poverty relative to other groups. Some of the studies noted by Wilson linked the decline in earnings by men to lower rates in marriage, additional to that of women. The impact of this has been substantial for many blacks as fathers are less interested in marriage for reasons that are connected to his employment status as well as with his belief that marriages do not last over the long term and therefore are not worth the investment. Women are less likely to become wedded to these men for similar reasons. And some cited that they are not as concerned about the involvement or connection to the father due to his status. They see their own stability and economic survival as dependent upon themselves and less of the father. Stack (1974) described the strategies that account for this type of survival in her work, contending with the notion that urban black families are living in a culture of poverty.

Anderson (1989, 1999) also addressed the impact of the urban landscape on the black family with specific depth to both adult and adolescent fathers in the inner city. He agrees

with Wilson that the impact of joblessness and also the lack of role models in urban areas of concentrated poverty have influenced African American family life. However, he devotes more attention to the role of what he calls the “decent daddy” and “old heads” on the black family:

The decent daddy is a certain kind of man, with certain responsibilities and privileges: to work, to support his family, to rule his household, to protect his daughters, and to raise his sons to be like him, as well as to encourage other young people to demonstrate these qualities, too. Today, he may be a factory worker, a common laborer, a parking-lot attendant, a taxi driver, or even a local pharmacist, a doctor, lawyer, or professor, striving hard to be a good husband and father. He tends to carry the weight of the race on his shoulders and represents his community to outsiders. He is highly principled in morals and tries to embody what to him are the best features of the wider society (1999, p. 180).

Anderson concluded by stating that when positive men who serve in the role “decent daddy” and “old head” are lacking, detrimental social conditions are structurally constructed that extend beyond the family:

Today’s young people who reside in pockets of concentrated ghetto poverty, even the most decent, often have less experience with stable communities and families than their own parents or grandparents did. The old days of the manufacturing economy are more than a generation away. The more successful families and individuals have left the inner city for the wider community. There are more incentives for the strongest decent women to value careers and job potential over the grandmother, and the wider society attaches less value to the role. But more significant are the very serious challenges that beset the decent daddy and the grandmother of today’s inner-city ghetto. As poverty becomes more deeply entrenched, as drugs proliferate, and as the level of violence rises, the community grows demoralized (p. 205).

Other scholars have taken a narrow focus to examine the conceptions and everyday lived experiences of specific dimensions of fatherhood. Jennifer Hamer (2001) studied the lives of non-residential fathers who were involved (or in some cases not involved) in the lives of their children. Roberta Cole (2009) explored the perspectives and everyday lives of black men who were single parents. These studies and others capture aspects of

fatherhood (adolescent and adult) generally ignored by society and scholarly literature (see also Richardson 2009; Oware 2011; Miller 1994; Dallas & Chen 1998; Paschal, Lewis-Moss, & Hsiao, 2011, Smith 2010; Smith, J.D. 2010).

Regardless of what aspect of fatherhood one may choose to focus on one thing is certain: fatherhood does not occur in a vacuum. Neighborhood characteristics and demographic contexts (urban vs. rural) have influences on outcomes and an impact on family functioning (Wilson, 2009). Wilson (2003) documented how the inner-city context, with its high levels of joblessness and other structural issues, has profoundly shaped social relations and how fatherhood is narrated and effectuated in everyday life among black men. “In communities where the young people have little reason to believe that they have a promising future-including the prospects of stable employment and stable marriages-the absence of strong normative pressure to resolve out-of-wedlock pregnancies through marriage has resulted in an explosion of single-parent families. Furthermore, there is a tendency among policymakers, scholars, and black leaders alike to separate the economic problems of the inner-city from national and international trends affecting American families and neighborhoods” (pp. 19-20). In essence, they neglect the social problems which can serve as a challenge to fatherhood, and thereby family functioning.

ABSENT IN HOME, PRESENT IN LIFE

Black men have persistently been portrayed as disinterested in participating in adult life (Hamer 2001; Cole 2009). The extant narrative on black families is that the children in households headed by single-parent women are “fatherless.” While this narrative is

representative of some black, and white, children it does not capture what role many men who are and aren't the biological father of these children have in their developmental trajectory. Not being under the same residential roof as their child does not negate the reality of their attachment to and engagement with their lives. Many of the fathers I encountered and interacted with in the field were not married to their "baby momma" nor did they reside in the same living quarters as them. They were nevertheless active in the extracurricular activities of their children, attending sports events, musical performances, and also attending school meetings. This is in addition to their own private social endeavors they planned for them. When I inquired about their availability to "kick it" at a usual spot of choice they would inform me of their arrangements to have their child(ren) during that time. It was not a negative preclusion for them as they often were involved, along with the mother, in attending to their weekly needs also. Thus, their "daddy time" allowed them to emotionally connect one on one with each other through leisure in the City.

Balancing the demands of fatherhood with work, a personal life, and a co-parenting relationship with the mother can sometimes be difficult. This dynamic is sometimes further complicated when the mother of the child has other children with another man. The social interactions in blended families can work out amicably if the situation has been established in a way where both sides are understanding of the family structure and what that means for each partner. Men reported that they are sometimes guilty in cases where there is a non-biological child in the household whose father is not as attached to or involved in their life. Mike, a bus driver, states: "I feel kind of bad sometimes because when I go to pick [my son] up to spend the weekend or a few days with me [her other

kids] are kinda just looking and staring at me. I know they wanna go sometimes just to get out of the house. It's kinda bad you know that their daddy don't come around like I do. Me and his momma have problems sometimes with all of her nonsense but with me and him it's straight. I think she's now beginning to see what me being there is really about. I gotta deal with her bullshit when she on something. But the more she sees that I'm doing what I'm supposed to do, doing my part, and how that's helping her, she giving me less flack with the bullshit!" He laughed as he made the last statement and I laughed along with him because we have spent a considerable amount of time conversing about the situation between them. There was visible relief in his nonverbal communication with me on this issue. It wasn't a completely settled matter, but he was excited and pleased with the progress they both had made and that he was "there" in his son's life.

Mike also spoke of the importance of his role in the relationship as it concerns being present to help both the mom and his son navigate his developmental changes as a boy who is approaching early adolescence. He began to have some behavioral problems at home and school and the mother solicited him to intervene to help correct and guide him at the time. He would talk with him on the phone, at the mother's quarters, and have conversations with him when they were together. When he considered it necessary, he would take away leisure privileges and games from him as a form of discipline until he amended his ways and doings both with his mom and teachers. This further strengthened the co-parenting relationship and according to his assessment she continued "to come around to the fact that she can't do this without me. I don't get too much in the way but I know that she's now seeing that she needs me there! Especially with the other [fathers] of

the other ones not really giving a dam and not there to help her! She knows I'm the one to help give her some relief from all of that stress when [my son] is tripping. And she need a break! I know it! And she knows it!"

J.C., a business and information technology professional, is another father who spoke with me about how he navigates family life as a father who is not married to the mother of his two children. His oldest, an adolescent son, and he had some emotional distance for a time. He had a healthy relationship with the other child and they spent a great deal of time doing activities together. The elder sibling would sometimes skip out of planned activities to stay home with the mom. He didn't understand this distance and talked with me about it during one of our conversations. "I don't know what his deal is. He throws an attitude all the time and act like he doesn't want to be around- unless it's something he wants. It's kinda like he's using me or something. His momma doesn't say anything because she and I are not always on the best terms so if he says he doesn't want to come then she doesn't make him. It's like neither one of them care half the time man. I don't want to put up an argument since the youngest is cool with coming over and everything... What do you think all that is about man? It's not like I don't do stuff for them. And spend time with them like some other niggas do with their kids.... I don't know man." He did let out a laugh and says, "It's a trip man. It is what it is I guess. All I can do is my part. Whatever it is maybe he'll come around at some point. When he does want something, like for his birthday or something, he'll link up with me, like the other one, like nothing has ever happened. I'm just keeping it real with you man. What do you think?" I didn't offer any particular advice but inquired of him more about his relationship with the mom over the years.

After he conversed with me about his relationship history he began to contemplate how that may have influenced his older child's attitude towards him. They had a turbulent relational history with one another. And he was candid about the role he played in contributing to the conflict they endured over time. "Maybe that's what it is man," he says. He was old enough and around when all of that shit took place back in the day. It might be some kind of resentment or something with him over that. I never really thought about it like that my brutha. But I think that's what it is. I was kinda off back then. It was not like it is now with me. I know that I probably have something to do with it." He laughs again and said, "It's a trip man."

A CHANGE IS GONNA COME

When a child becomes a part of the family structure, many of these men reported or demonstrated a shift in their outlook on life, who they are, and how they should conduct themselves now that their social status as a new father has changed. There is a transformed perspective in their understanding on life after the birth of the child relative to the time of pregnancy. They knew the upcoming responsibilities that were approaching as the time of delivery drew nigh. But the change in psychology is more intense when the vicissitudes of being a dad confronts them. The social realities of caring and providing for the baby crystallizes what they anticipated or were told about the actual life of being a father. These things are now up close and personal. And compromises that they typically would not allow or engage in the romantic or casual partnership are now approached with a more open mind. All of these changes, and many others, are a part of the life they now have to adjust to. As one of the fathers declared, "shit is real man!"

Terry is a blue-collar worker employed by a private security company. We met one day during his shift near one of the buildings he worked in. He grew up in a working-class, and at times working poor, family. He was exposed to the inner-city life as a boy and witnessed the interactions of drug dealers, gang members, and drug addicts. In his old neighborhood, it is considered a marvel to be young, black, male, alive and without children by the time you they reach emergent young adulthood. Yet, he was living a life with all of these characteristics. While he had past experiences with the street life, he has now been living a “decent” life outside of the dynamics of the “hood” for years (Anderson 1999).

Terry was single and dating at the time we met each other. He had no children and did not speak about fatherhood in any particular way concerning his desire to be a dad. Nor did he discuss the prospects of a woman that he would likely marry. Eventually he informed me that his partner was pregnant and expecting a baby in the months to come. We laughed about it as if it was a “surprise” he put no effort into. “Oh, wow! You got a birthday present and it ain’t even your birthday man,” I joked! He laughed with me and said, “yeah man! Shit is crazy, right?!” He and the mother were off and on in their relations to one another. But as time passed and she nearing her due date, he began to talk with a different expectation and plan for how he was going to navigate his role as a father.

