

UNCOVERING THE MISTER MAGIC: CRITICAL RACE COUNTERNARRATIVES OF BLACK
MALE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

By

C. EMMANUEL LITTLE

(Under the Direction of Karen Webber)

ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study examined Black male pre-service teachers in the Clemson University Call Me MISTER program regarding their feelings on race, masculinity, and their roles as educators. This case study used a narrative inquiry research design with a critical race theoretical framework to allow individual stories of participants to serve as counternarratives against deficit-focused framing of Black males in education. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews with 11 participants and a supplemental document analysis of materials collected from the program. The study produced five major findings: 1) Participants valued racial representation and desired to be role models; 2) participants resisted racist stereotypes; 3) participants felt that their Black masculinity made them both hypervisible and invisible on their campuses; 4) the Call Me MISTER program expanded their perspectives on masculinity; and 5) participants felt the MISTER brotherhood assisted in their success on Clemson's predominantly White campus. Findings from this study are valuable to those interested in bolstering Black male retention in teacher education programs and more broadly, their success on college campuses.

INDEX WORDS: African American, Black masculinity, education, Call Me MISTER, racism, teacher education, critical race theory

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C. EMMANUEL LITTLE

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By

C. EMMANUEL LITTLE

Major Professor: Karen Webber

Committee: James Hearn

Bettina Love

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour

Dean of the Graduate School

The University of Georgia

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beautiful wife. Crystal, I never could have made it this far without your love, understanding and unwavering support. Thank you for consistently loving me and providing the sense of perspective and encouragement I always needed to carry on and press towards the mark. This is *our* degree and I dedicate the rest of my life to reciprocating what you've given me. We did it!

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Chapter I: Introduction

A public school system without Black teachers is [like teaching] White supremacy without saying a word. (Mercer & Mercer, 1986, p. 105)

Background

According to the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004), the U.S. population is rapidly becoming more racially diverse; the K-12 classroom mirrors this trend. Unfortunately, the future cadre of teachers does not match this increased racial diversity, with teachers of color still representing a drastically low percentage of the total teaching force in comparison to their students (Norton, 2005). Black males in particular are severely underrepresented, constituting only two percent of the national teaching force (Toldson, 2013). This, combined with young Black males often being considered among the most vulnerable students (Kunjufu, 1985; Jackson & Moore III, 2006) paints a picture of urgency regarding the future of education for Black males. This picture would be incomplete without contextualizing it further to examine exactly what they are vulnerable to. Black males are vulnerable to the insidious impact of White supremacy, whether in K-12 classrooms or within the broader societal context. The insidious impact of racism encourages framing of its victims as the problem rather than its systemic perpetrators in this case.

Part of the larger context for this discussion relates to the after-effects of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which outlawed segregated schools in the 1950s but indirectly led to disparities in Black teachers and continued inequalities in school resources. This inequality

helped create an environmental context for re-segregation of schools under the guise of increased and/or equitable opportunities, as over half a century later the landscape around education also involves considerable discussion around the proliferation of charter schools and their relationship to segregation. Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley and Wang (2011) found that charter schools currently isolate students by both race and class as a whole; this is true, both in the sense of mostly White settings but also in examples attended by mostly students of color (2011). Despite increasing prevalence of certain narratives touting charter schools as essential to the educational future of the most vulnerable children, there is little empirical evidence (test scores, graduation rates, etc.) supporting such assertions (Frankenburg et al., 2011).

Currently, state and federal education policy has considerable influence on classroom dynamics. Teacher evaluation standards such as edTPA, which, ostensibly, are designed to assess and increase teacher efficacy (Luna, 2016), are subjects of much debate and controversy – not the least of which being whether such methods are as “colorblind” as originally intended (Luna, 2016). Attempts to standardize curricula throughout K-12 school systems such as the Common Core have been met with similar consternation. According to Villegas & Lucas (2004), education reform such as this and policies such as *No Child Left Behind* have had mixed results, given that placing a highly qualified teacher in classrooms also means gatekeeping measures that have decidedly less than equitable outcomes, particularly for teachers of color (Villegas & Lucas, 2004; Ahmad & Boser, 2014). Such an environment leads to increased pressure on teachers to meet standards in the classroom, as evidenced by recent testing scandals in places such as the Atlanta Public Schools.

Combined with these pressures, the various school contexts for teachers portend potentially devastating consequences for students. For example, teacher salaries are not competitive with other professions across the spectrum. Allegreto & Mishel (2016) found that, compared to professionals with similar educational backgrounds, teachers make roughly 17 percent less than other professionals in weekly salary. Even when accounting for benefits teachers receive, other professionals still make on average of 11 percent more (Allegreto & Mishel, 2016). This wage gap is even more pronounced for men compared to women at all levels (Allegreto & Mishel, 2016). This amounts to a disturbing trend, particularly given the importance placed on teachers to prepare the next generation of students for college and beyond.

Given the aforementioned policy pressures and salary issues, it is not difficult to imagine the fallout reflected in the teaching force. Much of the nationwide rhetoric around teachers mentions the alarming prospect of a teacher shortage. Many researchers have examined this trend and found various reasons for why more teachers are currently needed. Imazeki (2005) suggested that retiring baby boomers combined with larger K-12 student enrollments contributed collectively to the lack of teachers. Regarding recruitment of racial diversity, Ahmad & Boser (2014) found that factors such as lower rates of high school graduation/college entry and less success on standardized testing pose serious threats to diversifying the teacher pipeline. Retention-wise Ingersoll, Merrill & Stuckey (2014) found that non-retirement teacher turnover has increased 40 percent between 1988 -2009. The immediate question then becomes, “why are these teachers leaving?” Much of the teacher attrition nationwide concerns teachers of color in particular, who are more likely to leave the profession than their White peers (Ahmad & Boser, 2014).

One such program known as “Call Me MISTER” (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) has emerged as a key initiative aimed at addressing such issues. Call Me MISTER is a program focused on diversifying the pipeline for educators by targeting Black males. Beginning in the state of South Carolina in 2000, the program now resides in over 20 different higher education institutions of various types and missions throughout the southeastern United States, with its main headquarters located at Clemson University. The program operates with the following declaration as a foundational vision statement for its members:

I am a dedicated Servant Leader who is perpetuating a sorely needed concept - Servant-Leaders as role models in elementary schools. I am devoted to planting seeds of dignity and respect in children and inspiring them to cultivate those seeds producing a crop of unprecedented success. I will teach reading, writing and arithmetic and progress to self-esteem, imagination and determination. Because of my immeasurable promise, not only have I earned your respect, I demand it! A title is only important if ones' character and integrity dictate its use. When you address me, please verbalize my destiny... please do not call me by my first name... call me in reference to my great vision... call me MISTER! Teamwork makes the dream work! (Jones & Jenkins, 2012).

The available literature on Black male teachers, while growing due to increased national attention, needs greater focus on the nuanced identities of Black males and the reasons why they decide to pursue education, particularly relative to oppression and its relationship to those identities. To avoid generalizations, more research is needed on their

individualized experiences both in teacher education programs such as Call Me MISTER and also once entering the teaching profession.

Purpose Of This Study

This qualitative case study sought to explore the various dynamics that compose the Call Me MISTER program through a critical race lens. Using a narrative inquiry approach, I examined the stories of participants within one Call Me MISTER cohort, situated within the context of the environmental factors that necessitate the program's existence. By using semi-structured interviews bolstered by document analysis, the study examined the relationship between participants' motivations to teach, race, and their masculinity, along with other aspects of their identities.

By examining participant counternarratives via a case study such as this, I explored stories of young men who were actively doing exactly what prevailing narratives say they were not – that is, seeking out careers as K-12 educators. With Clemson's Call Me MISTER program providing a conduit for Black males to complete their certification (with the university's College of Education) for over 15 years, its success merited closer observation in order to provide valuable insight into the intersections of race, Black masculinity and educational careers.

Significance

This study is relevant to K-12 practitioners and those in higher education with interest in innovative teacher education programs that are working to increase teacher diversity, particularly that of Black males. It is also significant to policy makers interested

in finding solutions to the issue of teacher diversity and, relatedly, how to expand the teacher pipeline. This is due, in part, to the increasingly challenging field of teacher education. With teacher diversity already at a premium, programs that purport to address this issue have become even more important in order to stem the tide. Observing not only the successes of such programs, but the stories of their participants will provide important context concerning why Call Me MISTER persists as a key pipeline for Black male educators. The findings forthwith could also be a valuable addition to the literature on Black masculinity, particularly within the context of higher education.

My Journey Into This Work

My journey to this dissertation began, in earnest, in fall 2003. As a freshman Black male at a predominantly White institution or *PWI*, I often suffered from issues of isolation associated with my marginalized identity, as Black students accounted for less than 10 percent of the undergraduate student population at the time. Nevertheless, I persisted and after graduation, began working at my alma mater - first, as an admissions counselor but later as a diversity coordinator. The four years spent in this position proved transformational, as I was tasked with starting our institution's African-American Male Initiative to assist Black male undergraduate students with retention and graduation support. As part of this work, my staff and I hosted seminars focused on helping these students assess and re-evaluate their perspectives on themselves and the world around them, while also supporting them as they navigate situations on campus. Later, I began another new position at the institution, this one focused on beginning the first Call Me MiSTER program in the state - focused on identifying Black males to become teachers. Throughout this work, I have had numerous opportunities to not only see first-hand the

challenges that Black males in higher education face in general, but also the successes that these students reached in spite of such challenges.

Much of the aforementioned work around Black males revolved around leading or facilitating workshops for these students, often either directly or indirectly dealing with Black manhood. As such, these experiences often forced me to both challenge my students to think critically about their masculinity and also to re-evaluate my own perceptions. As a director of a Call Me MiSTER program, this also meant making connections between ideas of Blackness, masculinity, and careers in the classroom. Thus, this study is a natural progression from the work I have been engaged in as a practitioner.

Research Questions

The aforementioned literature asserts that there is a dearth of Black male teachers and several factors discouraging Black men to both choose careers in education and stay in those careers. More insight is needed concerning what motivates Black males to choose to become teachers, particularly regarding the experiences of those participating in programs focused on bringing more of them into the pipeline. Bridging this gap is significant because focusing on why Black males do choose teaching instead of why they choose other professions would be more instructive for practitioners wishing to further expand the teaching pipeline for racial and gender diversity.

Through my research, I sought answers to the following questions:

- What motivates MISTERS to teach?
 - Do MISTERS see their role in the classroom as related to racial uplift?
 - How did their K-12 experience inform their desire to teach, if at all?

- How do MISTERS' individual raced and gendered identities impact their desire to teach and perceptions about the profession?
 - How do their other identities impact them as well?
 - How do MISTERS see others' perceptions of these identities?
- How does participation in the Call Me MISTER program serve as a counterspace from institutional racism?
 - What activities do MISTERS find most beneficial?
 - What does the program itself purport to provide regarding counterspaces?

Chapter II: Literature Review

Black males are underrepresented as teachers due to challenges at various stages of the pipeline to the profession. This, in addition to attrition rates that are disproportionately higher for teachers of color, mandates further research on their experiences at various stages of the teaching pipeline. This case study purposed to add to the existing literature by providing a spotlight on the nuanced stories of Black males pursuing teaching careers with the assistance of the Call Me MISTER program.

Based on the key bodies of literature influencing the background of this study, I will discuss relevant research and connections among the following categories: 1) teacher diversity; 2) Black (male) teachers; and 3) Black masculinity.

Diversity in the Teacher Pipeline

In order to properly contextualize current issues around racial diversity in the teaching force, it is important to briefly examine the historical background, particularly regarding the decline in Black teachers. The landmark civil rights case *Brown vs. Board of Education* essentially outlawed the “separate but equal” doctrine and allowed for integration of Black students into White schools. Of course, such a paradigm shift is ostensibly regarded as a positive for Black students; however, many scholars have challenged this overall notion (Bell, 1979) and explored the deleterious impact on teachers in particular. Fairclough (2007) examined trends in school systems after *Brown vs. Board* and found that thousands of Black teachers were pushed out of the profession (2007). This was also reflected in educational administrators as well (Fairclough, 2007; Irvine, 1988).

While the landmark case happened several decades ago, the trends it started still reverberate in the current landscape with unintended consequences for teacher racial diversity.

Much of the literature around racial diversity in particular underlines the trend of increasingly mismatched students and teachers (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ahmad & Boser, 2014). According to a recent report by the U.S. Department of Education (2016), the teaching force is currently 80 percent White, eight percent Hispanic and seven percent Black. This is a cause for concern, given the current increasingly diverse student demographics (U.S. Department of Education, 2016) and various studies regarding the impact of teachers' racial background on student achievement. Dee (2004) found that same-raced teachers have a positive impact on student academic prowess. More recently, specifically concerning Black males, Gershenson, Hart, Lindsay, & Papageorge (2017) found that simply having *one* Black teacher significantly decreased the likelihood of a Black male student dropping out of high school. This, combined with research that suggests White teachers tend to have lower expectations for their nonWhite students (Irvine, 1990), paints a much clearer picture of the increasing urgency of teacher racial diversity.

Challenges to Teacher Racial Diversity. What explains the paucity of teachers of color choosing and/or staying within the profession? Ahmad & Boser (2014) outlined several possible reasons for the “leaky pipeline,” including fundamental barriers to entry into the teaching profession for people of color. At the postsecondary level (within teacher education programs/majors) these include standardized licensure exams such as the PRAXIS and various costs associated with them (Ahmad & Boser, 2014). Additionally,

national standards for college entry such as the SAT and ACT exams pose unique challenges for students of color in particular (Ahmad & Boser, 2014).