After she gave birth to their child he turned his focus to their relationship as co-parents and his new status as a father. This was his first child and he was excited once she arrived. We talked after he arrived back to work following his child’s release from the hospital. When he saw me one day I noticed the fatigue in his face from staying up and

dealing with the baby all times of the night. “Look at this man,” he said! “This is a picture of the baby!” He took me through each of the many photos he had in his phone. “Let me show this right here! I made this video of her.” I replied saying, “that baby look just like you dude! Congratulations daddy!” He smiled and began to speak about the wonders of fatherhood and how he has to gear up and think about certain changes so he can fulfill the obligations of being a parent.

A few weeks passed by and I saw him on duty at his job. He greeted me with a smile as usual. I asked him how his “lil girl” was doing and he responded as he would do numerous times, “she growing man! She growing like weeds.” He then pulled out his phone to display recent pictures he had taken of her. He even played a video where he was given her a bath and another one of him holding and playing cheerfully with her. He smiled during the entire video as if he was beholding a marvel. And he was willing to enact social planning for her in early preparation for her future; he opened up an investment account to begin saving for appropriations that could be used for college. His stance was that she will be on a pathway that will lead to higher education. She may decide not to go, choosing other career options such as the military or owning her own business. But he conveyed to me that he was going to do his part as a father to ensure she had resources to contribute towards her higher education pursuits. Terry’s father was not really present when he was growing up and thus he is giving his daughter an inverse family life from what he as a boy experienced. And to effectively and sufficiently do this he, like other men, has to have access to the social, economic, and educational structures as a support for his trajectory as a father.

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

Perhaps one of the most misunderstood elements of black fatherhood is the social support that men have through their connection to other men of all ages. The relational interactions between parents, irrespective of the relationship status, was observed as being influential to the health of the relationship between children and their fathers. And if the fathers who live apart from the biological children desired a strong connection with them, they would devise relationship strategies and approaches to ensure that they would be able to maintain and build a bond with the child. It is a balancing act for sure. They have the duties of work, whether that occurred on “main street” or Wall Street, to deal with. Plus, they have the exigencies of their own life to attend to. It is complicating to add the stress of a conflictual relationship to a morphed social status of being a father. If it can be avoided, they strive to do whatever they can to veer away from it. Navigating these things effectively is typically not done alone.

Formal and informal social support processes characterize the lives of these collared men. Anderson (1999) noted the role of the “decent daddy” in his cogent delineation of the “code of the street.” This figure in the urban community serves as one who fills in the gap when there is a deficit of model adults to guide youth and other adults in the community in an effort to preclude them from being entangled in the life of the streets. Deindustrialization profoundly impacted the social order of cities. The lack of role models in the urban context caused further decay of the social support that once existed for black people of diverse status prior to the exit of the black middle class from the core of residential areas (Wilson 1987, 1996; Anderson 2000). The City is somewhat different, as previously mentioned, in that the rent control law structures white-collar, blue-collar,

and orange-collar people together in some neighborhoods. The social network is not always readily available or extended in this case but it allows for some level of connection with other individuals who have access to social networks and human capital.

Men who formerly lived in these communities or a similar neighborhood who are now a part of the black middle class connect regularly with other middle-class black men. Additionally, they are involved in various social groups in the City that reaches out to the youth of the community through formal programs. Other interventions are informal as they understand their role as black men who have achieved measures of success is to teach and guide others who aspire to arrive to the same or similar levels of success as themselves. I conversed with Sam, a white-collar black man, who is involved in this way. On our way to a social event he talked about his counsel with another white-collar, albeit younger, “brutha” who recently was informed that his partner and he were soon to be parents. “Did you hear about Terrance”, he asked? “No. What’s up with him,” I inquired? “He and the lady are expecting their first child,” he said. “Oh, wow! I didn’t know that,” I responded.” He continued with his perspective on this news saying, “Man look! I talked to that brutha one on one the other day. I told him just like this- you already know what you gotta do right? He just looked at me.... Yeah, man go ahead and marry that woman and tie that thang on up. You’ve been with her all this time. Ya’ll already hooked up anyway so it’s just a matter of doing what you gotta do. I was just straight up and street like that with him,” he asserted with a subsequent laugh. “Ain’t no need in them playing house like that when shit gets real like it’s about to be. You know what I mean?”

As a black man more senior to Terrance, who is also an educated professional working in the City, Sam wanted to encourage him to solidify his relationship in this way and

prepare for the changes that will inevitably take place after the child is born. Implicit in his conversation with Terrance is the reality that he would continue to be a role model and one he could access for guidance counsel should he ever need it. In the words of an old adage, “a change is gonna come.” As an experienced elder, he knows what many of these changes are and how he’s going to have to make the proper adjustments. It’s not always easy, but fatherhood brings changes that a man must first acknowledge. Following this acknowledgement, he takes the necessary steps to transform himself to meet the requirements and challenges in his own developmental pathway. These changes are not seen as something that may happen. They are inevitable. And along with the changes that fatherhood brings into the trajectory of a man are the social, economic, and legal forces that challenge it.

Orange-Collar Men

There are three prevalent phenomena that complicates fatherhood in many urban black communities: mass incarceration, unstable labor market participation, and race relations. Mass incarceration became a phenomenon that began in the 1970s. It was due to policy efforts to get “tough on crime” and also to the “war on drugs.” Lawmakers resisted the ideals of the criminal justice system being used as a tool to rehabilitate individuals convicted of crimes and opted instead to use the system as deterrence from crime and to punish or incapacitate individuals (Western, 2006). This era not only stood as a means of dealing with crime, as it was understood at the time, but it also exacerbated inequalities that already existed for the groups that were marginalized. Many among the incarcerated (particularly poor black men with low educational levels) are products of neighborhoods

of concentrated disadvantage and absentee fathers (Garland, 2001; Western, 2006). In addition, many of the young adult men have children who are left behind in their communities to be primarily raised in single-parent homes headed by women (Harris, Evans, Beckett, 2010). The latter statement is an example of how the impact of incarceration extends beyond those imprisoned to family and friends outside of the prison.

Concerning mass incarceration and its impact on the community Clear (2008, pp. 98-99) notes, “the individual-level effects of incarceration on those who go to prison ripple outward. Imprisonment is also an intervention into the lives of people who may never go there themselves. There are three levels of such effects. Imprisonment affects the children of people who are locked up and their families; it affects community infrastructure-the relations among people in communities and the capacity of a community to be a good place to live, work, and raise children- and affects how safe a community is to live in.” Placing massive numbers of men, particularly African-American men with low levels of education from impoverished urban communities, into prison extends beyond the prison context into the communities in which the families, partners, and children of the incarcerated live. Why is this issue of particular importance to African Americans? Descriptive data on the social ills faced by black children and families partially answers this question.

According to Comfort (2007), twenty percent of black children compared to 1 in 40 white children born in 1990 experience the imprisonment of at least one parent by the time they reach age nine. Forty-three percent of children born in the 1990 birth cohort who had a parent who lacked a high school diploma experienced the incarceration of their

parent by age nine. Having parents with low levels of schooling and a parent(s) incarcerated has significant impact on child-wellbeing. These children are typically reared in low income households by single-parents. These parents may have low levels of education and little social capital to help support them as they go about dealing with the everyday stress of raising children and taking care of other parental responsibilities (Harris, Evans, & Beckett, 2010; Western, 2006; Comfort, 2007). This could potentially have significant effects on the educational trajectories of children, placing them at-risk for school failure, even dropout (Cauce, Stewart, Rodriguez, Cochran, & Ginzler, 2003). More importantly, it speaks to the realities of some black fathers who have been subjected to the penal system and thus removed from their families and rendered absent from the lives of their children and homes.

No other subgroup of the American population has been more impacted by incarceration than black men. “Incarceration rates are much higher among male high school dropouts in their twenties.... Incredibly, thirty-four percent of all young black male high school dropouts were in prison or jail on an average day in 2004, an incarceration rate forty times higher than the national average” (Western & Wildeman 2009, p. 225). Western (2006, pp. 3-4) noted that there were nearly seven million people incarcerated in 2003, representing about six percent of the adult male population. When disaggregated the story for African-American men is different. Incarcerations rates for black men intensely increased over time. Dating back to the 1960s, thirty percent of black men with no more than a high school education and sixty percent of high school drop outs had served time in prison. This was a “historically novel development in American relations.”

And it served as a “betrayal of the democratic purpose of rehabilitation [which gradually] diminished the citizenship of African Americans most of all.”

The incarceration of black males has left a significant number of black children without the active participation of their dads in their lives. From 1980 to 2000 there was a substantial increase in the number of children with fathers in jail or prison (Western & Wildeman, 2009). This is not to say that all of these men were actively involved in the lives of their children or that they were providing financial or emotional support to them. For those who are not “dead beat” dads but gridlocked into the legal system, incarceration serves as a major interruption in family functioning.

Orange-collar status, as conceptualized and defined in my analysis, is any man whose life course has been labeled and influenced by a criminal status. Like white-collar and blue-collar identity, orange-collar status presupposes a fluidity that any of these people can encounter and be immersed in at any point in their life course. J.C. is an example of how this could unfold. On one particular day became entangled in an altercation that eventually led to an arrest and subsequent conviction. He was sentenced and incarcerated for months. Following release and return to his home, he “hit the ground running,” searching for employment in related industries to his former job. One of these companies was very eager to hire him given his excellent interview and work history. But when they did a criminal background check and saw he had a criminal record they ceased consideration of his application file. He was not initially privy to the mark still being on his record as the case was supposed to be sealed after his release. Nevertheless, after much effort he was able to secure a position at a company with a great compensation and benefits package.

The interesting insight I acquired from J.C.'s case is that he was incarcerated for months and yet returned back into civil life without the complications that most men in his situation endure after their release. There are orange-collar men who are aware of this predicament and therefore remain "on the run" from the legal system since they do not have the status position that he had (Goffman 2014). He maintained all possessions during this period and all of his life's responsibilities were taken care of while absent from society. I inquired how he was able to navigate this process and he informed me that he had a dispersed network that handled all of his liabilities in his absence so that when he returned everything was still afloat. "Man, I know things could've been different, even with me being in there for just that short period of time. Because some people's situation didn't end up like that. You go in there for a minute and lose everything. I mean everything! You have dudes in there who go in with a house, car, job, girlfriends, friends and connections and then come out with none of that! Some of them are even homeless when they get out." "Did they tell you that when they got out," I asked. "No," he said. "They told me that when we were in there! They lost it all." Yet, J.C.'s economic, social, and human capital reserves spared him of what could have been total ruin.

Most orange-collar men do not have the economic, social, and human capital reserves that J.C. has. I began to think through this ethnographic encounter of how his life was preserved because of these advantages that he has relative to other men whose complex status yielded different results. Perhaps the most potent of the revelations from the field that came through this analysis was how fluid and complex all forms of status is. In one judicial decision, J.C. went from an educated white-collar man to an orange-collar man. He reentered society with leverage that allowed him to regain his white-collar status in

the economy. Yet, he is also simultaneously navigating an orange-collar status until his criminal record is expunged. In addition to all of this he also had the status of being an unmarried and nonresidential father to his children, whom he reunified with upon his return home. His life is an indication of the resilience and economic resources needed to successfully navigate the turbulences of social life.

THE ECONOMICS OF BLACKNESS

There was dramatic growth in the U.S. economy during the 1990s. This growth, however, was not experienced by all in the American society in the same way. Those with low levels of education and with criminal records were found at the bottom of the economic barrel. Black men, being disproportionately incarcerated, suffered the brunt of the economic inequality during this period more than any other group. Those who were disadvantaged, due to low levels of education and impoverished communities impacted by high levels of crime and drug trades, had low pay and high unemployment rates because of a selection effect that is a result of their subsequent involvement in drug dealing and robbery as a personal effort to combat the few job prospects offered to them (Western, 2006; Alexander 2010).¹

For many men “incarceration reduces not just the level of wages, it also slows the wage growth over the life course and restricts the kind of jobs that former inmates might find. Incarceration redirects the life path from the usual trajectory of steady jobs with career ladders that normally propels wage growth for young men” (Western 2006, p. 109). Pager (2003; see also Comfort 2007 for a delineation of Pager's study) conducted an experimental audit study where she matched pairs of men for application into entry-

level jobs. In these pairs were both African-American and white men. The men were randomly assigned to place on the application that he had a criminal record related to a drug conviction during the first week, while the other pair would rotate with this distinction during the subsequent weeks. The results of this study revealed that men who stated that they had a criminal record had fewer call backs compared to those who did not; blacks with a criminal status had a significantly lower call back rate relative to their white counterparts. Criminal records, however, is not the only issue that explains the weak participation of black men in the labor market compared to whites.

While research has suggested or indicated that incarceration can have a negative effect on the economic situation of former black inmates and their families, this does not explain all of the outcomes for these men as it concerns their employment. Pager's (2003) study not only found that men with criminal records had a higher call back than men without a criminal record, she also discovered through her analysis that white men with a criminal record were more likely to receive a call back than black men without a criminal record. "The results of this and earlier audit studies provide vivid illustration of the degree to which racial considerations continue to actively shape the employment opportunities available to young black men" (Pager & Karafin, 2009, p. 72). The plight of discrimination against black men in the labor market is shaped by cultural stereotypes and employer's perspectives on the characteristics of black men in general. Some employers in their study acknowledged that there are structural issues such as poor education, poverty, and disadvantaged neighborhood environments that impede black men from participation in the labor market. Others took a different approach by "blaming

the victim,” stating that black men are lazy and unmotivated to work, for example, and thus are in the circumstances that they are in (Pager & Karafin 2009).

Regardless of how black men are portrayed or characterized by individuals and society, it is clearly explicated that the participation of fathers in the labor market shapes their ability to meet the normative expectation of fatherhood. When they are not able to meet the demands of fatherhood by financially supporting their children in the way that they wish or the mother expects due to chronic unemployment or working low wage and precarious jobs, it creates shame in these men. Liebow (1967, pp. 135-136) concludes that for such fathers, “marriage [and fatherhood] is an occasion of failure. To stay married [and continue being a present father] is to live with your failure, to be confronted by it day in and day out. It is to live in a world whose standards of manliness are forever beyond one's reach, where one is continuously tested and challenged and continually found wanting.” The effects of low labor market participation have been empirically explored and elucidated as it relates to its impact on the life course of black men. The lack of available and/or sufficient economic opportunity that provide wages for a decent quality of life has structurally shaped urban and family life (Wilson 1987; Anderson 1999).

THE LEGACY OF RACIAL GROUP POSITIONING

Race continues to be a very important issue in America and has effects on the outcomes of groups subject to problems that arise because of it. One of the things I noticed in my review of the social science literature on fatherhood is the lack of attention on the significance of race in black family life, particularly African-American fathers.

Disparities in health, education, employment, housing etc. still persist and are very prevalent (Anderson, et. al. 2012). And while a significant proportion of the white population hold dear to the notion of a post-racial society, many of them yet hold negative stereotypes against African-Americans and other groups (Bobo and Charles 2009). The continuity of such stereotypes has profound impact on the quality of life for blacks from their participation in the labor market (Pager 2003; Pager and Quillian 2005; Pager & Karafin 2009; Pager, 2011) to where they can live, which also have impacts on the quality of education for children.

Anderson and colleagues (2012, p. 35) noted working conceptions on race in contemporary America. Many whites disown their racism/stereotypes and believe that we are living in a post-racial society. In addition, many of them believe that they themselves are victims of “reverse racism.” Blacks on the other hand repudiate these notions on the basis of their own lived experiences with race vis-à-vis the wider society (most specifically whites). Their working conception operates through the narrative of “one-strike”; blacks enter the world with a social deficit by simply being born black in a white dominated America that provides no equal place for them. Anderson and his team further elaborate on this concept. “In this racial caste system,” they wrote, “any white person can remind a black person that he or she has one strike and must stay in his or her place. Exclusion, discrimination, stereotyping, and racial profiling are just a few of the tactics that notify blacks of their subordinate position. Everyday messages from the dominant culture constantly remind them of the limitations on their presence and position and the consequences of ‘uppity’ behavior.” When these interactions are presented subtly by whites, the effects of this “silent racism,” particularly in the North, does not diminish its

effect on the life course or psyche of black people. The “same shit” they dealt with across different settings in the past is the “same shit” that operates throughout the country today.

This is the American society in which black men develop, interact, work, seek opportunities, and have and raise children. Consistent experiences around race in various contexts and their exclusion from opportunities that would provide social mobility and capital has been acknowledged as a construction interpreted as “racial injury” in the psyche of many blacks, particularly males (Anderson, 2011). The spillover effects (if any) that this may have on the interaction males have within the family unit is yet to be discovered. More attention should be given to influence of race in social science research on fatherhood and the family. Currently little effort has been provided and some scholars believe that race has little effect and that we should focus the field predominantly on social class (see Massey & Sampson, 2009).

NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES

Incarceration, precarious participation in the labor market, and race relations has created challenges for many black fathers. For the incarcerated it is obvious that they will not be able to be as emotionally or financially involved in the lives of their families due to confinement compared to their counterparts. Those who are released from jail or prison are also challenged by the lack of job prospects available to them, causing some to resort to the underground economy. Finally, the persistence of discrimination in the labor market has caused many urban black men to be denied access to jobs, further complicating their ability to live up to the roles of fatherhood.

It is in the context of this “peculiar social environment” (Du Bois 1898) and “peculiar conditions” (Washington 1901/1995) that black men construct strategies to help them navigate their everyday life. The black men in their formal and informal support networks are keenly aware of the position of all of these men for they either were in the predicament themselves or someone in their own family and/or community was in it. They understand the psychological stereotypes and social realities that are faced by all of them, regardless of status. Current and expecting black fathers are already labeled with the racial “strike” present at birth for them. Being a “deadbeat dad” is an additional strike against you on top of the one you were born with. The men of this study exhibited a shared understanding of what their role as a black father is through their own lived experiences and narrations.

The most powerful demonstration of fatherhood for many of these men is “being there.” Being there is understood as living out your existence as a father in their lives. It doesn’t require being physically in the same residential space, though some of them live with their children. Nor is it exclusively tied to money. Time is an exceedingly more valuable currency than money. The plight of some of the working poor and working class does not always yield sufficient economic output that would be sufficient to support family needs. Children, mothers, fathers, and other men understand this issue. Other youth and families are in the same situation and thus have a similar lifestyle of “making ends meet” as best as they can. For white-collar men, being there is also very important. Their status on Wall Street, both literally and as a proxy for the educated black middle class, does not serve as an accepted excuse for not being present as a force in the

trajectory of their children. And they too are counted as deadbeat dads if they are not “on their grown man shit.”

Fatherhood is as complex as the society in which it occurs. Alexander (2010, pp. 173-174) recounted a speech given by former President Barak Obama when he was the official nominee for the Democratic Party. He was in a predominantly African-American church during a Sunday service. His “message was a familiar one: black men should be better fathers. Too many absent from their homes.” And this message was one that was given before by other black public figures. And mainstream media and society always rally to the message given the stereotype black men are marked with as a “deadbeat dad.” Obama went on to proclaim a bleak picture of black men that is a reverberation of the rhetoric of white America. “If we are honest with ourselves, we’ll admit that too many fathers are missing-missing from too many lives and too many homes. Too many fathers are MIA. Too many fathers are AWOL. They have abandoned their responsibilities. They’re acting like boys instead of men. And the foundations of our families are weaker because of it. You and I know this is true everywhere, but nowhere is this more true than in the African American community.”

Obama’s message was not completely erroneous. There are men from all social groups who are legitimately “deadbeat dads,” absent from the home and in life. But many nonresidential black men, unacknowledged in this speech, are actually socially and emotionally attached to their children, albeit from a different home (Cole 2009, 2009; Oware 2011). A survey study from the Center for Disease Control (Jones and Mosher 2013) revealed that black men reported involvement in the lives of their children in a number of categories, such as dining with their children and assisting them with their

homework, at higher levels than whites and Hispanics. Obama's speech, like the rhetoric of many in political, media, and public discourse, overlook or neglect the nuances of understanding fatherhood in this way. Furthermore, they miss one particular recurring theme I apprehended in the field: many of the men who had experienced the absence of their father utilized what they learned from that time as a child to "be there" for their child. Some of them reunited with their fathers later in life as adults and worked to build whatever substantive father-son relationship with them as they have with their child. However, their son or daughter would not have to deal with this experience. They know the heart and mind of a child who goes without the presence of their father in their life and are determined to ensure that their status as a father is not lived out in the same way as their dad's.²

It behooves those external to this group to comprehend the nuances that comes along with being a black father in America. The lived experience of these men is not to be narrated and controlled by media. Nor is it to be the leverage of politicians who see them as an advancement for their own power ambitions. Finally, the public discourse on these men should be dominated by the men themselves. If they are "hoodlums," "regulars," or "wine heads," as noted about the men in Jelly's (Anderson 1978), then they should explicate how they see themselves and understand their own situation. And if there is a representation of them, it should reflect their own views and understandings of their own situation. The handwriting on America's historic wall is read as a narrative from those external to the group which does not typically reflect the social reality as it exists. And there were commentators who believed that Obama's speech was another attempt at this

feat. “Obama’s words may have been spoken to black folk, but they were aimed at those whites still on the fence about whom to send to the White House” (Alexander 2010).