The pipeline for teacher racial diversity decreases at every stage required for entry into the teaching profession. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), students of color are less likely than their White peers to graduate from high school and enroll in college, major in education, graduate with a bachelor's degree in education, and then upon graduation, enter the teaching profession even with an education degree. Finally, those who enter the profession are less likely to continue teaching (Ahmad & Boser, 2014). This paints a troubling outlook for the future of teacher education if diversity continues to be a key concern.

Concerning positive trends in teacher diversity, HBCUs (Historically Black Institutions) represent important strongholds for production of a more racially diverse teaching force. While they produce only two percent of all teachers, HBCUs produce approximately 16 percent of all Black teachers nationwide (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Additionally, various alternative pathways to teaching have produced encouraging results for racial diversity, with significantly higher percentages of teacher candidates in such programs outside of higher education being composed of nonWhite individuals (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Given the study's focus on Black male pre-service teachers, it is important to briefly examine key trends related to that population as well. Currently, Black men account for less than two percent of the national teaching force (Lewis, Toldson & Moore, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). However, Toldson & Snitman (2010) found that primary school teacher was the number one most common profession for Black males, who are

actually overrepresented in school systems as educational administrators (Lewis et al., 2013). How can these seemingly diametrically opposed outcomes happen simultaneously? Lewis, et al. (2013) point to Black males being less likely to enter and graduate from college (and thus, attain certifications to teach). Thus, the leaky pipeline (Ahmad & Boser, 2014) needs the most repair in the K-12 school system, at least regarding Black males.

Ingersoll and May (2011) cite high teacher turnover rates among teachers of color as a larger issue than recruitment. According to them, efforts to recruit more teacher diversity and place underrepresented teachers in “disadvantaged” schools have been largely successful. However, does this trend hold true for Black male teachers also? According to Lewis et al. (2013), college educated Black males are far more likely than White men to become teachers or part of other helping professions, as well as educational administrators (Lewis et al., 2013). This appears to be good news; however, Black men are still severely underrepresented in the teaching force.

Despite the large number of teachers relative to other professions held by college-educated Black men, they represent less than two percent of the teaching force of a student body that is seven percent Black male. By comparison, White female teachers comprise 62 percent of the teaching force, of a student body that is 26 percent White female. (Lewis et al., 2013)

Given this disparity, it is important to examine the literature that explores the dearth of Black male teachers and reasons for its existence. Lewis et al. (2013) mention low college graduation rates and lower likelihood of actually *majoring in education* (not to be confused with actually becoming a teacher) as contributing factors. While not explicitly focusing on Black male teachers, Torres, Santos, Peck, & Cortes (2004) expounded upon

reasons for a lack of diversity in the teaching force, citing inadequate academic preparation, better or more lucrative career opportunities, working conditions within school systems, lack of cultural and social support groups, increased competency testing, and high attrition combined with low salaries.

Other researchers expanded upon this inquiry by examining whether the lack of teachers relates to a recruitment/pipeline issue, teacher retention in schools, or a combination of the two. Ingersoll and May (2011) found that teachers of color have less stability within the teaching field than their White counterparts and are more likely to bounce between schools, especially male teachers of color. This, combined with the larger likelihood of teachers of color to be dissatisfied with salary and school management (Boser, 2011), creates an environment more conducive for teachers of color to leave the profession. Similar assumptions can be drawn from research that suggests that Black male teachers are more likely to be assigned the “more challenging students” and given other responsibilities outside of the classroom. These teacher departures, then, are largely related to school organizational conditions (Ingersoll & May, 2011), some of which will be revealed in literature to be discussed later within this review.

Rationale for Why Teacher Diversity Is Important. Much of the available literature focuses, at least partially, on making the case for the importance of teacher diversity in K-12 schools. Villegas & Irvine (2010), for instance, outlined three key arguments for increasing the composition of teachers of color:

- *Role modeling:* This revolves around the assertion that teachers with shared racial backgrounds serve as role models for students (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). While sensible, Villegas & Irvine offered that this rationale has little empirical basis.

Nonetheless, various programs for teacher diversity focus on this assumption, including the national Call Me MISTER program that targets Black male teachers (Jones & Jenkins, 2012);

- *Student outcomes (cultural synchronicity)*: The argument that greater teacher diversity increases student outcomes is prevalent in the literature and national conversation. Irvine introduced the idea of cultural synchronicity several decades ago (1988), where teachers of shared cultural backgrounds are more likely to understand their students and the various cultural dynamics that inevitably affect the classroom as well (1988). This is also reflected in aforementioned research by Dee (2004, 2005) and Gershenson, et al. (2017); and
- *Workforce rationale*: Villegas & Irvine (2010) assert that the current narrative around a nationwide teacher shortage can be addressed by recruiting greater teacher diversity, particularly given that teachers of color are more likely to teach in schools in lower income areas.

Similarly, Ingersoll and May (2011) also found that critics cite three main arguments for why teacher diversity is important, including:

- democratic parity;
- cultural synchronicity, as defined by Irvine (1988), where teachers of color are assumed to have “insider knowledge” that would further encourage students of color to succeed; and
- teacher shortages, where more minority teacher candidates are likely to be motivated by a “humanistic commitment” to teach disadvantaged students.

Toldson suggests that cultural differences between teachers and the students they teach of a different race may affect schooling experiences (Toldson, 2013). These differences create racial disparities in how students are perceived, which in turn creates environments where student potential can easily be undermined (Toldson, 2013). Dee (2005), in a thorough study concerning possible relationships between race, ethnicity, gender, and teacher-student interaction found that not only do these factors matter in the classroom, but they also “appear to be concentrated among students of low socioeconomic status and those in the South” Dee (2005) suggests that these narratives contribute to pronounced achievement gaps in these areas.

The “teachers-as-role models” narrative reflected within the mission of Call Me MiSTER is repeatedly underlined within the literature as well. Irvine (1990) suggests that Black teachers are more than role models for their students, but “cultural translators and intercessors” for them. In this way, the role of mentor is a more accurate description (Irvine, 1990). Villegas and Irvine (2010) explore various arguments for diversifying the teaching force, one of which being that Black teachers can improve outcomes for students who look like them, drawing again upon the idea of Black teachers being role models for students. They also critique this perspective as compelling or well intentioned, but also the “least well-developed” (2010) of any rationale for greater teacher diversity and - as Woodson & Pabon (2016) agree - problematic. Thus, the role model assumption “demands research designed specifically to examine the presumed role model effects of teachers of color” (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Villegas and Irvine also concur with Dee’s prior study, underlining the empirical evidence that students of color benefit in numerous ways from

having teachers of the same race/ethnicity (2010). This holds true also for those in school districts with diverse teacher representation (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Recommendations for Policy & Spotlights on Current Programs. Many of the studies on this subject also focus on attempting to provide valuable information for practitioners in the field of teacher education. Thus, the literature offers best practice strategies for recruitment and retention of racially underrepresented students in teacher education, and information on university programs that were created for this purpose.

Ahmad and Boser (2014) made several recommendations for the federal, state, local government levels in recruiting greater teacher diversity, echoing and building upon findings and trends from aforementioned literature. Such recommendations included grant funding and scholarships for teacher preparation programs at minority-serving institutions, and supporting pre-existing programs such as Call Me MISTER. Similarly, the National Education Association (2009) published a study recommending similar strategies in addition to creation of a “national clearinghouse” for better data-driven programs concerning the teacher education pipeline, as well as marketing the teaching profession earlier to children of color who may not automatically see themselves represented in the front of the classroom (2009).

Sleeter and Thao (2007) suggested ways to offset the likelihood of teacher candidates of color struggling in White-centered programs. Particularly if one views the field of education through the lens of critical race theorists, teacher education programs would certainly do more harm than good if left to their own devices in training young teachers of color. Inclusion, then, rather than disenfranchisement, while recognizing important perspectives and cultural values is paramount to embracing greater teacher

diversity (Sleeter & Thao, 2007). Several researchers also recommended that teacher education programs should re-evaluate their focus on standardized competency tests (Bridges, 2011). Bridges, for instance, asserted that many of the potential teachers (particularly Black males) that can reach marginalized children may not be the students that typically do well on such tests (2011).

Bristol (2015a) made several recommendations in a policy brief specifically prepared for Boston Public Schools to increase their number of Black male teachers, based primarily on the aforementioned research he conducted with the Boston Teacher Residency initiative. His recommendations contained actionable items tailored for policymakers, specifically, for them to:

- recruit Black male high school students to enter the teaching profession;
- focus on retention efforts;
- design professional development tailored for Black male teachers;
- train all administrators regarding race and gender issues;
- encourage other schools to increase their numbers of Black male faculty members;
- and
- expand the Office of Equity (Bristol, 2015a).

Given the increased national spotlight on the issue of teacher diversity, the aforementioned recommendations will likely be joined with additional policies nationwide designed to both widen the pipeline for teacher diversity and assist with retention efforts. However, policy is bereft of sustainable impact without proper understanding of the nuances inherent within the problem itself.

History & Trends of Black (Male) Educators

Specifically regarding Black male teachers, it is important to briefly highlight the key literature spotlighting the history of Black teachers (male and female) and key scholarly narratives of Black male teacher experiences.

The available literature thoroughly describes the current state of Black teacher education by first examining the history and trends. According to Cole (1986), education has always been a major occupation for college educated Black Americans (1986). However, the introduction of integration into schools via *Brown vs. Board of Education* had unintended consequences for Black teachers in particular (Cole, 1986; Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Irvine, 1988; Torres, Santos, Peck, & Cortes, 2004). Irvine (1988), in her analysis of why Black educators were “disappearing,” suggested several reasons for this decline after *Brown*. For one, White administrators now commandeered black schools, which were previously “semiautonomous” in nature (Irvine, 1988). This led to personnel decisions “resulting in the firing and transferring of many black teachers” (Irvine, 1988). Particularly in the South (as one might expect), the effects of *Brown* were particularly acute on the Black teaching force. According to Holmes and Hudson (1994), an estimated nearly 40,000 Black teachers and administrators lost their jobs in 17 southern states after the *Brown* case.

After *Brown*, Cole predicted that the demise of the Black teacher would have deleterious effects on not just Black children, but all children:

In this pluralistic society, and especially in one of our major institutions of socialization, the need for interaction with diverse groups is paramount. The demise of the Black teacher will not only have a negative impact on the Black community, but also on the growth and development of our nation (1986).

In more recent studies, researchers have examined the trends in teachers of color resulting from the aforementioned effects of *Brown*. Ingersoll and May (2011), for instance, published a comprehensive report that showed a continuous gap between the percentage of students of color and teachers of color, despite the overall number of minority teachers doubling from 1988 - 2008. This seeming disconnect, according to their research, is due to the increased percentages of students of color in school systems relative to their White counterparts (2011). Concerning Black males specifically, Fultz (1995) examined U.S. Census data from the Reconstruction era, finding that Black men accounted for roughly half of the Black teachers in 1890. By the 1940s, this percentage decreased to 21%, with Black females making up the remaining 79% (Fultz, 1995). Bristol speculates that one reason for this decline could be “increased job opportunities in a rapidly industrializing America combined with the need for soldiers in two World Wars” (2014).

Experiences of Black Male Teachers (pre-service and in-service). Some of the more insightful aspects of the literature focus on specific Black male experiences as either teachers or pre-service students within teacher education programs. Bridges (2011) conducted a qualitative study on Black male K-12 teachers from the “hip-hop generation” in order to glean more insight into their desire and motivations for entering the profession. He found that the Black male teachers he studied use hip-hop culture as a tool of resistance to oppressive structures (Kitwana, 2002). The teachers he studied were guided by three principles influenced by hip-hop: call to service, commitment to self-awareness, and resistance to social injustice (Bridges, 2011). This approach was critical in reinforcing their motivations to continue teaching in the face of prevalent racism (Bridges, 2011).

Similarly, Bristol (2015) spotlighted young men of color who participated in the Boston Teacher Residency, a portion of whom were Black males. These individuals incorporated hip-hop/urban vernacular as part of the classroom experience of “valuing the cool” (Bristol, 2015) to facilitate the learning process. While they found such strategies successful toward students, the teachers Bristol interviewed felt isolation within their schools from colleagues, due not only to their status as underrepresented but also to their ideas that countered traditional teaching methods (Bristol, 2015a). They also experienced challenges regarding being seen by colleagues as the default disciplinarians and assumed mentors of male students of color; having a network through the teacher residency provided support to persevere through such challenges (Bristol, 2015a).

Due in part to this research, Bristol (2015a) found that: (a) early teaching experience helped influence Black men to later choose the profession; (b) Black male teachers face significant challenges with being the “loner” in a school; (c) Black male teachers are frequently seen more as behavior managers than educators; and (d) Black male teachers are more likely to leave low performing schools, as broached in literature mentioned previously (Bristol, 2015a).

As an example perhaps even more instructive for this research, Lynn (2002) conducted a qualitative study of several Black male teachers in Los Angeles, California utilizing a CRT framework. Using their counternarratives, he found that 1) these Black men saw the teaching profession as a “calling” rather than simply a job to perform (2002), and also that 2) they saw their Black male identities as a pedagogical strength in the classroom that allowed them to reach students easier (Lynn, 2002).

Gaps & opportunities for further exploration. Black men are not a monolith.

While expanding, the available literature on Black male teacher education does little to address the individualized experiences of Black men. While the aforementioned studies do provide some spotlight on various Black male teachers, little research exists concerning larger patterns and trends that reflect a more intersectional analysis. For instance, how do Black gay men differ from their non-LGBTQ counterparts in motivations, perspectives, and experiences both in the classroom as a teacher, but also as a pre-service student within teacher education programs? Similar questions can be asked concerning socioeconomic status, family background and type of school (K-12 and college/university) attended. Would any of their experiences change, given differences in any of these factors?