Ironically, Obama’s social history is reflective of how status and the understanding of a “deadbeat dad” knows no status exclusively. His biological father entered the country as an African immigrant on a student visa that he utilized to study as graduate student at Harvard. After meeting his mother and conceiving him he eventually chose to abandon the family. Here you have an Ivy League-educated and immigrant father who is neither present in the home or life. Yet, many of the men that Obama was referring to as a group, African American fathers, are either one or both.

Most of the perceptions and beliefs through which this narrative prevails is based on inner-city black men from marginalized and despondent communities. Nevertheless, the family history he emerged out of reveals more layers to the understanding of what fatherhood is and the ways in which it is effectuated in everyday life. It also affirms why the prototype of men that patronize Side Street Tavern and Westside Spot socialize with one another across status and why some among them are eager to formally and informally engage in the lives of other men to aid them as they navigate race and status in everyday life. Counseling them on family matters, as Sam did for Terrance, is vital to their life course. Fatherhood, I reiterate, is as complex as the society in which it occurs. As fellow black men, irrespective of their status, they are constantly up against the currents that society have constructed for them and fighting to not add yet another “strike” to their record (Ruggles 1994; McCall 1994; Young 2011; Pager 2011). This is true for white-collar, orange-collar, and blue-collar men.

Chapter 4

The Future of The American Color Line and Collared Men

The journey towards freedom and respect for blacks in America has been a long path that extended over centuries. Black people were not, however, torn after Emancipation about the task of what to do to advance, build and rebuild the race. They began to establish their own institutions of higher education, businesses, and civic groups to uplift the group in ways that they had envisioned. This is contrary to the historical narrative that blacks had no agency during and were despondent without any avenues towards progress outside of what was being provided through the sympathy of white progressives (Hunter 2013). Times were changing for blacks. Times were also changing for whites. And the latter group was shattered by the transformations that was taking place before their eyes. And they felt challenged by this new social reality of group repositioning and the demand for black men, women, girls, and boys to be treated as humans with the same rights available to them (Blumer 1958; Thomas 1980; Bobo & Hutchings 1996).

The transformations of American society were a matter for blacks and whites to address, albeit in different ways. The following sections discuss the history on some of these social developments and conclude with contemporary work both from my field research and existing empirical analyses on race and status. It is critically imperative that the continued study of the black lived experience in America be understood as an offshoot of American history; it is thereby rendered as a “legacy” of the past that one can leverage to understand the social realities that are before our observance today (Anderson et al. 2012).

THE EDUCATION OF THE NEGRO

Looking towards the days ahead and what was needed to uplift the race blacks understood they had to leverage the best among the group. The idea was that if the “talented tenth” of the group could rise to the occasion, they would be the beacon of light that led the group out of social bondage and conditional despair into enlightenment and progress. Du Bois (2003, pp. 68, 71) asserted, “so here we stand among thoughts of human unity, even through conquest and slavery; the inferiority of black men, even if forced by fraud; a shriek in the night for the freedom of men who themselves are not yet sure of their right to demand it. This is the tangle of thought and afterthought herein we are called to solve the problem of training men for life.... Race-prejudices, which keep brown and black men in their “places,” we are coming to regard as useful allies with such a theory, no matter how much they may dull the ambition and sicken the hearts of struggling human beings. And above all, we daily hear that an education that encourages aspiration, that sets the loftiest of ideals and seeks as an end culture and character rather than breadwinning, is the privilege of white men and the danger and delusion of black [men].”

From this line of social thought, the historically black colleges were developed. The ideas on how black leaders and institutions should approach the education of black people and for what purpose became a matter of both intragroup collaboration and conflict. The thread that ran throughout all of the similarities and differences among black leaders were ultimately a means to the same end goal- the improvement of the status of former slaves and the descendants of these same emancipated people.

Black people increased their literacy from five percent to seventy percent in less than five decades, a matter of profound improvement following Emancipation. The economic status of the group in aggregate did not change significantly during this time period and their racial status was set as a “strike” that would not change and yet remains to this very day. White philanthropists and missionaries during this same era of improvement took notice and interest in the recently established black institutions of higher education. Whites were already a major administrative force in a significant number of these institutions, such as Howard, Claflin, Virginia Union, and Fisk. “These schools’ white missionary teachers and white boards determined school policies, controlled school finances, and periodically spoke disparagingly of their students as ‘child-like’ and ‘heathen’ (Franklin & Higginbotham 2011, p. 290-91).

The northern religious denominations were slower to hire blacks in their colleges and universities.” However, even during these early days of educational development for black people there, “ironically,” black faculty and administrators were in the segregated institutions of the South. “Some black schools, especially Tuskegee Institute, developed notable educational programs owing to their leaders’ enviable ability to attract sizeable amounts of white philanthropy.” This money came with conflict with whites and other blacks over the control over who would decide the best path for the institution. However, “as Booker T. Washington liked to remind his opponents, a private school such as his Tuskegee Institute was black controlled and had a black faculty and president—the epitome of racial self-help,” which was a major goal during that time (Franklin & Higginbotham 2011, p. 290-91).

As a social order based on the social rules of group superiority, white progressives and southerners were just as fixed on the “same shit” during that time as the men of this study narrate them to be fixed on today. They would take any measure to uphold their authority and to keep blacks in their “place” (Anderson 2011; Anderson et al. 2012). Yet, Booker T. Washington stressed an educational model for blacks in the South that became a point of divergence between himself and W.E.B. Du Bois. Du Bois (2003, p. 35) even stated in one of his classic works that “easily the most striking thing in the history of the American Negro since 1876 was the ascendancy of Mr. Booker T. Washington.” The contention between these two public figures would continue for years. They differed on the approach that the “talented tenth” should take in the educational, economic, and social advancement of black people. And much of the contemporary discourse on Washington and Du Bois to this day is gridlocked exclusively to this season of their lives. This contention based on their philosophical distinctions was not always the case.¹

Following the establishment of Tuskegee Institute, Washington began the work of recruiting the best and brightest to his school. He was indeed focused on the industrial education of black people in the South. There was no hesitation from him to unabashedly declare the mission of his new institution. It was a comprehensive one, conflating what he called the education of the “head, heart, and hand.” He started out as the first teacher of the school when the Institute opened its doors on July 04, 1881 (Washington 1995, 2014). Among his early recruits included Robert R. Taylor, the first black graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, George Washington Carver, a renowned scientist and researcher, and Du Bois. Washington and Du Bois “had known each other since

1894, when Booker first offered him a teaching job, which he turned down in favor of a position at Wilberforce College” (Norrell 2009, pp. 225).

Norrell (2009, pp. 225-26). notes, “Du Bois had written to Booker approvingly about the Atlanta address, and they had corresponded periodically after 1895 about an appointment at Tuskegee. Du Bois had defended Booker’s leadership from attacks at the Afro-American Council meeting in the summer of 1899. Before 1900 there apparently had not been a cross word spoken between the two, or a negative opinion voiced by one about the other.” Following a 1900 conference for black farmers which he attended, Du Bois wrote to express his approval of a program that was successful in helping to alleviate the plight of black people through a program that “sought to raise the standard of living, and especially to change the three things that hold the Negro still in serfdom—the crop lien system, the one-room cabin, and the poor and short public school.”

Washington approached Du Bois a second time, as he had in 1895, to offer him a position on the faculty of Tuskegee Institute. He declined his offer again citing a potential conflict between his research agenda and the industrial education program at the school. This would later be proven to possibly be contrary to fact, which I will address in a subsequent section of another recruit. Nevertheless, there was one additional request that Du Bois presented to Washington. He was interested in a position in Washington D.C. as an assistant superintendent. He wrote to him saying, “could I not serve both your cause and the general cause of the Negro at the National capital better than elsewhere?” This job was highlighted as being more than the salary at Tuskegee and Du Bois’s wife preferred the urban environment of D.C. over the rural area of Tuskegee, Alabama. Another candidate was chosen for the position and he held fast to his position on the

Tuskegee offer (Norrell 2009, pp. 227-28). Washington, however, succeeded a few years later in finding and recruiting another social scientist to do what he desired Du Bois to do at Tuskegee.

THE SOCIAL SCIENCE OF MONROE NATHAN WORK

The refusal by Du Bois to accept Washington's offer for a job as a researcher did not deter them from collaborating together a few years later to pen *The Negro in the South*.² The problems of the black race after slavery continued. And in the post-Emancipation period they were determined to understand both their civil liberties and the racial problems that came with it, particularly in the South. Monroe Nathan Work was offered the job in the Spring of 1908. Prior to his acceptance of Washington's offer he worked with Du Bois as a research colleague at the Niagara Movement. And Washington wanted the social science expertise he developed at the University of Chicago to be present at Tuskegee Institute (Norrell 2009).

Work was appointed as Director of Records and Research at Tuskegee Institute. He "developed his life's vocation at Tuskegee Institute, because Booker T. Washington gave him the opportunity. The Department of Records and Research which he started in 1908 was one of the mediums through which he, as well as Tuskegee Institute, was able to influence Negro life and race relations" (Guzman 1949, p. 438). Throughout his tenure there he believed that facts would trump racial prejudice and ignorance about the black race that was propagated in America at that time. To address and counter this scientifically he produced knowledge on the problems and lived experiences of black people and circulated this information nationally and internationally. He compiled data

on the health status of blacks, creating the “National Negro Health Week” which was observed throughout the country. Additionally, he established “The Tuskegee Lynching Records” where he provided references to this major problem taking place in the South. It gained national attention in the mainstream media and caused political leaders to debate the exigencies of black life (Guzman 1949; Norrell 2009; Carter 2010).

Years prior to his placement at Tuskegee Institute, he set out to understand the problem of black violence in Chicago. This research was complimentary to Du Bois’s findings on the plight of black people in Philadelphia. His analysis revealed a higher rate of crime that was disproportionately higher in the North than anywhere else in the nation. Additionally, his findings elucidated the fact that black crime was at a higher rate relative to immigrants. Finally, he noted that virtually all of the black men in his study in 1897 “had, or gave, no occupation” (Work 1900, p. 217; Muhamad 2010). It was in this latter part of his analysis that he began to lay the foundation for understanding the “peculiar” circumstances that characterized the outcomes lived by blacks (Du Bois 1898; Washington 1995).

After presenting all of the statistics from his data collection, Work (1990, pp. 222-223) concluded with an explication as to why this data stood as it did during this time period:

Going on the hypothesis of his social advancement, may we not say that, since his emancipation, he has been in a transitional state- a transition from a state of slavery to one of freedom? During all these years, he has been endeavoring to adjust himself to his new environment. He has had to endure the economic stress and strain attendant upon this transition. The fact that he is in this transitional state from a lower to a higher plane of development accounts for a part, at least, of his excess of crime. Within this transition, the economic stress under which he has labor labored appears to be the main factor. In the South, his economic condition is better in many ways than in the North. In those places where his economic condition is the best his rate of crime is the lowest. The reverse is also true: where his economic condition is poorest his rate of crime is the highest. His economic condition is poorer in Chicago than in the southern cities noted.... There are race characteristics peculiar to him that also help. But it appears to the writer that the fact of the negro being in a transitional state, and the economic phase of this transition, accounts for a large part of the excess of negro crime in the United States.

The advancement of knowledge on any substantive issue is a powerful tool. For black people, the knowledge production which represented their situation in the early part of the twentieth century gave way to deeper resentment to their position in American society. The “gradual” progress, concerning their political incorporation, noted by Booker T. Washington (1995) that was to be expected by them as reality was becoming more and more intolerable. He believed that the economic advancement that blacks, such as those aforementioned by Work in Chicago, would facilitate this developmental process and that black people should place a priority on this aspect of their lives as a foundation for greater things to come. Following his death and burial at Tuskegee Institute in 1915, the only thing that became gradual was the strategies devised and enacted by civil rights leaders and groups to confront the “peculiar” circumstances that both he and Du Bois noted in their delineations of the black lived experience.

THE LEGACY OF GOMILLION

Charles G. Gomillion, a sociologist, came to Tuskegee Institute in 1928. He was not of the tradition of accommodating the social rules of the Deep South that was a part of Booker T. Washington’s leadership. The realities of “Negro life” had been put front and center by social scientists such as Du Bois, Work, and Charles S. Johnson. Gomillion was influenced by all of these men and was particularly informed at Tuskegee by Work’s research program. “From him Gomillion learned that the collection and dissemination of information about blacks was an important task in the larger effort to uplift the race” (Norrell 1998, p. 35).

Gomillion eventually became a part of the social and political activism of Tuskegee and the broader civil rights movement taking place across America, particularly in the South. He visited and met with leaders of various civic organizations and began to learn from them the plight of black people in the community. The white-controlled local government created laws and policies that undermined the quality of life of its black residents. The alcohol prohibition, which labeled Tuskegee as a town in a “dry” county, incentivizing the white cops with bonuses for every arrest they make. He further learned of the conditions of the infrastructure of the town in the areas throughout the city where blacks inhabited. The records on money allocations for the public education system revealed that white school system received far more appropriations for their schools than blacks. With this information, he became more and more interested in not only recording the social issues of African Americans but also addressing them. And he believed that the only way to address this municipal issue was through the local political system (Norrell 1998).

After Gomillion took counsel with himself and a few other black people in the Tuskegee community he set out to become registered to vote at the Board of Registrar. Before this feat, however, he inquired about the lack of black political participation in the community and “quickly learned that white officials had no political reason to respond to black concerns.” Very few black people voted and “almost every black voter [who participated in the political process] had significant power.” One local black businessman reported his logic on why there was little to no hesitation in allowing him to register to vote, “I had done so many favors for so many crackers in the county that they couldn’t turn me down” (Norrell 1998, p. 36). After hearing this, is plausible to believe that his

understanding of the Booker T. Washington approach to economic advancement for blacks as a foundation for their political advancement was further strengthened. There is no indication from this historical account of this particular ethnographic encounter with this local white-collar man, from among the persistently emerging black middle class, that he was impressed in this way. Nevertheless, he would learn that their economic status helped to navigate a problem that extended beyond, yet inextricable to, race.

Tuskegee imposed a poll tax on all residents of the city. Most blacks could not afford to pay this fee given their socioeconomic status. While this political tactic was reported as a measure to prevent incompetent white people from voting and preventing both whites and blacks from abusing the system, it turns out it was nothing less than a whitening of the political system. Literate blacks who could afford the poll tax were taken to task through other mandates that became an obvious attempt to preclude them from voting. The process which Gomillion had to navigate helped him to develop a shared understanding of the local Tuskegee culture that Booker T. Washington once endured as a leader. He also came to the realization that “the Tuskegee environment simply did not allow Washington to be more assertive about black rights” (Norrell 1998, p. 35).

The approach of acquiescence, however, eventually came to an end. This had less to do with black voting rights than it did with equal treatment in the services available to black people, such as public education. He changed the name of the local Men’s Club to Tuskegee Civic Association, focusing on the incorporation of blacks into all facets of societal affairs. From there they grew to focus more and more on this deficit in community and political affairs in Tuskegee and America. The subordinate status of

blacks was no longer accepted as a continuing norm. Nor was the social realities of the black experience unknown (Norrell 1998).

His exposure and participation in the Department of Records and Research was bearing fruit. And it would have profound implications for both Tuskegee and America. The nation at this point had progressed forward beyond Emancipation for almost half a century. But the legacy of slavery still existed. Thus, black civic and civil rights groups pressed America to make further progress in addressing the inequities that yet existed and abounded. And “Gomillion believed that voting was the ultimate solution to many black problems” (Norrell 1998, p. 42). He was so adamant about this strategy that he was willing to fight from the local courts all the way to the Supreme Court for the alleviation of the “Negro problems” that Dubois delineated in his empirical work (Du Bois 1898, 1899). This would not be the complete eradication of these problems. But it would set the social stage once again for subsequent developments in the best interest of black people. The denial card that whites continued to play created the imperative for black people to address the blatant racism they refused to acknowledge. They were no longer enslaved on a plantation. But they were in a racial caste system that persistently reminded them of their place and position in American society (Davis and Gardner 2009; Dollard 1957; Anderson et al. 2012; Anderson 2015).

THE CASE AGAINST THE DENIAL CARD

The classic case known as *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* not only lends legal representation to the power of compliance to the Constitution of the United States, but also provides a reverberation on black-white race relations, the political structure in everyday context, and the intersection between the two. The case was based on political actions targeted

towards Tuskegee, Alabama which disenfranchised eligible black voters in the city by rearranging the boundaries of the city in a way that they would no longer be included in the municipality. This would therefore exclude them from all political matters of the said area by stripping them of the voting privileges they previously possessed.³

The *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* case was petitioned by Charles G. Gomillion, then sociology professor at Tuskegee Institute, as the lead plaintiff to the Middle District Court of Alabama in an effort to contest Act 140, the official name for the gerrymandering law; this State law was crafted by Samuel M. Engelhardt Jr. Engelhardt was a senator representing Macon County of which the city of Tuskegee is the county seat. Prior to this situation, some positive developments were being initiated and implemented as it concerns black's political participation. James E. Folsom, presiding governor of Alabama at the time, appointed Herman Bentley as the chair of the Macon County Board of Registrars. Under his leadership, the number of black citizens who registered to vote nearly quadrupled. According to Entin, "this threat to white political domination prompted a backlash."⁴

As a result of the political developments instituted by Governor Folsom and Chairman Bentley, which increased the number of registered black voters in Macon County, many of the whites became indignant. Among those stirred by these reforms were Bentley's colleagues on the Board; the other two members of the board stepped down from their duties with the intent purpose to dismantle the function of the board (which they succeeded in doing). Senator Engelhardt had also taken note of the emerging political power of the blacks in his respective county and began his pursuit to eradicate this progress of the citizenship of blacks. He constructed a bill (which became Act 140)

which he pushed through both houses of the state legislature. Not only did he plan to rearrange the boundaries of Tuskegee through the bill, he also had the additional plan to eventually abolish Macon County and divide it up among connecting counties. This plan, however, failed due to oppositions and disagreements about how the area would be divided among the counties. Meanwhile, Charles Gomillion was on task to challenge Act 140 through the courts.⁵

Middle District Court Case

Upon discovery of Act 140 Charles Gomillion filed a class suit in federal district court requesting that the law be declared unconstitutional due to a violation of the 14th Amendment's right of "due process and equal protection" and the 15th Amendment's guaranteed right to vote for all citizens.⁶ Judge Johnson provided the court opinion in this case. He began his opinion by stating the matter to which both the plaintiff and defendants were appealing, the defendants asking the court to strike the plaintiff's complaint from court due to a lack of compliance to the Federal Civil Procedure rules. Johnson clearly stated the complaint brought by the plaintiffs by penning the following:

Prior to the passage of Act No. 140, the boundaries of the municipality of Tuskegee formed a square, and, according to the complaint the defendants seek to strike and dismiss, contained approximately 5,397 [Blacks], of whom approximately 400 were qualified as voters in Tuskegee, and contained approximately 1,310 white persons, of whom approximately 600 were qualified voters in said municipality. As the boundaries are redefined by said Act No. 140, the municipality Tuskegee resembles a 'sea dragon.' The effect of the Act is to remove from the municipality of Tuskegee all but four or five of the qualified [Black] voters and none of the qualified white voters. Plaintiffs state that said Act is but another device in a continuing attempt to disenfranchise [Black] citizens not only of their right to vote in municipal elections and participate in municipal affairs, but also of their right of free speech and press, on account of their race and color.⁷

After addressing the complaint brought by Gomillion and his fellow plaintiffs, Judge Johnson moved forward to attend to the "motion to dismiss" by the defense. In order to

do this the court's opinion was that it must first establish the authority of the Alabama Legislature to enact the law. He went on to cite from subsection 18 of 104 of the Alabama Constitution. According to Johnson, it appeared that section of the state Constitution authorized the Legislature to pass Act 140 as it gave the right to 'amending, confirming, or extending the charter of any private or municipal corporation, or remitting the forfeiture thereof; provided, this shall not prohibit the legislature from altering or rearranging the boundaries of the city, town, or village.' On these grounds, he concluded that "the Legislature of the State of Alabama had, under the Constitution of the State of Alabama and the interpretation of that Constitution by the Supreme Court of the State of Alabama, the authority to pass the Act in question."⁸ Following this ruling in the case he continued with the opinion as it concerns the State's right under Federal law to enact Act 140.