Much of the literature also assumes that Black male teachers have similar positionalities regarding race and motivations; a critical race theoretical lens mandates that researchers look more deeply into these experiences to determine (a) how individuals experience and are affected by oppression, and (b) how they view their role as an educator in combating it, also taking into account those who do not view their role as such. Of course, such a study would be limited by the nature of categories that participants are divided into; for instance, students may be more hesitant to self-identify as LGBTQ or share their experiences related to their sexual orientation/gender identity as related to education.

The literature also has little information comparing the lived experiences of Black male teachers that were trained through more nontraditional means as opposed to entering through traditional four-year teacher education programs for undergraduate students. Even the research focusing on individual pre-service teachers is overwhelmingly

centered on those in the “traditional” 18-23 year-old age group; this ignores the very likely different experiences of individuals who choose the teaching profession in later years. For instance, a Black male who decides to pursue a career in education after 15 years of working in the corporate sector would possibly have different influences than a 22 year-old freshly-minted college graduate. He may also experience very different challenges, both within a teacher education program but also once entering the teaching field as an older professional. Research concerning these likely disparate experiences can be crucial for policymakers and practitioners because it would provide the proper levels of nuance necessary to properly support Black male pre-service teachers at all levels of training.

Black Masculinity

The concept of Black masculinity has been both explicitly explored by various scholars and implicitly defined through popular culture and social norms. This section will detail the scholarship around the subject and outline key themes within the literature, then conclude with how these themes connect to current dynamics. With these connections, possible solutions to problems will be broached as well.

In order to properly examine current trends within the literature on Black masculinity, it is important to first briefly observe key scholarship in related to masculinity overall. In a survey of the history of U.S. masculinity, Kimmel (1995) suggested that definitions are continuously evolving, beginning with the antebellum era where ideas of White manhood were attached to economics (ownership of land, etc.) and later, through hard labor. This soon evolved in the early 20th century, where White men more frequently found themselves in office settings with women and minorities (Kimmel, 1995). As a result, physical recreational activities became part of how manhood was defined, hence the

growing popularity in the mid-20th century of such sports as boxing and football (Kimmel, 1995). Connell (1995) adds to this by asserting that these definitions have always composed the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which is composed of arbitrary social norms used to define manhood (1995). Rooted in patriarchy, these norms often result in homophobia and misogyny and thus, according to Connell (1995), Kimmel (1995), and others, are in desperate need of revision.

Given the different ways in which race and gender intersect in society (Grenshaw, 1991), it perhaps goes without saying that definitions of Black masculinity may differ from that of Connell's hegemonic masculinity (1995). Thus, the following section will focus on describing key trends in the literature regarding Black masculinity.

Patriarchal narratives. Much of the earlier scholarship related to Black masculinity is saturated with patriarchal ideals about what it means to be Black and male in the U.S. Given slavery's profound impact on the Black family, much of the early scholarship focuses on its resulting emasculation of the Black male (Neal, 2005). The origin of the strong black man trope is credited by some scholars as beginning here, as a reclamation of the sense of manhood lost through enslavement became key in narratives such as that of Frederick Douglass (1845) and later, DuBois (1903).

Frazier (1935) took this narrative a bit further, bemoaning the state of the Black family in the early 20th century by blaming Black male unemployment and other issues largely on the supposed predominance of Black women in the home (1935). Aligning with the aforementioned ideals of hegemonic masculinity being attached to subordination (Connell, 1995), Frazier argued that Black men's collective inability to lead their households contributed to failures of the Black community to advance as a whole. With this

juxtaposition, Frazier laid the groundwork for decades of scholarship focused on such patriarchal foundations, none of which being perhaps as notorious or controversial as that of Moynihan (1965). Moynihan built upon Frazier's thesis, suggesting for Black women to return to their gender roles within the patriarchy so that Black men can reclaim their masculinity through leading their families (1965).

It should be noted that such narratives also took hold in movements for Black liberation throughout the latter half of the 20th century. The civil rights movement and Black Panther Party, for instance, featured visible leadership composed predominantly of Black males such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Fred Hampton, Huey Newton, etc. Decades later, a similar patriarchal focus was reflected in the Million Man March (Hopkinson & Moore, 2006), where large numbers of Black men congregated to essentially tout similar solutions described previously concerning reclamation of families. This intentional focus on charismatic Black men to lead these movements often meant the marginalization of Black women (hooks, 2004). Critiques by Black women and others of this marginalization are discussed in the following section.

Critique and revision of established narratives. Much of the literature around Black masculinity, especially over the last several decades, has focused on critiquing and attempting to revise the aforementioned patriarchal narratives. Black female scholars, feeling the double effects of both racial and gendered oppression (Crenshaw, 1991), are among the most prominent voices of dissent. Wallace (1978) critiqued the misogyny laden in movements for Black Power and decried the disconnect between Black women's hard work and the credit being given for such work (1978). Wallace outlined how the sense of *Black macho* associated with Black male leadership resulted in the silencing of others

(1978). hooks (2004) built upon this by exploring the negative impact that limited Black masculinities have not only on Black women, but also on the Black men that cling to them (2004). hooks argued that this leads to limited ability to express emotions and thus, embrace the entirety of Black male humanity (2004). Hip-hop culture (and specifically, rap music) has been used as both a medium to perform Black masculinity and a lens through which to view Black masculine tropes. Hopkinson & Moore (2006) deconstructed this dynamic, noting the prevalence of homophobia and misogyny and argued for a more expansive, less problematic definition of Black masculinity reflected in the music (2006).

Several male scholars have also contributed to revising the literature on Black masculinity. Neal (2005) argued for a new Black man; eschewing homophobia and misogyny in favor of a “queered” masculinity that is much more expansive and inclusive of all Black male identities while forgoing the subordination of others (Neal, 2005). Jackson (2006) observed how popular depictions of Black masculinity followed certain scripts throughout history. Such scripts included the popular stereotypes of the “pickaninny” and “coon” that served to not only limited acceptable models of Black masculinity through a White lens, but also created caricatures that still persist in some manner today (2006). Jackson conceptualized a Black male identity model, centered within the ongoing struggle for Black men to redefine themselves through masculinity (2006), noting that Black masculine identities are complex and should be treated as such (Jackson, 2006). Hunter & Davis (1994) observed that largely, definitions of Black masculinity are influenced by the hegemonic culture (Connell, 1995); however, they also found that the Black men studied defined their manhood through spirituality and family as well.

Exploration of black male masculine performance. Various scholars have also focused on exploring how Black males perform masculinity. Buckner & Caster (2011) drew upon the historical evolution of Black male performance. Noting that places such as barbershops and church pulpits have been sites of various presentations of Black masculinity, they also explored the impact of such presentations (Buckner & Caster, 2011). Black masculine presentation in southern preachers, in particular, often reflected a desire to reclaim patriarchal power lost through enslavement and thus, resulted in further marginalization of the Black women that composed significant portions of their congregations (Buckner & Caster, 2011). In one of the more influential books on Black masculine presentation, Majors & Billson (1992) introduced the phrase “cool pose” to describe the behaviors, postures, and signifiers of “cool” that Black men adopt in order to better adapt to their environments (1992). Cool pose denotes the dichotomy borne of the Black experience in America, where one wears a “mask” to survive (Dunbar, 1913)

The concept of Black male dichotomies has been broached in the scholarship as well, dating as far back as DuBois and the notion of double consciousness (1903). Building upon this concept, Neal continued his growing scholarship on Black masculinity by conceptualizing legible and illegible masculinities (2013). Neal argued that *legible* Black masculinities are those that are readily accepted or expected by mainstream White society, including that of the athlete, entertainer, or violent criminal (Neal, 2013). *Illegible* masculinities are those that are more complex and three-dimensional, embracing the whole of Black male humanity and thus, often rendered unreadable (Neal, 2013). Even preceding Neal’s distinctions, Cooper (2005) theorized the concept of bipolar masculinity regarding Black males as the only version seen as acceptable in society. Cooper asserted

that bipolar masculinity is divided into two boxes – that of good Black men and bad Black men. The *good* Black man is one that distances himself from Blackness as much as possible and embraces White masculine norms. The *bad* Black man, as Neal (2013) would also argue, is the more legible one, embracing aggressive and violent stereotypes (Cooper, 2005).

This is particularly problematic in that it minimizes the humanity and nuance within Black manhood. What does it mean if the only societal expectations for your masculine presentation revolve around two extreme caricatures? At the very least, it sets a dangerous precedent, where Black boys may grow up downplaying parts of themselves in order to attempt to comply with such impossible standards. This dichotomy is often reflected in mass media representation as well.

Mentorship. The need for mentorship is often mentioned as a panacea within the popular crisis-focused narrative regarding Black males and masculinity. Indeed, such organizations such as the 100 Black Men (which has existed in chapters nationwide for decades) and more recently, the White House Initiative called “My Brother’s Keeper,” were created primarily with mentorship in mind (Cuyjet, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In a survey of overall mentoring literature, Jacobi (1991) suggested three main components of mentoring relationships; first, that they are achievement-based; second, that mentors typically possess higher levels of expertise and knowledge; and third, that mentor-mentee relationships are typically reciprocal. Specifically regarding Black males, researchers have pointed to importance of focusing intentionally on the Black experience via an Afrocentric lens (Akbar, 1984; Harris, 1999). This has been recommended not only for K-12 educational settings, but also for postsecondary education. Organizations such as

the Student African-American Brotherhood (SAAB) and the University System of Georgia's African-American Male Initiative were established to assist Black male retention and graduation rates by focusing on mentorship activities (Cuyjet, 2006; University System of Georgia, 2017).

School dynamics. In order to provide the proper level of nuance to addressing Black male challenges in education, several scholars have focused on exploring the impact of school environments on Black male success. Kunjufu (1985), for instance, asserted that there was a “conspiracy” to destroy Black boys and outlined various reasons why educational settings were traditionally antithetical to Black male achievement, such as being feared and stereotyped as early as elementary school (Kunjufu, 1985). Several scholars have endeavored to explore how Black masculinity is viewed in education and the resulting impact of such treatment. Kunjufu (1985) is often credited with introducing creating the narrative of the Black male as an “endangered species”. Arguing that Black boys are under attack, his seminal work asserted that a largely White and female teaching force was detrimental to Black male success. Thirty years later, other scholars have bolstered this aspect of his work. Ferguson (2001) outlined, via a case study, specific ways in which Black boys were criminalized in school systems. Seen as older and in some cases, labeled negatively and feared by their teachers and administrators, Ferguson outlined how institutionalized racism in such practices sets Black boys up for failure (2001). Ferguson found that Black boys' collective mistreatment within schools served merely as a training ground for entry into prisons later (Ferguson, 2001). Noguera (2008) agreed with these findings, asserting that the “trouble with Black boys” is not the boys themselves and their

presentations of masculinity, but rather, how they are perceived by those in authority within the schools they attend (Noguera, 2008).

Noguera pushed back against the popular narrative of Black boys as troublemakers by outlining how *trouble is made* for them within the same schools that purport to educate, essentially resulting in what Woodson (1933) deemed their mis-education. For instance, Gershenson (2017) found that having simply one Black teacher significantly decreased the likelihood of Black males dropping out of high school. Dee (2004) also found that the race of teachers matter regarding student success.

It should be noted that such narratives are shortsighted unless also included with the experiences of Black women in schools as well. According to Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda (2015), Black girls are subjected to similar or worse treatment in K-12 schools, in addition to the aforementioned misogynoir – or combination of racism and sexism - (Bailey, 2014) they are subjected to, even from Black men. Thus, it is important to avoid framing narratives around Black masculinity in schools as completely unique and isolated from issues that Black females face in the classroom.

Black masculinity in higher education. In higher education, Harper (2009) has gained increasing prominence due to his work on Black males and masculinity. Introducing an anti-deficit framework for studying Black men (2009), Harper asserted that lower expectations for Black males derive from limited ideas of Black masculinity and its inherent possibilities. As a result, limited societal imagination about Black male achievement serves only to perpetuate the “Black male as endangered species” (Kunjufu, 1985) narrative of dysfunction. Harper posited that focusing instead on positive outcomes for Black males provides a more useful lens through which to assess Black male success and revise

problematic narratives (Harper, 2009). This, while marking a departure from the dominant narrative, acknowledges the challenges Black males face while also exploring strategies to address such challenges in higher educational settings. Scholars such as Wood and Harris (2013) have built upon this work as well, most recently in the Black Minds Matter online lecture series, which focused on Black boys in education.

Toxic masculinity. Given the accepted scripts (Jackson, 2006) and legible masculinities (Neal, 2013) discussed earlier, the issue of *toxic* masculinities continues to pervade both mainstream popular culture and day-to-day interactions. While this is not unique to Black males, it is nonetheless readily visible in various spaces dominated by Black men, including rap music (hooks, 2004; Hopkinson & Moore, 2006; Hurt, 2006;). This results in the continued marginalization of Black women and LGBTQ people in particular. In order to address and revise toxic masculinity, Black males should embrace the *new Black man* proposed by Neal (2005). This would require relinquishing the seductive trappings of imitating White male patriarchy and reframe definitions of Black masculinity away from homophobia, transphobia, and subordination of women (Hopkinson & Moore, 2006; Jackson, 2006; Neal, 2005). This new Black man would reject “cool pose” (Majors & Billson, 1992) in favor of a more holistic presentation of masculinity allowing for expression of a full range of emotions (hooks, 2004).