Johnson's court opinion as to the Federal right of the State of Alabama to enact Act 140 was made by invoking *Laramie County Comm'rs v. Albany County, Town of Mount Pleasant v. Beckwith*, and *Hunter v. City of Pittsburgh*. In all of these cases the Supreme Court asserted that the state has the right to arbitrarily rearrange boundaries, alter charters, and amend their powers as long as any act enforced is not in violation to the Constitution of the respective state. Again, the court is focusing strongly on the state legislative rights under the purview of state constitutionality. However, only one Supreme Court case is invoked to provide the limitation of the state's rights under the laws and Constitution of the United States.⁹

Judge Johnson referenced the *Doyle v. Continental Insurance Co.* in making the point that the courts do **not** have the power to question the motives of the Alabama

Legislature.¹⁰ According to this court's opinion "if the State has the power to do an act, its intention or the reason by which it is influenced in doing it cannot be inquired into." Furthermore, "If the act done by the State is legal, is not in violation of the Constitution or laws of the United States, it is quite out of the power of any court to inquire what was the intention of those who enacted the law."¹¹ Following the citation of this case and particularly these statements Johnson concluded that the court has no authority to declare Act 140 void, regardless of the motive of the Alabama Legislature. The final decision by the court was to overrule and deny the defendant's claim of violation of Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. However, it granted their "motion to dismiss" the case.¹² Thus, the plaintiffs further challenged Act 140 through the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Court of Appeals

The appeal was brought before judges Jones, Brown, and Wisdom through the U.S. Court of Appeals Fifth Circuit. Judge Jones wrote the opinion in this case. This opinion essentially reiterated the previous opinion of the District Court, providing a few additional Supreme Court cases (i.e., *Colegrove v. Green*) to affirm their judicial claim that the State Legislature is within its right to not only enact Act 140 but also "at its pleasure, may modify or withdraw all such powers, may take without compensation such property, hold it itself, or vest it in other agencies, expand or contract the territorial area, unite the whole or a part of it with another municipality, repeal the charter and destroy the corporation...with or without the consent of the citizens, or even against their protest." This was declared to be a "political function" in which the courts had no purview. Echoing the district court, the Appeal Court's opinion also failed to extensively

interrogate the claim that the Act was in violation of the Constitution of the United States, choosing instead to briefly mention in the concluding statement that the court must affirm the district court's decision given the "absence of any racial or class discrimination appearing on the face of the statute," though it was alleged that the motives of the legislative body was to disenfranchise blacks from their voting rights in the City of Tuskegee.¹³ However, this ruling did not come without a judicial contest. Judge Brown dissented saying "feeling that this decision is wrong, I cannot presume to speak for the Court. But in sounding this respectful dissent from the action of my Brothers who are no less sensitive than I to the compelling obligations of the Constitution, I would suggest that the Court itself is troubled by this decision." He continues by interrogating the stance that this is a "political matter" and thus is beyond the scrutiny of the courts. The fact that the courts have stated emphatically that there doesn't appear to be any racial or class discrimination on the face of the law is in essence a scrutiny by the judiciary, according to Brown.¹⁴

Brown also asserted that the lack of detail and attention to the Constitution is absurd! "This Constitution shall be the Supreme Law of the Land...and whenever true conflict has in fact existed, the Constitution has always won out," he emphatically notes. Furthermore, he concludes by emphasizing that there are few existing cases known to the court of exclusive action by states that in some way could have or has been "found to be violative of some constitutional provision." And the cases invoked by the courts to elucidate the states' rights were actually not completely relevant to this particular case.¹⁵ The Supreme Court would eventually agree with the judicial sentiments presented by Brown.

The *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* case was argued in the Supreme Court October 18-19, 1960. A decision was issued on November 14, 1960.¹⁶ Justice Frankfurter provided the opinion for the Court. And unlike the previous cases it was made clear in that the Constitution of the United States will be the central issue being assessed by all Justices, as Frankfurter writes in the opinion, “at this stage of the litigation we are not concerned with the truth of the allegations, that is, the ability of petitioners to sustain their allegations by proof. The sole question is whether the allegations entitle them to make good on their claim that they are being denied right under the United States Constitution.”¹⁷ After careful judicial review by the Justices they decide unanimously to reverse the decisions made by the District Court and the Court of Appeals.

Gomillion v. Lightfoot was preceded by the racial ideologies and political developments of Alabama (and the South), as I pointed out earlier in this paper. Therefore, this case must first be understood from these lenses before thinking about the various stages of legal development that eventually took place. This is not to diminish the relevance or power of the case but as one scholar notes, “Winning that case had only a limited effect on black political participation... It did not of its own force lead to additional registration... [Thus] in the end, *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* did not definitively resolve any problem. At the same time, [however], the case played an important role in undermining white supremacy in Tuskegee and Macon County, and it helped to pave the way for the reapportionment decisions that, along with the Voting Rights Act, have fundamentally altered our politics. That is no small legacy.”¹⁸

Despite the limitations of the *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* case in terms of its actual impact in Tuskegee, it gave both Alabama and the U.S. a vivid picture of how race relations and

political power can dominate and be maintained in our society in a negative way if left unchecked. The legal mark it etched left a model of how an extant racial order and political structure can be identified and contested in an effort to bring about social progress.

THE RACIAL THREAD OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Du Bois (2003, p. 3) proclaimed insightfully and assertively that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line.” Out of this color line emerged deep and persistent problems and inequalities that began in slavery, and then morphed into the Jim Crow Era, and continues today as the “legacy of racial caste” (Anderson et al. 2012). Many blacks narrate this legacy saying, “same shit, different day!” There is still a subordinate “place,” a status, that blacks have in the psyche of the broader white society. Slavery placed blacks in subservient status on plantations throughout America for hundreds of years. The subsequent Jim Crow period placed blacks on sharecropping establishments. It was better than slavery. And blacks were given freedom from the demands of slave life and were no longer to be considered an incomplete human being. Nevertheless, it still relegated blacks to a lower position in mainstream society.

The policies formulated and enacted during the New Deal and Fair Deal eras were constructed in a deliberate discriminatory manner; blacks who otherwise qualified were excluded across the U.S. due to the authority given over to individual states (Katznelson 2005). Finally, the racial caste system that existed for one hundred years following Emancipation was likewise abolished through the diligence and resilience of the social and political work done by African Americans. But the “peculiar conditions”

(Washington 1995) that they faced in “peculiar environments” (Du Bois 1898) maintained their status in society. Discrimination in the job market, poor quality and segregated school systems, and marginalized neighborhoods once again reminded blacks of the lingering status that they experience in their everyday life (Du Bois 1899; Drake and Cayton 1945; Spear 1967; Massey and Denton 1993; Anderson 1994; Hirsch 1998; Rainwater 2017).

There is a collective acknowledgement by all racial and ethnic groups of the racial progress that has occurred over the years and across centuries. Contemporary race relations do not allow for a denial of this fact and when the denial is presented it can undoubtedly cause whites, in some cases legitimately, to wield defense of the American progress that blacks enjoy today. But many blacks remain collectively suspicious amidst this progress due to their shared understanding of the history of race relations in America. The experiences recounted in this essay on the history of race relations in Tuskegee is a reflection of the U.S. writ large during that time, particularly in the South. Respectively, there is a sense among black men in Harlem today that America once again is showing progress while reconfiguring itself to maintain the structures, practices, policies, and laws which in turn maintains the status of blackness. Their views on this issue does not always place them in agreement with one another. The economic, marital, educational, and criminal status of black men is not monolithic. They understand the advantages, disadvantages, and liberties that come with how they are positioned in these respects. But they remain keenly aware that whether they are working on Wall Street, main street, or in the underground economy they are all born with a strike against them. And this strike follows them everywhere they go in America (Anderson et al. 2012).

Blacks are often compared to other non-white groups in America when explaining the possibilities that they could lay hold of. If the Jews, for example, were able to overcome the discrimination and anti-Semitism they were faced with for decades after their arrival into the U.S. and become successful over time, why is this not the case for black people? “[And] whenever blacks attempt to change their circumstances by demanding assistance from the various levels of government, whites predictably ask the question: ‘Why can’t blacks be self-sufficient like the Jews, Italians or other ethnic groups and help themselves, rather than going to the government for assistance.... Most blacks are demanding compensation or reparations from the government for the centuries of expropriated labor and the legacies of slavery and Jim Crowism that continue to place European whites, Hispanics and Asians over them,’” Claud Anderson asserts (1994, p. 87). He further notes, “a continuing flow of immigrants, decade after decade, from 1607 to the present day, came believing that America abounded with freedom and wealth. Common sense dictates that had they anticipated they would face the kind of life most black people face, immigration would have ceased immediately after the first boatload arrived. The flow of immigrants never ceased, because they were never treated like blacks” (p. 102). This analysis affirms and elucidates the strike of blackness as a major social deficit that distinguishes the group position of black people from other groups.

I had an engaging conversation with a Mexican man one day about various topics. This young man is both intelligent and well-educated. As we continued to converse I learned that his plan for intermarriage with an Asian woman caused friction within her family because of his racial background. They did not approve of their union. Yet, after months of turmoil they concluded the matter with this statement, “at least he is not black.” He

wasn't their ideal choice for an addition to their family, but he had the relative privilege of not being born with the strike of blackness and all that comes along with that. And this is the negotiation that ethnic people, that blacks are constantly compared to, have as an advantage for the progress of their respective groups. Jews and formerly marginalized European groups were able to assimilate into whiteness in a way that Blacks never could. Whiteness was penetrable for Jews. Blacks could never penetrate the white racial frame. The social problems concomitant with blackness have persisted in ways unexperienced by other groups. Therefore, it is exceedingly erroneous to compare blacks to these groups (Goldstein 2006). The Harlem natives expressed their own understanding of the changes occurring before their eyes that they perceived to be a reiteration of the "same shit" that has happened to blacks over the centuries time and time again. Their lot is measurably improved, but their "place" remains unchanged.

I was walking with an acquaintance, Joseph, through Harlem on our way to a social gathering. This was the first time he and I had an opportunity to speak one on one outside of our group outings in settings like West Side Spot. We started out talking about the recent social events we attended with the "homies." Most of these "cats" are white-collar men who live and work in the City. And some of them, like Joseph, are natives of the City. He is originally from the Bronx borough. Since I had spent a considerable amount of my time in the field it was intriguing to talk with people who were nurtured in this particular unit of the City. Joseph talked with me about the way it used to get down in the Bronx in his "hood." It had all of the accoutrements of inner-city life in black deindustrialized communities as other cities delineated by scholars (Wilson 1978, 1987, 1996; Anderson 1978, 1990, 1999). He witnessed the effects of poverty, the drug trade,

educational inequities, and street life. He also spoke of the “good times” he experienced with those who were not wedded to the street life, noted by Anderson (1999) as the “decent” people. “Man, it used to be popping on my block brutha, he declared! I mean, it got raw sometimes in that joint. But everything was not crazy like that.” He currently lives in a different borough but commutes by train to see family and friends. As he interacts and observes the life of the area today, he sees indications there of the same changes that are happening in other parts of the City.