For a recent example of this possibility in popular culture, one need look no further than the critically acclaimed *4:44* album by rapper Jay-Z, where he largely foregoes previous hegemonic masculine narratives around possessions – money, women, property – in favor of lyrics about fatherhood, therapy, legacy, and most importantly “killing” the limited masculine persona crafted for himself (Carter, 2017) to be more emotionally

available for his family. While this example occurs within a ten-track album for entertainment purposes, it nonetheless has real-world relevance for revision of Black masculinity, similar that that suggested by Hunter & Davis (1994) and Neal (2005).

Athletics. Collins (2004) asserts that Black men are rarely allowed to express themselves beyond accepted roles of physicality. This manifests itself currently within various debates around athletics in society. For instance, the specter of race cannot be avoided regarding the discussion around whether NCAA athletes should be paid for their services. Rhoden (2010) and others would argue that this would require institutions to see a cadre of largely Black male student-athletes (at least, concerning the more popular sports such as college football) as more than vehicles for entertainment, but, as wholly human and thus, more than the aforementioned framework prescribed for Black masculinity. Similarly, various Black male athletes have been more outspoken on issues such as police brutality and politics in recent years. Inevitably, much of the backlash resulting from such actions revolves around an assumption that these players should *stick to sports* – in other words, stick to the established script that has been written for you (Jackson, 2006; Neal, 2013).

The notion that Black male athletes also have intellectual lives and political opinions has received pushback throughout sports history (Rhoden, 2010). While agreement with espoused opinions is not always necessary, it is increasingly vital for sports networks and organizations to nonetheless embrace the holistic humanity of the Black men whose talents help line their pockets. This means not only encouraging such players to speak out in important issues affecting their lives, but also supporting their full-throated cries asserting their humanity outside of a football field or basketball court and asserting as Wood (2017) states, that “Black minds matter” as much as Black bodies.

While these suggestions do not purport to solve all issues revolving around the perceptions of Black masculinity, steps must be taken to change the societal narratives around Black men. While definitions of overall masculinity continue to evolve (Kimmel, 1995), ensuring that this evolution occurs in a healthy, non-oppressive manner is critical in producing better outcomes not only for Black men, but for others as well.

Gaps to address. Based on a survey of relevant literature, there are some areas that would benefit from further exploration. For one, there is a dearth of scholarship treating Black males with respect to their nuanced identities (race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.). It should be noted that such scholars as Brockenborough (2013), Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly (2013) and Harper (2009) have made valuable contributions here, but more scholarship is necessary to avoid creation of broad narratives that treat the Black male experience as a monolith.

Also, despite increased attention on the “Black male problem” as relates to the teaching profession, more research can be conducted on programs that address this issue. Case studies that both explore best practices for Black male achievement in teacher education and divulge individualized narratives of students who comprise their participants could do much to bolster the literature.

Theoretical Framework

“Until the lion tells his story, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.” – African

Proverb

This study uses a critical race theoretical framework. Critical race theory (known shorthand as “CRT”) arose out of several scholars’ frustration with the failure of critical legal studies to properly address issues of race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Using race as

the primary unit of analysis, CRT provides a useful tool through which to not only view issues of racial inequity in education, but also possible solutions for those who are most affected. CRT posits that racism is intentional and “ordinary”(Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), serving as a function in various societal institutions to uphold the dominant group. Critical race theory, widely attributed to noted scholar Derrick Bell, uses several tenets as the primary guiding principles, all of which will be discussed later in the section of this study devoted to the theoretical framework. CRT’s emphasis on counterstorytelling (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) will be used most explicitly here in an effort to allow each participant’s story to offer new narratives counter to that of the aforementioned dominant group.

Critical race theory has informed my individual lens, even outside that of a researcher, for several reasons. Having both attended and worked at predominantly White institutions since my introduction to higher education, I have seen the effects of institutionalized racism (even seemingly borne of good intentions) upon the morale and psychological well-being of Black and Brown students. Additionally, as someone whose work as a practitioner focuses around issues of racial equity, I offer no pretenses of objectivity. I consider my role as an advocate for racially marginalized communities with respect to the intersections of their identities, demanding a nuanced researcher lens respective to the various identities that each individual holds.

It is important to briefly examine some of the key scholars of the CRT movement and key works that contribute to scholarship in the area in order to properly understand the context of CRT and how it began and evolved over time. Such scholars are as follows:

Derrick Bell. Known by some as the “father of Critical Race Studies,” Derrick Bell critiqued the supposed advances made by the Civil Rights Movement; namely, key

touchstones such as *Brown vs. Board* that outlawed segregation (Bell, 1979). Bell argued against the assumption that Black students integrating into schools with White students was beneficial for Black people and suggested that there were distinct advantages to schools with all Black students and Black teachers (1979). It should be noted that other scholars have drawn connections to *Brown vs. Board* and its unintended negative consequences for Black teachers and students as well (Fairclough, 2007; Irvine, 1988). Bell used racial realism as a framework to analyze societal problems facing Black people in particular, asserting that incremental advances made towards equality did nothing to change the subordinate status of Black people in U.S. society (1991). Thus, he argued, it was more useful to search for solutions with the assumption that racism is permanent (1992).

Richard Delgado. Richard Delgado (1984) critiqued the role of White scholars in popular civil rights scholarship of the day. He argued that their predominance in the field was not only taking up too much space, but also as a result, silencing the voices of scholars of color (1984). This *imperial scholarship* did little to address the true nature of inequity, he argued (1984); thus, he called for scholars of color to use their voices whenever possible to call out such disparities and for the aforementioned White scholars to stop marginalizing underrepresented voices.

Kimberlé Crenshaw. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) is perhaps best known today for coining the increasingly ubiquitous term “intersectionality.” In her seminal scholarship, Crenshaw outlined key blind spots in both movements for civil rights and for women, noting that Black women’s voices were largely ignored in both (1991). Thus, intersectionality was created to conceptualize how Black women in particular experience oppression to their multiple marginalized identities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). While the

term itself is relatively new in the current zeitgeist, it should be noted that the concept goes as far back as Sojourner Truth (1851) when she asked “*ain't I a woman?*”, asserting that her voice as a Black woman matters.

Other CRT scholars in education. In education, Ladson Billings & Tate (1998) outlined key reasons for using CRT to analyze issues of inequity. Given the continued salience of race as a social construct with real consequences, they argued for the importance of using race and its intersection with property rights (school districts, curriculum as intellectual property, distribution of school resources, etc.) as a way to properly analyze educational inequities (1998). Solórzano (2001) suggested three key questions that critical race theorists in education must keep in mind:

- *What do we do?* (Analyze the impact of racism and its intersections with other forms of marginalization in society)
- *Why do we do it?* (To strive for social justice and challenge the status quo)
- *How do we do it?* (By centering the counternarratives of marginalized people as important) (Solórzano, 2001).

CRT main tenets. Briefly, CRT has several key tenets discussed in the literature, including the following:

- *Permanence of racism:* Introduced by Bell (1992), CRT assumes that racism is permanent and ordinary and thus, deeply embedded in every societal institution so as to be essentially irremovable (1992). Any movements to advance the plight of racially oppressed people should operate from this assumption in order to provide realistic solutions (Bell, 1991). Advocacy and anti-racist work are framed within the

context of making such a society amenable enough for racially oppressed people to thrive in, even while constricted within the parameters of systemic racism.

- *Counterstorytelling*: The stories of marginalized people are extremely important in discovering new truths (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Given the predominant narrative told from the oppressor's perspective, counterstorytelling embraces and acknowledges that all history is subjective. Thus, using counternarratives are key in eschewing a hegemonic history that does little to tell the entire story (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).
- *Critique of liberalism*: Critical Race theorists are ardently against the foundational ideals of liberalism, where notions of "colorblindness" are aspirational (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Given the aforementioned assumption of the salience of race, many critical race theorists argue that much of the narratives and policy surrounding piecemeal "diversity" and "multiculturalism" amount to minimal progress, essentially attempting to become "everything to everyone" and thus, resulting in being "nothing to anyone" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1998).
- *Emphasis on social justice*: While critics regard it as overly cynical and radical in many cases, CRT features an explicit focus on social justice. Rather than the incrementalism of prior movements for liberation, CRT sees justice in the subjectivity.
- *Interest convergence*: With Bell's assumption of racism's permanence (1992), racial realism (1991) means accepting that the dominant White culture will not concede to demands of marginalized populations via mere altruism. Interest convergence, then,

involves using the interests and desires of the oppressor to achieve the goals of the oppressed (Bell, 1992).

- *Whiteness as property*: The concept of Whiteness as property was introduced by Harris (1993). Essentially – and as explored via education later by Ladson-Billings & Tate – Harris argued that viewing Whiteness through the lens of property rights could be key in analyzing issues of racial inequity. For instance, the historical exclusion of Black people from public (and, therefore White) pools is connected to what Harris deemed “rights to exclude” (1993). In education, this concept brings to mind inequalities in school resources across racially and socioeconomically segregated school districts.
- *Intersectionality*: While the term has recently become popular in social justice conversations and misused to apply to various identities regardless of oppressed experiences, Crenshaw (1991) coined the term to *specifically* analyze the unique experiences of being Black and woman in society, arguing that identities dually oppressed by both race and gender experience those oppressions differently as a result. For instance, Black women must deal with racism from White supremacy (in both daily interactions and systemically) as Black people. They are also affected by misogyny; this conundrum is expounded upon via Black feminist scholarship such as that of Hull, Scott, & Smith (1982).

CRT research on Black males. CRT provides a useful lens through which to analyze school experiences of Black males, both at the K-12 and postsecondary levels of education. What makes it useful in this case? For one, Noguera (2008) outlined the various ways institutional racism affects Black boys in the classroom, where they are often labeled as

problems as early as elementary school (Kunjufu, 1985; Noguera, 2008). In a harrowing study, Ferguson (2001) explored specific cases where Black boys were marginalized and eventually, criminalized in schools as well. With racism being institutionalized in schools, some researchers have used CRT to analyze not only problems, but also possible solutions. They are discussed briefly forthwith.

K-12 schools. Given the aforementioned research by Kunjufu (1985), Noguera (2008) and others (which, it could be argued, use tenets of CRT without explicitly saying so), various scholars have intentionally examined the school experiences of Black boys via a critical race lens. In an ethnography, Duncan (2002) found that Black boys are often stereotyped in traditional K-12 settings and thus, further marginalized given that their collective humanity is ignored (2002). Given the prevalence of such stereotypes and accepted “legible masculinities” (Neal, 2013), some schools have been created in an effort to change the narrative. Various scholars (Duncan, 2002; Mitchell & Stewart, 2013; Howard et al, 2013; Terry et al., 2014) suggested that all-male academies could constitute solutions for Black boys in education for due to at least a couple of reasons:

- Improving outcomes: All-male academies holistically produce better outcomes for Black males (Mitchell & Stewart, 2013); and
- Havens from White supremacy: Schooling in environments where complex Black masculinities are nurtured rather than feared provides a haven from White supremacy (Terry et al., 2013; Howard, 2014).

Afrocentric & all-male schools. As part of attempts to solve the aforementioned educational issues, all-male schools (primarily Black/Brown males) and their efficacy have been spotlighted in the research, both explicitly and implicitly with CRT references

(Mitchell & Stewart, 2013). Chicago's Urban Prep, for instance, frequently receives national attention for its extremely high rates of success for Black male students and could be considered a model for best practices (Warren, 2017). Even if not all-male, schools with an overt Afrocentric (Akbar, 1984; Kunjufu, 1985) focus could be solutions to the so-called "Black male problem." With the critical race assumption that traditionally hegemonic societal systems are set up for marginalized people to fail, these schools harken back to Bell's *The Afolantica Awakening* short story (1992). While this story fictional, the idea of counterspaces as havens from White supremacy is nonetheless relevant for today's issues in education.

Anti-deficit framework. Irvine (1990) found that White teachers tend to have lower expectations for Black students. This suggests a deficit, defeatist framework that assumes Black students are doomed to failure. Harper's (2009) shift here is important; rather than assuming the deficit in students, what if we assumed (as CRT does) that the deficits are in the racist institutional framework of the schools themselves? Such a shift would necessitate active resistance of the structural determinism of these institutions by treating Black males (and all students) as if nothing is inherently wrong with them.

Higher education. Regarding Black male experiences in higher education, various scholars such as Cuyjet (2006) and Strayhorn (2015) have focused scholarship on both highlighting their experiences and suggesting policy. Among this increasingly prolific area of scholarship, Harper's 2009 study is particularly instructive as an exemplar for using critical race analysis in Black male experiences. Here (and in much of his scholarship), Harper uses an anti-deficit framework, where focus is shifted away from perceived problems with Black men (and thus, the failures) and toward the success stories (2009).

Using counternarratives, Harper explored why various Black male high achieving undergraduate students succeed, and thus, avoid becoming *niggered* by their campus (2009). He found that these men actively combated racial stereotyping on their campus via campus leadership positions and speaking out when issues of oppression arise (2009).

Why CRT? What makes critical race theory necessary for this study? For one, its assumption of racism as “ordinary” means that it is prevalent and as Bell suggests, permanent (Bell, 1992). As such, it is institutionalized and pervasive in American systems, including education. If this is the case, teachers serve as agents of further incorporating racist messages of inferiority in children of color by mere default. CRT provides important insight into how racism influences socialization of both members of the dominant culture and racially oppressed groups. For instance, the structural inequities created by White supremacy can have a deleterious effect on the mindsets of Black children, even in school systems that purport to have the best of intentions. Black children are influenced by racist messaging, both overt and covert, daily within the classroom; perhaps it’s the teacher who recommends the overly active Black children in their classroom for special education at higher rates than their peers of other races. This study can be viewed as drawing connections between these racist foundations, inequities and their impact on teacher education for Black males and their experiences as pre-service teachers. Also, given critical race theory’s emphasis on the importance of counterstorytelling, this dissertation highlights the experiences of Black male pre-service teachers as unique voices within the classroom via counternarratives.