I talked with Joseph about what I observed in East Harlem when I was “apartment hunting” and went there to view a particular unit. The area has been known for many years to be like South Bronx, a locale for a high concentration of minority residents. I expected this to be the case during my immersion in the streets. I knew that my personal tendency would be to walk the entirety of the neighborhoods. And while walking the streets with my friend I noticed that there were a number of young white “locals” walking around very comfortably, even white women. The typical suspicion of blacks I observed in West Harlem and upper Eastside Harlem was not as present on this particular day. “You see that,” I asked my friend? “Yup,” he responded. “That is some shit right there my brutha! I’m telling you man! This place is about to be done in a few years. These white folks are walking around here in middle of these blacked folks too damn comfortable! That’s a clear sign! Wow! And in East Harlem,” I concluded! This is not too surprising given the proximity of this part of the City to Midtown Manhattan. It is prime real estate. But for years many middle-class whites were unwilling to live in these neighborhoods because of the racial and economic composition of the area; most of the people who live there are either working-class or working-poor (Anderson 1990).

The process of gentrification is continually changing these communities. After I conveyed my apartment hunting experience in East Harlem Joseph responded calmly with wide eyes as if to say he wasn't surprised by my observation. "It's been happening for a minute now man. I've seen this stuff make its way into my old neighborhood in the Bronx. They did not used to come into the area at all. But now little by little they are running up in the Bronx. The Bronx! It ain't gone be the same, like you said, in a few years. And trust, they are gonna price Black people out of the community big time. It's wild how it's happening. Don't get me wrong. When they enter into the community, services and infrastructure starts changing rapidly. Stuff we couldn't get the City to pay attention to will start being implemented in the area. That's a good thing. But what black person is gonna be there to enjoy the changes?... Again, they come in and clean up a lot of the bad things that are in the hood. But at what cost," he rhetorically asked? I weighed in responsively to his statement that the communities undergo positive changes as a result of the changing communities in an effort to grasp more deeply what he meant. "They come in and soon the black and poor people are going to have to leave because they can't afford to stay there anymore. Where are they gonna live? They have to go somewhere... So, they are not solving the problems, they are just relocating them," he concluded.

Looking forward to the future through a historical lens causes concern for blacks of all manner of status. America has a peculiar history, as demonstrated by analyses on Chicago and Tuskegee, of transforming itself in ways that benefits whites disproportionately while relegating blacks to a continued lower status. The communities where many of the current black middle class emerged from are being altered profoundly as their white middle class counterparts migrate into these urban communities. The

popularity of the suburbs that were a strong attraction in the past are losing ground. The urban space is now the destination for them and most particularly their children. Jobs are still centered in the heart of these areas and the current culture of young educated professionals are choosing to dwell wherever they can afford in the City. This is not unique to Harlem, Bronx, or the City in general. Gentrification is happening in every city in America. And the property that is for the moment inhabited by long-time working class and working poor residents has become prime real estate. This is undoubtedly driven in part by economics. But there is a racial element to this as well, one that Joseph understands (Du Bois 1899; Drake and Cayton 1945; Spear 1967; Massey and Denton 1993; Anderson 1994; Hirsch 1998; Hunter 2013).

The American economy went from being built on agriculture to one that was advanced substantially through industry. After many years of industrial participation by the people across Rust Belt towns and cities across the country, deindustrialization ravage black communities. These workers were typically low-skilled people with low levels of schooling who were dependent on these jobs to support themselves and their families. Joblessness created a decay in the hope and morality in these communities across the country. And as time passed the industrial economy was rapidly replaced in great degree with a knowledge economy characterized by jobs that require more specialized skills, skills many of them had not developed. The future workforce, inner-city youth, attend low-quality and troubled schools that are inadequately preparing them for the economy that exist today (Wilson 1978, 1987, 1996; Anderson 1999).

The picture is looking bleak for many of these young people in the City, which is a proxy for urban America. Social groups throughout the City are actively engaged in

addressing many of the social problems in the neighborhoods, creating mentoring and educational enrichment programs that work with teams of young people over the long-term. I sat in on a number of such programs during my time in the field. The leaders of these groups didn't see this as a panacea to the persistent issues in these urban communities, but rather as a way to alleviate them so the young people and their families can be as resilient as possible. The men of social groups that mentor and create activities for boys in the community are often seen as "big brothers" or "fathers."

I ventured to a barbershop in Harlem with a friend one day. He had made an appointment with his barber for a cut. This particular shop was in the heart of a community across the street from a local public housing area. It was very similar to the previously described haircut spots which are located in black communities. This "joint" was a small and cozy space with a few barbers in the setting. There was music playing over the speakers and people from the streets walking in and out, some as patrons and others as "regulars" who come into the spot to "chill" and "act a fool for a minute."

One particular regular in the setting was a man by the name of William. I was sitting in a waiting chair right across from him. He was talking and joking with all of the barbers as they groomed their customers. We enjoyed the music that was being played as they conversed, a blend of soul rhythm and blues musical artists. William noticed that I was thoroughly enjoying the music and asked, "what you know bout that?" I smiled and said, "I grew up on this stuff! This is my era right here man! Spinners, Blue Magic, Earth, Wind, and Fire- my favorite group, The Emotions- my other favorite group!" William laughed loudly and reacted to my list saying, "check you out little homie! Ain't nothing like it man! Nothing! These were some good times! Some good times man!" "This is that

old school music right here, I interjected! Not like this junk they're making now! I don't buy it! And I don't listen to it! Hell no!" "You have an old soul, he says! You don't look your age! You know about this stuff right here!" "Oh, yea, I responded! ole school is pretty much all I listen to! That's it! Period!" "Not old school... Real School! Say, it! Real school," he demanded as he looked straight into my eyes. "Real school," I said! "That's right! Real school. That was real music back then," he said affirmatively!

This exchange opened a door of conversation between William and I. He inquired about my origins and I told him that I was originally from the South. He then furthered inquired about the specific area of the South I was from. I answered him, noting that I was from Alabama. He proceeded by telling me that he spent some time in the South in the state of Florida. "I went to college in the Florida." "Oh really, I said. What did you study?" "I studied sociology. That's what my degree is in-sociology." "That's what I'm studying right now, I said. What did you do after you finished school? And where are you originally from? Are you from New York?" William answered, "I'm from right here in the City! I moved back here after college to the City. But my folks are originally from down South too. They moved up North. That's why I grew up here. I liked the South though. I had good times down there. I moved back up here and I worked for years in the social service system. I had to leave it though. There is so much shit going on in that system man! It's a hell-of-a lot! I got tired of it and said I'm out! I still do stuff in the community though. There's an area named after me right here. I can take you right now and show it to you- right across the street. And I do work with an organization where we are doing various things with the youth here in the hood. Man, shit is rough out here. But you'd be surprised what a program like this can do for these kids. A lot of them don't

have their father in their lives. Some of them don't even know the motherfucka! A lot of us out here are doing it though man. Cuz we understand what time it is for these kids.”

The perils and exigencies of urban life, coupled with the navigation of everyday life in America, is a constant hope and struggle for black people. There is hope because of the positive progress that has been made in this society over time. It is a struggle because of the persistent social problems that overtook their communities, from the de jure Jim Crow South with all of its rules to the de facto Jim Crow North where “silent racism” offered a new brand of southern segregation and marginalization that continued throughout the sixties and seventies. And many black people of all statuses perceive this to be the case today. The change in their communities, and by extension their way of life, is something that they are making sense of today just as they always have done when these social developments took place across the City and country (Zorbaugh 1983; Anderson 1990).

This essay was written to present the historical context of the ethnographic realities of the African American community. In this last section I endeavored as an ethnographer in New York City to sociologically apprehend and render the men's everyday lives today through their own understandings and environments (Shaw 1966; Young 2004). If history is to be any indication of how things will unfold in the future, black people still have a long and gradual journey of progress ahead of them. Slavery itself lasted for hundreds of years. And the Civil Rights legislation was enacted one hundred years following Emancipation. Being black in America in and of itself is representation of endurance and resilience.

Epilogue

The essays in this dissertation each focused on the ways in which black men navigate their social worlds in a continually changing society. The starting point for this field work was in the West Side Spot and Side Street Tavern. I encountered and travelled into other settings to have socialize and talk with patrons and other people I knew who frequent these urban spaces. There are similarities and differences in the ways in which these men make sense of their prospects on life. The Wall Street brutha is typically more confident of his position economically relative to blue-collar and orange-collar men. Yet he navigates and narrates race in similar ways as they do. The differences these men bring into the Tavern, Spot and other settings are not sufficient enough to create a divide that neglects the “strike” and social history they all share as an understanding of themselves.

The ways in which race is manifested in the North is not seen as being radically different in the sense that black people feel as if they are in a safe space. The history of the North and the changes it is now undergoing has kept many black people in suspicion of any notion that they are in a post-racial society. Progress has been made to advance blacks as participants in mainstream society. But they believe that America still falls short of the ideals that it puts forth. The racist ideologies that devised strategies that were employed to keep them in their “place” in the past are yet being utilized in certain ways today. The private prison system targets inner-city men in order to maintain their capacity and profits. They allied with state and local governments to establish contractual agreements that ensures that their future profits are not compromised. Black and brown men are the primary victims of this strategy which yet exists today. And it is only recently that federal politicians have taken a bipartisan interest in reforming what they see as a wasteful investment of federal dollars. This approach is also increasingly becoming more understood as

ineffective in reforming these orange-collar men (Anderson 1999; Blackmon 2008; Alexander 2010).