Using CRT as the framework for this study is an attempt to best shed light on the stories behind exactly why the Black men of the Call Me MISTER programs studied choose

to become teachers and also how their participation in such a program helps them navigate institutions that, as CRT postulates, are engineered to sustain their oppression in a myriad of ways. Much attention has been paid recently to the aforementioned alarming statistics regarding the lack of Black male teachers and as a result, increased focus on possible solutions may follow. Using CRT for this study allows insight into the lives of those individuals increasingly seen as the embodiment of these solutions. According to Solorzano (1997), it is important to use CRT to examine how teacher education either works toward the elimination of racism or serves to uphold it. Viewing experiences within Call Me MISTER through this lens could help illuminate how these students see themselves as part of this matrix.

Chapter III: Methodology and Research Design

Problem Statement and Research Questions

Black men are consistently marginalized in educational settings and severely underrepresented as teachers in such settings, in many cases leading to increased marginalization (Dee, 2005; Gershenson, 2017; Irvine, 1990). This study aimed to explore how one program helps provide a solution to the issues facing Black males in education by mentoring Black men pre-service teachers in the Call Me MISTER program. The study was guided by the following overarching research questions and associated subquestions:

- What motivates MISTERS to teach?
 - Do MISTERS see their role in the classroom as centered around racial uplift?
 - How does their K-12 experience inform their desire to teach, if at all?
- How do MISTERS' individual raced and gendered identities impact their desire to teach and perceptions about the profession?
 - Do/How do their other identities impact them as well?
 - How do MISTERS see others' perceptions of these identities?
- How does participation in the Call Me MISTER program serve as a counterspace from institutional racism?
 - What activities do MISTERS find most beneficial?
 - What does the program itself purport to provide regarding counterspaces?

Data Source

This study used the affiliates with the Call Me MISTER program as the main data source. Call Me MISTER was founded in 2000 as a collaboration between Claflin, Benedict, and Clemson universities in South Carolina to address the increasingly alarming disparity regarding Black male teachers in the state (Jones & Jenkins, 2012). Call Me MISTER focuses on recruitment and empowerment of Black male teachers to become role models in the classroom and has been among the most successful programs in not only Black male teacher recruitment, but also retention in the teaching force (Jones & Jenkins, 2012). Since its inception, the program has spread to over 25 institutions nationwide, most of which are concentrated in the southeastern United States but exist as far west as Kansas and as far north as Illinois.

Call Me MISTER operates via the tenets of ambassadorship, personal growth, teacher efficacy, brother's keeper, and servant leadership and uses a multi-tiered mentorship model to support Black male pre-service teachers and prepare them to mentor others (Jones & Jenkins, 2012). The program generally uses the following key features to accomplish its goals:

- Financial Assistance;
- Living-learning communities for participants;
- Faculty and staff support and mentoring;
- Intentional exposure to classroom environments as preparation for required student teaching at their respective institutions; and
- Support for standardized licensure exams required for entry into the teaching profession (Jones & Jenkins, 2012).

Sampling and Criteria

I used a purposeful sampling (2015) method for this study. Purposeful sampling involves selecting participants that are most likely to offer relevant answers to the key research questions guiding the study (Patton, 2015). This may involve solicitation of key experts or participants in a phenomenon, community, or program (Patton, 2015).

Given that there are 27 Call Me MISTER programs nationwide, I was strategic when choosing an institution for this study, both in location and demographics.

Location. While there are programs as far north as Virginia and as far west as Kansas, I chose to narrow down the selection process to institutions within the state of South Carolina due to its pre-eminence as the headquarters for Call Me MISTER, with 20 of the 27 Call Me MISTER institutions housed in-state, including the headquarters at Clemson University. This served at least two purposes. First, the greater concentration of Call Me MISTER programs in the state increases the likelihood of cross-pollination and information sharing between programs, thus creating an important cultural context where students would more likely be completely enshrouded within the MiSTER experience. Second, South Carolina's close proximity to my home state of Georgia would make data collection logistically less challenging.

In order to find the most appropriate program to study, the Call Me MISTER institution was pre-selected from a list of those designated as "predominantly White institutions." I defined "predominantly White" as having a White student undergraduate population above 50 percent. Such institutions are listed below:

- Anderson University
- Clemson University

- Coastal Carolina University
- College of Charleston
- Lander University
- Southern Wesleyan University
- University of South Carolina-Beaufort
- Winthrop University

Once these institutions were pre-selected, their Call Me MISTER programs were evaluated for their utility in this study. I was mainly looking for a “mature” program (having existed for at least four years) in order to have a maximum number of possible participants. Given that many Call Me MISTER programs aim to add five students per year, a “mature” program would have around twenty participants total, with a variance of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors in the program. I selected Clemson University’s Call Me MISTER program as the subject for this case study, due to the program’s existence since 2000, direct connection to the founder of the program and its status as the epicenter of Call Me MISTER.

Site Description of Clemson University. Clemson University is a public land grant university located in Clemson, South Carolina. Founded in 1889, its sprawling campus features nearly 20,000 undergraduate and nearly 5,000 graduate students and boasts over 80 majors and 80 minors across various academic disciplines. Demographically, Clemson’s undergraduate student population is broken down by race and gender via the following pie chart, with percentages taken from the university’s Office of Institutional Research (Clemson University, 2017):

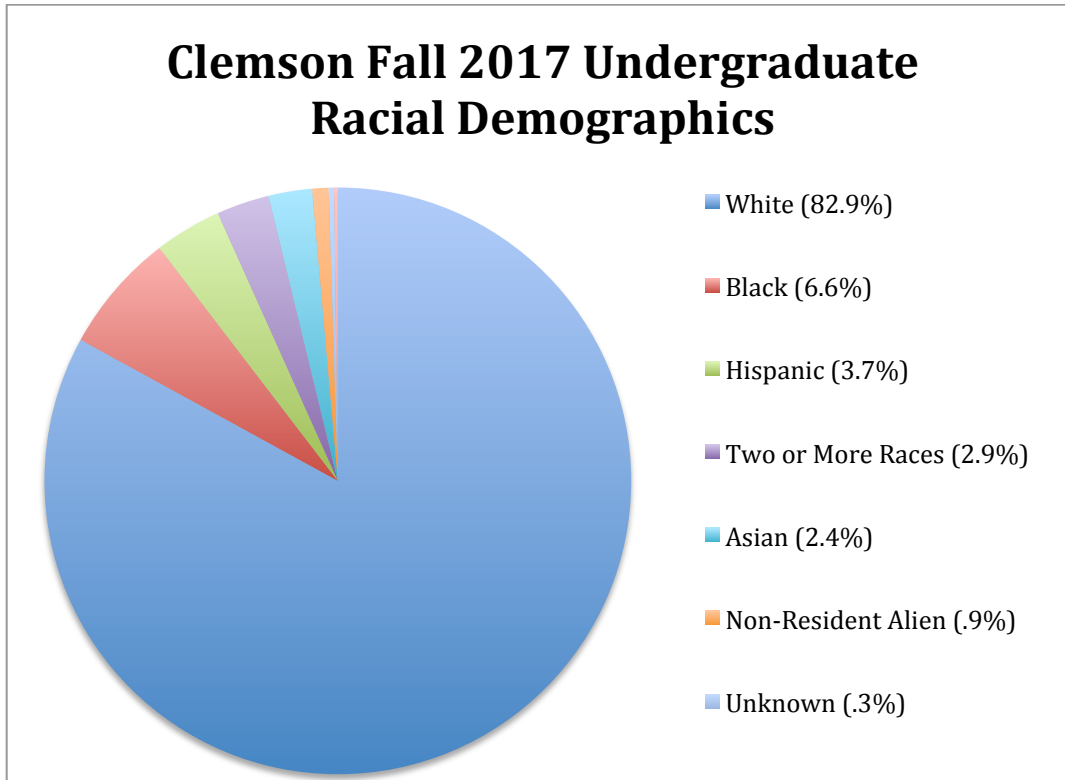


Figure 1: Clemson Fall 2017 Undergraduate Racial Demographics

Within the College of Education where Call Me MISTER is housed, its racial composition is similar, with Black students comprising merely seven percent of the undergraduate student enrollment. _

Recently, the campus has been embroiled in its share of racial controversy surrounding its history, perhaps most the most notable being the 2017 student protests of Tillman Hall, a key university building named after Benjamin Tillman, former South Carolina governor who was also a known White supremacist (Brundage, 2001). Also, students protested at Sikes Hall in 2016 after a banana was hung near a banner honoring African-Americans (Vasilogambros, 2016). Certainly, given these recent events and Clemson's history – like many institutions of higher education – being forever linked to

slavery and oppression of Black people, the existence and success of a program such as Call Me MISTER on this campus is worth in-depth inquiry.

Sample. I interviewed 11 participants for this study in order to maximize the likelihood of relevant findings. I targeted primarily students that have been MISTERS for at least a year, including those who began the program the previous fall. One participant was a recent graduate and was asked to recall his time as a pre-service teacher for the purpose of this study. The sample was chosen because of the heightened maturity level and tenure within the Call Me MISTER program, therefore increasing the likelihood that they would have meaningful insights into the research questions broached by the study, as opposed to brand-new students who have not been exposed enough to Call Me MISTER's tenets. Insight from first-semester MISTERS may still have proven useful, but it was important for this study to focus upon the students who have had the most exposure to the support systems facilitated by Call Me MISTER. The draft interview questions are included in Appendix C.

Using my cache as a Call Me MISTER collaborator, I contacted the field coordinator of the Clemson Call Me MISTER cohort as I completed the process for the institutional board review (see Appendix B). This involved getting written approval from the Dean of the Clemson College of Education to proceed with research. Following full approval from IRB, I contacted the field coordinator of the program to help pre-select students for participation in the study and then schedule interviews and observations. A letter was sent to these individuals as an introduction to the study; this letter is included in Appendix A.

Strategic Approaches & Data Collection

With the aforementioned lack of focus in the literature regarding in-depth case studies, I used a case study approach for answering the research questions via the Call Me MISTER program. According to Creswell (2007), a case study is appropriate when researching a bounded system. As such, case studies often involve various methods of triangulating data to maximize the relevance of the findings. These methods can include:

- Interviews;
- Document Analysis;
- Observations; and
- Reports.

In combination with the case study approach, I used the strategy of narrative inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) to ensure the prominence of participant stories. Narrative inquiry is derived from hermeneutic philosophy, which focuses on understanding and interpretation of texts (Patton, 2015). In this case, the text being analyzed was the interview transcripts, notes by the researcher, and key documents collected during the data gathering portion of this study.

Narrative inquiry was deemed appropriate for this study due to its explicit focus on storytelling; given CRT's emphasis on counternarratives providing a new paradigm through which to view a phenomenon. Here, the researcher's own narrative becomes part of the data collection process as well (Rudestam & Newton, 2014). Thus, I documented my own reactions and observations as part of my own reflexivity in crafting the larger narrative of this study from the smaller narratives of each participant. In this manner, I endeavored to use my own perspective as a researcher to "narrate" the rich experiences of

the participants, placing their diverse narratives in conversation with each other and my own reflections. As part of this conversational approach, I tried to include as much as their responses as possible to provide context and keep their individualized anecdotes intact as I weaved a larger narrative from the findings altogether.

I used two main methods to collect data in the case study. They are listed and described as follows:

Semi-structured interviews. Qualitatively, the interview is a pre-eminent form of data collection for analysis. For this study, I used semi-structured interviews to simultaneously allow for maximum flexibility and provide the appropriate amount of relevance to the original research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This allowed the interviews to feel as conversational as possible while still adhering to the general theme of the study. I, as the interviewer, had pre-written questions that I asked, allowing the interviewee to answer in the manner that he chose. These questions are listed in the interview protocol in Appendix C. Throughout this process, I listened attentively and asked follow up questions where necessary for further illumination and conversation around the subject matter.

In order to record the interviews, I used two different audio recording devices. I used the Garageband™ program for my Apple Mac™ computer as the first method, while also using the Voice Recorder™ application on my Android™ phone as a reliable backup. This ensured that all sound was captured throughout the process, with sufficient information demarking the time elapsed for further reference. Once interviews were completed, I transcribed the data using a reputable website called Rev.com. After transcription was completed, I reviewed the transcripts while listening to the interview

audio to ensure that all words were captured correctly. In addition to audio recording software, I took field notes by hand throughout the interviews and afterward in order to jot down my own observations, reflections, key points to return to upon transcription, and any important details concerning the interviewee's nonverbal communication.

After completing, transcribing and reviewing my own notes on the interviews (and beginning the first phase of data analysis), I conducted member checks by phone with each interviewee, reviewing my notes with them and summarizing the interviews via each question to ensure that my interpretation of their responses was correct and to ensure that no additional relevant insight needs to be included.

Document analysis. I used a document analysis approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) by collecting relevant materials of the chosen Call Me MISTER program that offered additional insight. This allowed for a "birds-eye view" of the case, as I collected relevant materials that serve to tell the story of Call Me MISTER from a programmatic and institutional standpoint. To obtain these materials, I asked the Call Me MISTER coordinator for copies of these documents, in addition to searching the program's website, viewing key articles, scanning for public reports and taking pictures of office displays relative to the program. The documents collected include:

Videos. I found two useful videos on the Clemson Call Me MISTER homepage (Clemson, 2018) that served to communicate its mission from different angles. The first, titled "Dignitary Testimonials," was just over seven minutes long and featured commentary from college presidents, corporate representatives and key donors as they shared why they believe in Call Me MISTER's vision. The second, titled "Graduate Testimonials", focused on

the narratives of MISTERS themselves who have graduated from the program into teaching careers.

Website: I examined printed copies of Clemson's Call Me MISTER website and took notes in hopes of gaining further insight.

Bulletin Boards. Throughout the week-long process of conducting the semi-structured interviews, I had ample opportunities to observe the offices where the Call Me MISTER was housed. I took pictures of the bulletin board and the pictures hanging on the walls as part of the data collection process in order to observe what stories the program itself deemed important enough to display for any visitors.

Official Program Book. The executive director of Clemson's Call Me MISTER program co-authored a book about the program's foundation and evolution. While technically it focuses on the program as a whole from a birds-eye view, I found it valuable, nevertheless in terms of its relation to Clemson's program, particularly given most much of the book details insight from either staff or students from Clemson's cohort. Published in 2012, the book is divided into three parts: 1) the roots of a crisis, 2) opportunity for new growth; and 3) spreading the seeds. With this book already in my possession given my role as a practitioner connected to Call Me MISTER, I skimmed through each chapter, making notes about key themes repeated within the text.

Observations. Lastly, field observations were initially planned to add to the well-roundedness of the case study in order to be a "fly on the wall" in as natural a setting as possible with the participants. To this end, Clemson's Call Me MISTER hosted meetings among its participants at least once per month in order to provide a setting for students to share information, vent about issues, learn from guest speakers, etc. I originally planned to

visit one of these sessions to further involve myself in the program's culture and gain further understanding of the group dynamics that may contribute to each MISTER's overall experience as a pre-service teacher. Ideally, this would have taken place before the semi-structured interviews as a way to help increase rapport before extensive one-on-one interaction occurs. During the week of initial data collection, this observation was scheduled to occur on the Monday before the semi-structured interviews. However, due to campus closing because of inclement weather that week and the onset of summer break, I was forced to forego that aspect of data collection and was not able to include observations for this study.

Data Analysis

Once the data was collected from the documents and interviews, I analyzed the data to make sense of the information given in order produce findings that are interpretable. I analyzed data via the following methods:

Document Analysis. Once all relevant documents were collected, I took notes and where necessary, coded each material by observing key trends, repeated words or phrases, and creating separate tags or categories based on each. These categories were then compared with those brought forth from the interviews in order to explore any relevant dynamics within the findings section, whether or not considerable overlap exists.

Regarding the videos, I used YouTube to provide an initial transcription of the audio for both videos, then revised the transcription while listening to both for maximum accuracy. Once properly transcribed, I watched both videos several times and made notes describing what was displayed visually and spoken verbally by participants in the video. I

then scanned the transcripts, using my notes and interpretations as a guide, applying codes as I observed repeated themes.

I analyzed data from the Call Me MISTER book by reading it page by page and taking notes on relevant themes included, making comments within the margins and afterward, evaluating the themes with respect to the research questions. The websites and any photos taken during data collection were notated similarly in order to determine relevance to the study, with each document printed out to allow me to write and code where necessary.

Semi-structured interviews. Once the participants were interviewed, I sent the recordings to Rev.com for transcription as mentioned previously. Upon receipt of the transcriptions, I first checked them for errors, misspellings, and other questionable aspects that may indicate transcription/interpretation issues. Then, I used the Dedoose program to analyze the data inductively, checking for key words and repeated themes to create relevant and mutually exclusive codes. Dedoose is a subscription-based application that allows the researcher to electronically upload, categorize, and code various types of documents.

As part of the data analysis process, I also took copious notes throughout the interviews in order to document my own observations, biases, and reflections upon the conclusion of each conversation with participants and throughout the each review of the transcripts.

I began with 28 codes, listed alphabetically below:

- Approach to classroom
- Addressing stereotypes
- Brotherhood

- Where I'm from
- SES (socioeconomic status)
- CMM activities
- CMM expectations and values
- Authenticity
- Being an example
- Expectations of teaching field
- Family
- Fear
- Finances
- Former teachers as influences
- Gender differences
- Homosexuality
- Imposter syndrome
- Isolation
- Living together
- Magnifying glass/microscope
- Masculinity
- Mentorship
- Negative educational experiences
- Personal accountability
- Racist history/environments
- Relationships

- Religion
- Teaching rationale

Once the initial codes were created, I then generated root codes within Dedoose based on the three guiding research questions of this study. Initial codes were then combined where necessary until categories were as mutually exclusive as possible, then organized into these three broad areas regarding the research questions.

Minding the Intersections

This study addressed the intersections of MISTER identities by including interview questions that relate to issues of race and gender specifically, given its connection to Black masculinity in education. However, other identities are important to include as well; thus, interview questions were framed in such a manner as to allow for participants to discuss the impact of other identities as well. This gave participants the option to discuss this further without requiring them to reveal aspects of their identity that they may rather keep secret. Also, I took great care as a researcher not to assume or project “truths” about the participants that they do not reveal themselves.

Significance

This study is significant for several reasons. First, I aimed to make a valuable contribution to the intersections of the aforementioned literature by using MISTER stories to highlight participants’ feelings on identity, mentorship, and their motivations for entering the teaching profession. The study also purposed to highlight positive examples of how Black men navigate institutional racism in higher education. Rather than simply contributing to the prevalent narrative asking “*what is wrong with Black men?*” this study asked “*what is right with Black men, despite all that is wrong in society?*” In this way, it will

contribute to the CRT literature as well, showing the power of counterstories to provide narratives of resistance to institutional oppression.

This study intended to provide a valuable addition to the literature on Black masculinity by attempting to account for the various ways in which the Black men view their masculine selves and their perceptions of how the world views them, particularly within the realm of education. Given that the teaching profession is overly White and female, the combination of the participants' underrepresented raced and gendered identities in their chosen field necessitates further exploration towards full understanding of their experiences. Thus, this study aimed to do far more than simply divulge Black males' motivations to teach; rather, it aimed to situate those motivations within the added context of their different identities.

Researcher Subjectivity

It is important to briefly discuss my researcher subjectivity and how it may impact this study. First, I am a Black male working within the education field at a PWI. Therefore, I identify personally with many of the issues discussed in the literature and potentially divulged within this study. This means that I have a level of subjectivity that some would avoid in traditional scholarship. However, CRT asserts that subjectivity is a strength, given the assumption that nothing in history is truly objective (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). As Delgado (1984) stated, I see my identity as a strength because it best equips me to treat these counternarratives with the appropriate nuance. I believe and know that racism still exists in various forms, embedding itself within the same systems that oppressed populations may consider tools for liberation (education, for instance). This is informed by both my personal experiences and the experiences of the students I serve and advocate for

in my daily work. Therefore I am unapologetic about this subjectivity, given that I, like CRT scholars before me, believe that all history and research is subjective and viewed through the tinted lens of the author or researcher. A study such as this, then, serves as a vital counterbalance to established frameworks that may be reductive.

Also, I am a practitioner for a Call Me MISTER program and thus, very interested in exploring issues that affect my students. This influences my choice of conceptual framework and subsequently, the sample – I chose an institution that closely reflected that of my own in order to not only seek relevant data related to CRT, but also to gain insight into my own students’ motivations and struggles. It would be disingenuous to suggest that this role would not affect the study in any way; as a researcher I took great care to acknowledge this as the data is analyzed. Given my familiarity with the program, I wanted to ensure that my own perceptions and feelings - while appropriate and an essential part of this research given its framework - do not encourage me to see themes in the data that are not there.

Trustworthiness

This study required me to address the issue of trustworthiness, both regarding the data and that of myself as a researcher with my subjects in order to collect the most useful information. Data-wise, I endeavored to achieve trustworthiness by utilizing different aforementioned methods of document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and following up via member checks to maximize the likelihood of data saturation. As a researcher, I understood that my presence - despite being somewhat part of the “in-group” as a Black male involved with the Call Me MISTER program - may cause participants to be wary of my role as a stranger. In this case, my relationship with the field coordinator helped

tremendously; while he did not coerce students in any manner, nonetheless it seemed his "stamp" of approval merely by spreading appropriate information about the study made identifying participants much less difficult than it might have been otherwise. This icebreaker proved crucial in allowing for as conversational an interview process as possible, providing a comfortable rapport from which their individual narratives sprang forth. Also, I decided to "dress down" for these interviews rather than wear a suit and tie, in order to appear less official/institutional and more relaxed as a researcher. This was particularly important given that the interviews were conducted in a formal office setting.

Expected Findings and Connections

Based on the literature and prior knowledge about the program being studied, I expected several key themes. First, I anticipated that MISTERS consider the teaching profession as a "calling" (Lynn, 2002; Jones & Jenkins, 2012). Given the paucity of Black males in the teaching profession, it would make sense that the few that choose education careers feel a special connection to the profession in order to make an impact beyond delivering a curriculum. I also expected that MISTERS would see mentorship as a key motivator to teach and also as a mechanism of support, given Bristol's (2015) findings regarding Black male teachers and support needed for them. Lastly, based on CRT's assumptions about institutional racism and my own experiences at predominantly White institutions, I expected MISTERS to share experiences of being stereotyped and isolated as Black men on campus, thus seeking programs like Call Me MISTER and other organizations such as fraternities (McClure, 2006) for brotherhood and support from such issues.

Chapter IV: Findings

Summary

Based on review of all website and printed documents, as well as interview comments from the participants, the results from this case study are categorized broadly via the following themes, described briefly in summation below before a more detailed exploration of the findings.

Finding One: Participants found a desire to provide representation through role modeling and mentoring as a key motivational factor to teach. As anticipated, MISTERS in this case study placed great emphasis on the power of mentorship. They saw themselves as role models for their students and exhibited tangible enthusiasm for taking on this role in the classroom.

Finding Two: Participants actively pushed against stereotyping in the classroom and in their daily life. As part of this conversation, participants spoke about fear or hyper-awareness to stereotyping, likelihood of being racially profiled, etc. In the classroom, they desired to redefine expectations of Black men and provide different examples of Black masculinity for their students.

Finding Three. Participants felt their Black masculinity made them simultaneously hypervisible and invisible in societal/classroom contexts. Within discussions about race and masculinity, interviewees discussed their feelings of being constantly watched while simultaneously feeling as though they were not being seen enough.

Finding Four. The MISTER brotherhood served to expand participants' perception of masculine scripts. Throughout their responses around Call Me MISTER and masculinity, several participants discussed the evolution of their own masculine ideals. This included both between each other within the brotherhood and regarding classroom contexts.

Finding Five. Participants felt that the brotherhood and mentorship facilitated by Call Me MISTER was critical to their development and support on a predominantly White campus. Call Me MISTER was considered a forum for participants to share ideas and collectively fortify themselves to meet challenges they may face at Clemson. The program itself focuses on promoting brotherhood and mentorship as well in order to support MISTERS on campus and in preparation for their careers as teachers.

Semi Structured Interviews

Participants. The 11 participants in this study are listed and briefly described below with their given pseudonym, student classification and major.

Table 1: Study Participants

Name (Pseudonym)	Student Classification	Major
Andre	Alum	Elementary Education
Antwan	Junior	Elementary Education
Bernard	Junior	Elementary

		Education
Chad	Senior	Elementary Education
Gil	Junior	Elementary Education
Kendrick	Junior	Elementary Education
Marvin	Sophomore	Special Education
Roger	Junior	Elementary Education
Samuel	Sophomore	Elementary Education
Shawn	Senior	Elementary Education
Tariq	Freshman	Elementary Education

The “Why”: Motivations to Teach. Interviews featured insightful narratives from participants about their rationale for teaching.

Family. Several participants discussed various aspects of their family life as motivational factors in their desire to teach. Regarding this theme, some participants talked about having family members who encouraged them to pursue paths towards teaching.

Others mentioned the manner in which different family dynamics motivated them to become successful in the education field.

Chad felt that familial experiences with the criminal justice system caused him to seriously consider a pathway toward teaching in order to make a positive impact on others.

My personal one is being a child with incarcerated parents growing up through my K through 12 education and in college. I know what that's like. Dealing with the justice system. Visiting, visitation, stuff like that. My brother's a freshman in college. This is gonna impact him a lot more than it's impacted me. I definitely see the effects of it and that is something we're gonna talk about, something that, like I said, should be on the application when you bring your child to school. We wanna know how our mental students of our students are. As a teacher, I wanna know. We know from studies, from Maslow's hierarchy of needs. If this child doesn't feel safe, they're not being fed, that's gonna impact that they can't come into my classroom and learn.... [speaking of having several incarcerated male family members] That's impacted me a lot. That's a big...something I bring into the classroom. Something that I'm conscious of -the family circumstance, something that I advocate for. I'm a big social, big advocate for students, children with incarcerated parents that maybe need resources for them as well in the school system. (Chad, Interview 4/18).

Chad was adamant in this portion of his narrative while discussing his enthusiasm for helping children with incarcerated children. As a researcher, it seemed that he had thought deeply about how exactly he can advocate for students he serves as an educator.

Samuel talked about the impact his mother had upon his motivation, given her role at a K-12 school:

I've had the opportunity, since my mother was a college career advisor, to meet male teachers that I look to as role models and that I can talk to. When I figured out my passion for education, I would talk to them about their jobs and what they would do and go visit them because I really respected them and what they were doing in the schools. My mother would always tell me about the amazing things that they were doing. I think my mother really pushed me for education too. (Sam, Interview, 4/18).