The death of Michael Brown did for Ferguson what Hurricane Katrina did for New Orleans in 2005. Both of these national tragedies gained widespread media attention. In the case of Katrina, the nation had to acknowledge and take an up close and personal view of the realities that the black and working-poor has had to deal with for decades. The storm was extremely destructive. But the lives of many of the residents of this area had already experienced the destruction of their everyday lives prior to catastrophe. I was located in the South during that time and became a part of the recovery efforts of helping families as they navigated through homelessness. They brought with them the effects of concentrated poverty and hopelessness that already existed in the urban cores of their city prior to Katrina. New Orleans was no longer just a place where people go to enjoy jazz, food, culture, and many major athletic and entertainment events. The nation had to come to terms with the communities of the city that are not designated as tourist destinations. It was a hard pill for some people to swallow. How could we as a nation have neglected these communities for so long? And most importantly, why does this situation have an undeniably black face?

The Michael Brown incident similarly elucidated realities that went beyond his death at the hands of a police officer. Ferguson is a suburban area outside of St. Louis, Missouri. Most of the political and public discourse on low-income communities and failing schools is focused on the inner city. Yet, Ferguson revealed that the same problems of the inner city can also be found in the suburbs. The demographic is different relative to Harlem. But the peculiarity of the environment is very similar. Ferguson was later found to be a place with laws that also targeted blacks in an effort to get money, just as it was the case in Tuskegee during the tenure of Gomillion at the Institute (Norrell 1998). Cops were compensated for the number of arrests they were able to secure. And the local municipality constructed practices and policies that ensured that this way of life is maintained. Black people in the area understood their place vis-à-vis whites

in Ferguson just as they do in New York City. They are the majority, but they do not dominate positions of authority in that place. The media portrayed the concentrated poverty which characterizes many of the neighborhoods. For the people witnessing this on television in American society it was as if you were observing the inner-city life of St. Louis proper. But for many blacks, it was the “same shit” that they have always experienced irrespective of their demographics.

The men frequenting Side Street Tavern and West Side Spot live out their lives through their own statuses. This lived experience of race, socioeconomics, and fatherhood is as complex as the American society in which occurs. As the society changes, these men are forced to adapt to these transformations in order to remain competitive. Society is becoming increasingly more and more global. And the economy is rapidly becoming more specialized. The Great Migration of blacks into the North to access jobs during the industrial period helped to elevate blacks to a higher economic status relative to their life in the South. Many black people during this era, however, remained in the South. I conceptualize this as the “Great Stagnation.” My geographic roots in the South, which was discussed with many of the people I talked and interacted with in the field, is a result of this stagnation. And there is a trend I observed happening now that I believe will continue to grow in the days to come- black people are strongly considering and planning to either move to or back to the South. The industrial economy that once pulled them up North no longer exist as it once did. Thus, some black people are in search of a different setting with a cheaper cost of living. The South, particularly places like Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, and Charlotte, are very attractive to them. Their hope is that they will be able to successful connect to the economic and social life of these areas. This reverse migration, as I see it, is already happening.

Blacks today are amidst the knowledge economy located in the core of American cities just as the black people in Du Bois’s Ward were centralized near the core of the industrial economy in Philadelphia. Yet they, similarly, are not fully participating in this transformed economic structure (Du Bois 1899; Hunter 2013). A significant proportion of them are products of their

peculiar environments that did not adequately prepare them with the specialized skills they need to be competitive for the jobs that exist in mainstream society. Inner-city school dropout is still happening at alarming rates. And the bulk of the victims of this social crisis are black. The black collared men in New York understand this predicament. They witness the effects and unfolding of these things every day. And it keeps them alert and cognizant of who they are, where they come from, and what they can potentially do for others to provide some relief or an escape from all of this, serving as mentors, father figures, and “old heads” in their communities (Anderson 1999). The goal is not equality of results in today’s society, but rather equality of opportunity that can lead to good results. This is the continuing thread that is central to a thriving black family life.

The focus on fatherhood is not only important but necessary if we are to understand the life of the black family as it exists in America. This will not be clearly understood by focusing exclusively on contemporary or historical data. These two approaches make up a collective lens by which we can better grasp the nuances and explications that has fueled African-American family formation. While there is an increased interest in empirical work on fatherhood (Hamer, 2001) there is much more work to be done to unpack this area of the field. Fatherhood is like other aspects of social life. Military life, for example, is as complex as the world in which military operations happen. And mainstream educational institutions are the same- they function and are led by people who are a part of the fabric of American society. Thus, they become white spaces because America itself has long been a white space (Anderson 2015). Bobo (2003) affirmed that a focus on fathers does not diminish the role of mothers. Nor is there a premium placed on their status and position relative to mothers in society. But there was a research deficit that constructed an imbalance that only empirical work in this field could address. I believe the same sentiment is also true as we focus on the broader context in which men navigate race, family, and economics. Context matters. Meaning matters. And researchers are yet tasked with unearthing rich and substantive understandings of the lives of black men in American life. The essays contained in *Collared Men* are submitted as a contribution to this empirical goal.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

¹This research project is an offshoot of the work I did as a Graduate Research Assistant on a four-member research team exploring race relations and the social positioning of black people in contemporary society. This conceptual work culminated into an article that noted the need for continuing exploration on the issue, an idea I pursued through this dissertation. The names of all of the participants are fictive in order to protect their identity. See Elijah Anderson, Duke Austin, Vani Kulkarni, and Craig Holloway 2012., “The Legacy of Racial Caste: An Exploratory Ethnography,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 642:25-42.

²All of these publications explicate various issues in the inner-city through ethnographic and social-historical methods. This dissertation research leveraged the knowledge production contained in them and used the respective research projects as a model for my own work as the project developed.

CHAPTER 2

¹See Elijah Anderson, Duke Austin, Vani Kulkarni, and Craig Holloway 2012., “The Legacy of Racial Caste: An Exploratory Ethnography,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 642:25-42.

²See Elijah Anderson, “The Cosmopolitan Canopy: Race and Civility in Everyday Life,” 2011., New York: W.W. Norton. Anderson explicates the “provisional status” that blacks are given by dominant society until they prove that they are deserving of their place in the respective context.

³ See <https://www.si.com/college-football/2015/11/09/missouri-football-protest-racism-tim-wolfe> and <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2015/11/30/hls-consider-changing-seal/> for opinion editorials on the incidents that occurred at Harvard Law School and the University of Missouri.

⁴See Eduardo Bonilla-Silva 2013., Joe Feagin 2006/2010., and Leslie Picca and Joe Feagin 2007. These scholars have all written extensively about the white racial framework on race relations.

CHAPTER 3

¹Though this section focuses more on the impact of incarceration's effect on the trajectory of black men, the local economy is also a strong influence. Anderson (1999) and Wilson (1987), cited earlier in the preceding section, wrote extensively about the structural changes of the economy that led to a decline in social life through the increase in violence and infiltration of the drug trade and drug usage. Deindustrialization was a major factor that led to these transformations. Mass incarceration exacerbated the plight of black men following the decline in economic opportunity.

²See McCall, N. 1994. *Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America*. New York, NY: Vintage Books. McCall wrote in this book about his life growing up in the streets. Chapter 30 (pp. 270-276) noted his thoughts on fatherhood and the effects that the abandonment his father had on his brothers and he. The impact was both positive and negative among them. He and one of his brothers reunited with his father as an adult sometimes after he was released from prison. He maintained contact with him for a short period after that but eventually ceased his communication because the interaction seemed one-sided with him making virtually all of the effort. He believed that it was his father's responsibility to bridge the gap that had existed for decades since his absence. Fatherhood was a "state of mind" that his dad still didn't appear to have.

CHAPTER 4

¹*The Souls of Black Folks* (see Du Bois, W.E.B. 2003. New York, NY: Barnes and Noble Classics) included a chapter exclusively written as a rebuttal to the educational model and personal philosophy of Dr. Booker T. Washington. However, he acknowledged the contributions Washington had made to the civil rights advancement of black people, secretly and openly funding legal cases in an effort to challenge injustices against them by white people in court.

²See Washington, B.T. & Du Bois, W.E.B. 1907. *The Negro in the South: His Economic Progress in Relation to His Moral and Religious Development*. Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Company Publishers.

³See Lucas, Jo Desha. "Dragon in The Thicket: A Perusal of Gomillion." *Supreme Court Review* 194 (1961), pp. 195-196.

⁴See Entin, Jonathan L. "Of Squares and Uncouth Twenty-Eight –Sided Figures: Reflections on Gomillion v. Lightfoot After Half a Century." *Washburn L.J.* 133 (Fall 2010), pp. 2-3.

⁵See *Ibid.*, pg. 3

⁶See Lucas, Jo Desha. “Dragon in The Thicket: A Perusal of Gomillion.” *Supreme Court Review* 194 (1961), pg. 196.

⁷*Plaintiffs v. Phil M. Lightfoot*. U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, Eastern District. 167 F. Supp. 405, 1958 U.D. Dist. LEXIS 3431, p. 35

⁸*Plaintiffs v. Phil M. Lightfoot*. U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, Eastern District. 167 F. Supp. 405, 1958 U.D. Dist. LEXIS 3431, p. 36

⁹*Ibid.*, p.36-37

¹⁰*C.G. Gomillion et al., Plaintiffs v. Phil M. Lightfoot*. U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, Eastern District. 167 F. Supp. 405, 1958 U.D. Dist. LEXIS 3431, pg. 37

¹¹*Doyle v. Continental Ins. Co.* Supreme Court of the United States. 1876, 94 U.S. 535, 24 L.Ed. 148

¹²*C.G. Gomillion et al., Plaintiffs v. Phil M. Lightfoot*. U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, Eastern District. 167 F. Supp. 405, 1958 U.D. Dist. LEXIS 3431, pp. 37-38.

¹³*C.G. Gomillion et al., Appellants, v. Phil M. Lightfoot*. U.S. Court of Appeals Fifth Circuit. 270 F.2d 594; 1959 U.S. App. LEXIS 3363, pp. 15-17.

¹⁴*C.G. Gomillion et al., Appellants, v. Phil M. Lightfoot*. U.S. Court of Appeals Fifth Circuit. 270 F.2d 594; 1959 U.S. App. LEXIS 3363, pp. 17-20.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 20-22, 25

¹⁶*Gomillion v. Lightfoot*. Supreme Court of the United States. 364 U.S. 339; 81 S. Ct. 125; 5 L. Ed 2d 110; 1960 U.S. LEXIS 189

¹⁷*Gomillion v. Lightfoot*. Supreme Court of the United States. 364 U.S. 339; 81 S. Ct. 125; 5 L. Ed 2d 110; 1960 U.S. LEXIS 189, p.1

¹⁸Entin, Jonathan L. “Of Squares and Uncouth Twenty-Eight –Sided Figures: Reflections on *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* After Half a Century.” *Washburn L.J.* 133 (Fall 2010), pp. 6-7.

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