Samuel also mentioned his parents as key drivers in his decision to choose Call Me MISTER as a vehicle for his educational aspirations, revealing that his father always encouraged him to aim for the highest standard. His mother helped steer him to the program after hearing about its merits.

Antwan mentioned that family was extremely important to him as well. He wants to be a role model for his younger brother:

He reminds me of me a lot.... I kind of want to be that shift or that change to where he could see that males do become teachers. Or, one day, maybe you can grow up and be that teacher as well that you were missing in elementary school, or whatever that case may be. I think my family is a big reason why I'm doing what I'm doing....without my mom and my dad pushing me and trying to explain to me right from wrong, pushing me in my studies and stuff, I wouldn't be here....I owe it all to them for having me to be able to excel the way I did in high school and be able to have a chance to pursue a higher education (Antwan, Interview 4/18).

Tariq expressed similar sentiments about the impact he wants to have on his younger siblings:

When I was a lot younger, I just enjoyed teaching to my two younger brothers. And it was just a really good experience just to really invest in them and really just really teach them what I've learned in my experiences (Tariq, 4/18).

Andre, the only alum interviewed, discussed how his role as a father himself forced a paradigm shift in his approach towards education:

My life changed when I found out I was going to be a father. So my outlook on the world definitely changed a lot. I ain't gonna lie, I was wanting to be wild, I was wanting to have fun and be free. But when you become a father, especially at the age when I became one, you have to look at things differently.... The track that I was on, I probably would have been at Clemson for five, six years, but I had to get my stuff in order. I got a kid that's depending on me now. So that's what I had to do.... I really love being a father.... When I found out in November of my junior year that I was going to be a father, that's when I ultimately decided, I was like okay, this ain't about me no more.... I do this, why? Because my family is depending on me, my son is depending on me (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

Kendrick talked about growing up seeing the effects of drug addiction in his family and as a result, wanting to be more sensitive as an educator to experiences that could have a deleterious effect on children's learning. He spoke further about the impact both of his parents made on his decision to be a transformational teacher for his students:

If it wasn't for both of my parents going to college, I don't think I'd be in college right now....So just genetics, and different things they just passed to me, to instill within me the desire to try to achieve. So that transcendence then transfers into the classroom, me being sometimes that father figure or that parent figure, to my

students. And trying to instill in them, whether it's intentional or not intentional, those same type of qualities.... It's who I am, or where I grew up. And the person that my parents raised me to be, nonetheless, no matter how much I grow, and grow from it, that's the basis. That's always who I'm going to be, and that's always who is going to come out (Kendrick, Interview, 4/18).

Bernard came from a family of educators, with a mother who worked in a school district for over two decades, a father who was on the school board, grandmother who taught and an older sister currently teaching. Thus, he felt somewhat destined to become a teacher. Yet, he did not fully embrace this calling until after high school.

I participated in programs like teacher cadet, pro team, and I really enjoyed working with students. But it was not until I got into college, maybe sophomore year I was like this is something that I actually want to do. I think that I wanted to be a teacher because I feel as though I have the gift of working with children in a classroom setting. I think outside of classrooms I have trouble working with children because I feel as though that's not my gift, or not my calling (Bernard, Interview, 4/18).

Experiences (negative and positive) as K-12 students as motivation. Given the guiding research questions of this study, it was important to learn more about each participant's K-12 experience as related to their desires to become a teacher, particularly as relates to the aforementioned treatment of Black boys in schools. Based on my own work with Black males in the K-12 school system and their stories, I found the participants' input particularly insightful.

Chad felt that his negative experiences with special education as a child played a role in his motivations:

I initially wanted to teach special education, just my experience being a former special education student in K through 12 education, and seeing the discrepancy in my curriculum that I was receiving, treatment from other teachers, or lack thereof treatment from other teachers, and just the stigma behind it in general. I wasn't that pleased with it. I never saw myself as a student with disabilities so much as a regular student who just had some challenges, just like every other student had challenges in different ways (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

Gil attended predominantly White schools throughout much of his K-12 experience. He mentioned being annoyed by teachers who seemed to only pay attention to the “best of the best” students while ignoring those perhaps in most need of personalized attention. Gil also mentioned dealing with racism from peers in these settings:

I did used to get bullied and stuff for being Black, just for stupid reasons. Yeah, people would call me the N word. People would do stuff like that. I don't know. It's something that I never encountered in elementary school, so coming to middle school and having to deal with that. I don't even know if it's people ... I knew these kids they, I like to think that they aren't racist because I know a lot of them now. I think it's just the environment they grew up in, their parents at home. Just seeing, hearing things like that on TV or maybe hearing their parents say it and just thinking it's funny and bringing it to school (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

While such revelations seemed harrowing to me as the interviewer and a Black male who, fortunately, had never directly experienced such treatment, Gil relayed these experiences in a laid-back, almost matter-of-fact manner. He was mostly unbothered, while

suggesting the importance of having a teacher he (or any student) could go to in such situations:

Luckily I like to think of myself as a pretty strong person. A lot doesn't bother me. I have a lot of confidence for who I am and what not.... It's something that I never let bother me or get to me. You think back on, "Well maybe if I wasn't that way. How would that affect somebody else?" Just being able and I think if I had needed to go to a teacher or talk to somebody I would have wanted somebody who would have been sympathetic and understanding (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

Roger spoke about having elementary teachers that shaped him, particularly after moving to North Carolina from another state:

I used to model after them. I would ask for something old school supplies and take it home and play with it. That right there sparked my interest. Since then it's always what I wanted to do. I've thought about other things in education, but teaching is the core (Roger, Interview, 4/18).

Similarly, Andre had key figures early in his life that helped mold his career aspirations, even if they were not technically classroom teachers. Several of these individuals were male mentors, two of which made an indelible mark on him after his expulsion in middle school:

When I was in sixth grade, off a dumb decision being made, I actually got expelled from middle school. And needless to say I ended up going to the Anderson District Five Alternative School but even in that situation, I was surrounded by male figures that really wanted to see me win Sergeant McCullough was like 'boy, you don't belong here.' And it was only because he saw what I was doing in the classroom.

Like I said, when I graduated alternative school I was at the top of my, we called it platoons back then. I was at the top of that (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

Expectations of teaching (micro – within classroom). Participants also had valuable insight regarding their approach to the classroom as pre-service teachers regarding race, stereotypes and other societal issues.

Bernard talked about being apolitical pedagogically, while still being focused on making sure he emphasizes awareness in the classroom so his students will be knowledgeable:

I'll never take politics in the classroom. What I will take in the classroom is knowledge and making sure that my students are aware of the things that are going on. I think that the biggest problem in the world is that people automatically assume that they have to take sides, left or right. But there's a difference between taking a side and being aware of a lot of things and being knowledgeable about the things going on (Bernard, Interview, 4/18).

Andre, when speaking about race and the classroom, planned to ensure he uses his role as a teacher to prepare students for the reality of racism:

But racism, man...I just feel like that's a narrative that's still being written. But it's also something that we can use in our classroom to teach our kids about, in a positive way, which is going to get them ready for the real world. Because I would be a fool to be like, when you graduate high school, racism or acts of racism is not still going to be here (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

Chad believed his role as a teacher could have a profound impact in the minds of children, who could grow up to be racist if not for the efforts of an intentional educator:

We're saying how these White cops are shooting black men. They were in somebody's fifth grade class. Let's take it back even a step further. That's when I really started having conversations that really opened my eyes like...education is bigger than what people like to think it is....If this police officer has MiSTER [last name redacted] as his fifth grade teacher, I believe, personally, they wouldn't have shot...they would've been much more conscious of what they were doing and how they're interacting. 'My teacher's just like this person I'm pulling over' (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

Here, Chad echoed sentiments similar to what I heard previously in my role as a practitioner, attending summits where it was proclaimed that if Dylan Roof (White supremacist who murdered Black congregants at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina) was taught by a MISTER (or similarly-dedicated Black educator), perhaps he would not have committed such dastardly racial violence.

Shawn had a similar perspective about the potential to change perspectives as an educator, using a story from his experiences as a student teacher:

I actually came in with a durag to class.... last semester I was in my practicum and I would wear the durag up until I went in the school. So I would take it off in the car, put it in my pocket because I didn't want to put it where I'd forget it and I wouldn't be able to put it on at night.... So I'm in the class and I'm walking around monitoring, it's like stations or whatever. We have stations and I walked around and I forget it's in my pocket. I'm like, 'What is this in my pocket?' So I pull it out and look at it, and I say, 'Oh, okay, cool.' And put it back in my pocket, right? But I'm right by this group and so the group sees it and they say, 'What's that?' And so I look at them and I say,

'It's a durag.' And there's a White girl in this group, a White male, and a black girl. So they all say, 'What's that?' And so I intentionally, I don't want to be biased, so I asked the White boy, 'You know what a durag is?' He said, 'No.' I asked the White girl and she said no. I asked the black girl and she said no. So I say, 'Okay, cool.' So I go up and I say, 'Well, the durag is something that people with thick hair use to straighten their hair or keep their hair down so they can look like this. Like, if I didn't do this, then my hair would be really curly, really thick. And they was like, 'Oh!' And the black girl said, 'Oh, yeah, my daddy uses those.' Right? So what I'm thinking about at that point is, what if one of those kids' dads was a cop? Right? They're in the car together and they're riding and let's say the father's racist....And he's a cop. And somewhere down the line he might come into interaction with a black dude with a durag on. But, this is the turning point in the story now. He's riding with his daughter. And he says, 'I can't stand those guys like that.' And she says, 'What?' And he's like, 'Guys like that, you know, baggy pants, durags.' And she'd say, 'My teacher wears a durag.' You see what I'm saying? You know, and then he'd say, 'Oh, do you know what a durag is?' And she says, 'Yeah. He said he wears it for his hair....' So now he has a whole different understanding on it and that's just me thinking, okay. He just needed a better understanding (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

This prompted me to smile widely and chuckle, given that I still wear a durag daily and have worn such accessories faithfully for twenty years, foregoing wearing them in public based largely on my own fears of being stereotyped or judged. I was held rapt not only by the authenticity of this story, but the enthusiasm with which Chad shared it. I

imagined that his students would be similarly captivated by his authenticity and creativity as a teacher, spinning stories to best educate them.

Marvin, however, took a different view than most of the other participants regarding race matters in the classroom:

Yeah, I think as a teacher you really gotta play a neutral role. You can't be on one side but I think it ... I think for, just for Caucasian students, hearing a black male talk about, and just staying as neutral as possible and give your side of the story. How it affects you and it affects your people. I feel like it could change the world, just hearing a black male speak about it...But you also gotta stay neutral. You can't just be like, pro black, all pro black (Marvin, Interview, 4/18).

I pressed Marvin to expound a bit more about what this neutrality would look like for him and he responded thusly:

You know, just explain how ... our people have been treated unfairly so obviously I gotta explain that part. You can't just ... just be like, 'your people is destroying my people.' You gotta stay neutral I think that just causes more conflict (Marvin, Interview, 4/18).

Marvin felt as though treating everyone equally and with respect in the classroom would be more effective than taking a more direct approach towards White supremacy. His emphasis on classroom neutrality (while still acknowledging racial injustices) seemed to stem at least partially from his background. Growing up, he mentioned having few negative experiences related to race or racism and being relatively well-liked by peers of all races as someone who grew up in predominantly White neighborhoods. Despite the focus on

neutrality, he did nonetheless emphasize the importance of providing his perspective as a Black male in the classroom.

Gil echoed the earlier sentiments expressed by Shawn and Chad, embracing the potential to be a change agent in the classroom.

That's one of the problems with America, or really with America and especially here in the South, is that a lot of people are very opinionated, they're very bigoted, very much so stuck in old ways and don't ... As a result it affects a lot of people in negative ways. ...As a teacher, I want to be able to try and be someone that runs into a situation that may be racially charged or that may be started because some type of race issue and be able to deal with it in a manner that hopefully can help change the viewpoints of the students involved or at least set them on the path to doing so worthy before they say something to question it. Or when they go home and they hear their parents say something. They don't just agree with it. They think about it. They're like, 'Is that really something that's okay?' Where a lot of the problems when it comes to race that you might find in the classroom, they're not going to come from your Black students, they're not going to come from your Hispanic students, they're not going to come from your Middle Eastern or your Asian students. They're going to come from your white students, your students who when they go home, they're hearing their parents say racist things.... They're going to bring it to the classroom with them. It's just something that you have to be prepared for (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

Along this wavelength, Bernard and Kendrick mentioned the importance of providing equity in the classroom for their students as a way to reverse any wrongs they have experienced.

Now I know that is a very big stretch but I think that being equitable instead of ... pushing equity instead of equality, that maybe that'll be a little bit more helpful in my classroom (Bernard, Interview, 4/18).

I think it's very important that we give everybody equitable experience, not only in education, but in this country. Because we know that we didn't have an equitable start. It wasn't even an equal start. So, doesn't mean giving everybody forty acres and a mule, but it means giving everybody equitable opportunities so that they can be successful (Kendrick, Interview, 4/18).

Representation Matters. Several participants discussed the importance of role modeling as related to their motivations. This was expected, given Call Me MISTER's explicit focus on role modeling (the "R" in "MISTER" stands for "Role models") as part of the program's intended impact.

Gil felt that the comfort level for Black male students in particular is increased with a teacher of the same race and gender:

Especially Black male students...if they are able to have that Black male teacher in their classroom, they're able to have that person that they can look to and be like, "Wow, there's just something about you where I feel as if you can relate to me." I feel as if I can relate to you. I feel comfortable around you (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

Gil's assertion here is supported by findings from Gershenson et al. (2017) regarding the profound impact of a Black male student having merely one Black elementary school teacher.

Tariq agreed, taking things even further by embracing the possibility of being a positive father figure for his students – some of whom may lack fathers and need not only a positive male role model, but someone other than an entertainer.

And then they could see me and then think, oh they relate to my dad as they relate to the teacher that they'll have, that male teacher. So really just for me, just representing what it looks like for other black males, what they can do. Because usually they just see them in the NBA or just different sports. They see LeBron James, or just different rappers like Kanye. They're just like, "Oh that's only what I can do." And just being that representative, "Hey, you can be a male teacher, if that's what you want to do, or you can do other stuff. You don't have to narrow your options just to rapping, doing sports, and being a police officer (Tariq, Interview, 4/18).

Chad talked about the psychological impact of not seeing Black men represented in fields such as teaching. Representation is important to him and he drew connections between the dearth of Black men in the classroom to disparities in other fields as well.

I know, here, they talk about a lot, every time you see a black person, usually it's a custodian worker, or a janitorial position....I can see how that can impact some students. They're like, 'Wow, I've never seen a black man teach before. Black men are not teachers'.... I mean, you look at movies, and teachers usually are female!

We got Joe Clark, we got Ron Clark, and that's it! That's all you have right there!..... So

unconsciously, it creates this unconscious image in your head of what a teacher is.... So, representation is a big thing because it does inspire other people to pursue something... It reminds me just like most doctors you perceive to be a white male. There's white women doctors, there's black women doctors. Most of the doctor shows it's always a white guy usually. I think it's the same in every profession (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

Samuel seemed motivated by the amount of surprise experienced by his students upon seeing that he was their student teacher, an African-American male.

I think, even as an African American male, they will never see us in a classroom. I remember doing field experience and it was like, I've never seen a male in the classroom. Then one girl was like, 'I've never seen a black person teach before' So definitely here in South Carolina and around this area, you hear a lot of that and you see a lot of that. It's definitely eye opening. It kind of increases my hunger...and I need to be that example.... so they can just have the understanding of, 'Yeah, these African American males are meant to be here as well' (Samuel, Interview, 4/18).

Expectations of teaching field overall. Nearly half of the participants felt that their experience as students at Clemson, given its predominantly white demographics, was preparing them for careers in teaching where they will be similarly underrepresented. They felt that the whiteness of Clemson's campus (and, more specifically, their teacher education programs) served as a training ground for what to expect later.

Chad, for instance, saw his time at Clemson as a way to understand the mindsets of his students, many of whom may be white:

That experience [being a MISTER at Clemson] helped me to also understand the demographics in South Carolina school system that, I'm gonna deal with white children. So that's a big part of it, so that's- being here has helped me overcome that and just practicing, going into the classrooms...that practical work in the field, experience observation, teaching lessons in the classroom (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

Tariq offered a similar perspective, using his Clemson experience as a laboratory to challenge his ability to work across various differences:

So I've started since August on really just interacting with them [his white female peers in his teacher education program] and just getting a lot of different personalities and just really understanding what it looks like to interact with each one in a positive manner. So I think once I become a teacher, I'm already used to this personality, I'm already used to that... belief style or system or values, and stuff like that. So I'm able to interact with them and cope with them, even if I don't agree with certain beliefs or values, I can still work with that person in whatever way we can (Tariq, Interview, 4/18).

Antwan, in response to my question about entering a predominantly white female teaching force, suggested that he would not be uncomfortable in the slightest:

No, I don't see that being a problem at all, because I deal with it here, as a matter of fact. I see it hands-on right now....I wouldn't see it where it would be a problem, where it would be hard for me to do my job or whatever (Antwan, Interview, 4/18).

Chad, as he did frequently in our conversation, gently pushed back against the possibility or assumption that he or other MISTERS would face different treatment due to their race.

It doesn't affect me, like I said, maybe I'm not aware of it, I don't know what to look for, and when I'm not looking for it, I'm not expecting them to treat me differently, I'm not expecting them to have a slick comment, or something like that. I'm expecting them to treat me like a professional, because I'm here to perform in a professional way and this is to get professional experience, so I expect that. That's something I challenge a lot of the guys on in the program is just to change their mindset and their perception, and not think the worst of individuals who don't look like us, or who don't look like them (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

I found this response to be particularly insightful as related to stereotyping. It seemed that Chad, despite being prepared to deal with predominantly white environments as a Black male, nonetheless did not assume any intention of ill will, regardless of any racist history related to his environment. This was refreshing to me, given that I have frequently wrestled with such assumptions myself due to discrimination I faced in the past.

Who am I and who does the world say I am: Blackness, Masculinity, and Identities. The semi-structured interviews produced rich information from participants about their feelings on race and masculinity as related to society at large, their chosen field of study and the intersections of their other identities.

"It's Scary Out Here." Several discussed being fearful due to recent racism-related events occurring nationwide, such as police brutality. Participants also mentioned being wary of stereotyping and wanting to combat stereotypes about Black men, both within their role in the classroom and in general.

Gil talked about grappling with the daily reality of being seen as dangerous:

I think that's something that you especially have to deal with being a Black male in the world. There's a viewpoint...that a large part of society and America, especially in the South has that you're a threat. I guess growing up a Black male in a white society, it's something you notice a lot whether it's just walking down the street, going into restaurants, something like that. I think I've been made very aware of it...I think because of that it makes me better able to handle situations that I'm in as a result....Having dealt with that and being able to understand it really has prepared me I think to be ready for it because I know it's not going to change anytime soon (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

Gil's anecdote was reminiscent of Bell's permanence of racism. While seemingly fatalistic to some, this concept. Andre, echoing foundational premises of CRT as well, mentioned having to come to grips with this reality while searching for solutions:

I've long come to the conclusion that it's going to be something that we're going to have to struggle with. And that's the bad thing about some things in life, man. When you come to the realization that there might not be a solution....I would love to sit and talk with a person that's going to tell me how it's going to end (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

In his interview, Andre felt that focusing on working towards solutions was nevertheless beneficial in dealing with racism, however permanent those issues may be. Roger discussed feeling a constant wariness while sharing how careful he has to be while living in South Carolina in particular.

Right now, black males are definitely going through a lot....police shootings, having to worry about that every time you get pulled over. Especially in South Carolina

social climate, racism exists and is very alive and well here. That's always something on the back of my mind. Just driving through Seneca or Salem, you never know what you could get into so you're always being cautious and aware of your surroundings (Roger, Interview, 4/18).

This response invoked a sense of familiarity in me as the researcher, living in middle Georgia where Confederate flags are seemingly more commonplace than American flags. There is a certain level of paranoia that I feel as a Black male living in the South, surrounded by overt reminders of oppression. I, too, especially in my twenties, have felt similar to what Shawn also shared about this dynamic, saying “everybody is against you....it seems like they're trying to make us extinct (Shawn, Interview, 4/18).”

Kendrick went into even more detail while describing the defensiveness he constantly feels in what he deems a racist environment:

I just gotta guard myself.... I'm going to guard my heart. So, from emotional to actions, displays of expression....If I make one false move, that's it. It's really like a fine line.... I could say one wrong thing. I almost feel like I'm in antebellum era 1800s. I say one thing, I'm borderline getting lynched....I'm getting shot, I'm getting locked up. Trial thrown out, case thrown out. The stuff like that. And like I'm saying again, it's a little bit exaggerative, but my entire life can be ruined. And that's scary (Kendrick, Interview 4/18).

Here, Kendrick's repetition of the necessity of being careful and guarding himself was reminiscent of “the talk” that many Black families have with their children as a way to prepare for negative and potentially fatal interactions with law enforcement (New York Times, 2015). Kendrick continued discussing the weight of such fear:

So I'm out here trying to make a difference, but I can go to McDonald's, and be shot because I'm black....All my preparation and trying to make the world a better place has been completely stripped of me and my life has been stripped of me, most of all, because I'm a black male. It's scary out here. Because how am I supposed to make the society and the community that's so bad, better, if you're killing me? So, my blackness and my maleness definitely scares me. Because I know that the power that we have, but the envious attitudes and the hatred that is constantly towards us. And it has transcended, not only in America, but it's transcended worldwide. Everybody thinks of us as thugs and gangsters and rappers. And all these negative connotations. And it's sad.....it's stuff I think about all the time, because especially in the time that we live in....It's just like, man, I didn't think I would live in a time like this (Kendrick, Interview, 4/18).

Kendrick then repeated his earlier statement “it’s scary out here”, while referring to the incident in April 2018 where Travis Reinking, a white male, allegedly shot and killed four people of color at a Waffle House in Tennessee unprovoked (Stevens, 2018). This portion of the interview nearly became an impromptu venting session as Kendrick opened up about his feelings on racism. This was particularly poignant for me, as someone who has spent the majority of his professional career dealing directly with issues of race and racism in some form. I can recall several instances sitting in my office, just as I was with Kendrick, where students shared similar frustrations and fears about Black life in America.

Andre recalled specific alleged racist events that happened on Clemson’s campus, reminiscing on the racial tension and the student organizations that worked to address its impact:

But here at Clemson of course as you probably already know, publicly, we've had many instances of students upon campus....I'll just say groups of students have displayed racist behavior. Like I said, so I really applaud groups on campus that we have and programs that we have on campus, like CBSU - Clemson Black Student Union. And other organizations like CODA (Council of Diversity Affairs) and stuff like that that have really come to the forefront and really wanted people to know, okay, this is what we deal with at PWIs (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

While discussing these instances, Andre expressed regret about not seeing it as “his problem” at the time, especially as a pre-service educator.

Stereotypes. Participants also discussed the importance of resisting racist stereotypes. Given the aforementioned assumptions of racism, whether in school settings or outside of them, they seemed equally expectant about racial stereotyping as part of the environments they inhabit.

Tariq felt that external stereotypes about Black people were always in the forefront of his mind:

Race just really shaped me because everybody has really negative connotations with black and African-Americans with education. So that just really shaped me to really just put that as a priority, because people can tend to look down upon that with that race (Tariq, Interview, 4/18).

Marvin, an athlete, recoiled at the “dumb jock” stereotype:

All you do is shoot a basketball. That's all you can do so they assume that I'm just an athlete. and not a smart kid at all, which is not true. I handle my business in the classroom as well on the field or the basketball court. (Marvin, Interview, 4/18)

Here, while Marvin did not explicitly mention this instance, I thought about journalist Laura Ingraham's demand of superstar athlete LeBron James to "shut up and dribble" (NPR, 2018). James, refusing to be stereotyped, promptly turned the phrase into a docu-series about story of NBA athletes and activism (Variety, 2018).

Gil, while sharing a story about one of the MISTER activities, talked about the jarring phenomenon of being looked at completely differently based solely on his attire:

Because one of the older [white] ladies....I think she looked at one of the members...we were all dressed up. She was like, 'Yeah if I see someone dressed like you walking down the street, I won't be afraid, but if I see someone if you're wearing street clothes or something like that, I'd be very afraid for you to come near me.' I just thought that was interesting that literally it's the same person. The exact same attitudes, mentalities, ideas, ideologies, but a change of clothes and all of a sudden in their eyes you're a threat, a completely different person (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

This comment reminded me of my own experiences as someone who frequently wears suits as "work attire". When not dressed in my standard suit and tie, I have often felt "invisible" when walking past white colleagues who did not speak or seem to even notice my existence (where usually they would stop and at least offer a greeting if I am wearing my typical work "uniform").

Gil reflected upon the low expectations he felt from his teachers, stemming from racial stereotypes about Black inferiority:

When I look back on it a lot of these teachers they're only not used to seeing a Black student do well in these schools. Let alone seeing a Black student in a magnet program doing well. I ran into a lot of that when it came from teachers growing up.

It just very much so almost knew I would be showered with compliments. It was nice, but I look back on it and it's just I feel like confirms everything we talk about in our meetings and what not about how it's almost not expected for Black students a lot of the times in these schools to do well (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

As part of this conversation, it was important to also examine how participants resist these stereotypes on a daily basis. Samuel said he fights back at these assumptions of inferiority by focusing on exhibiting excellence on campus:

Really, it's not me proving them wrong or anything, but it's kind of showing a new light, or continuing to be myself. I guess people are kind of like, I don't know, shocked by that. Shocked by myself going to the higher standards, sitting in the front of the classroom or being involved in student government and everything like that, just because I am an African American male and those preconceived notions (Samuel, Interview, 4/18).

Chad again pushed back on some of these narratives, emphasizing the importance of not internalizing or assuming mistreatment. He wondered aloud how his fellow MISTERS saw things very differently than him in this regard:

You know, and I'm just like, 'Why are you feeling that way? Why?' 'Cause I'm like, 'I've been to that school, I go to this school, and I'm fine over there, I don't.' Maybe they know what to look for, maybe I'm naïve on what to look for, and....I don't let things bother me and I try to let things go over my head sometimes. No need to address....So that's, so with race, I imagine it and I'm very aware that I'm black, take pride in being black, but it never was really an issue until I came here. And I hear a lot of guys say, 'Oh, that was racist, or that was-' and I'm just like, I want no racism,

racists, and it hit me in the face because I had never had to deal with it before....not in my experience. I mean, I know racist people exist, I know racism exists, I'm not oblivious to that or I'm not naïve to that, but I'd just never, it just never impacted me. I'd never had to deal with it (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

Unlike Chad, a few participants discussed how they even fight with internalizing such stereotypes themselves, to the point where they feel like imposters. Samuel emphasized deserving to belong in the spaces he inhabits:

I think what I had to really understand is that I'm meant to be here like everybody else is too. So it's understanding that and knowing that (Samuel, Interview, 4/18).

Roger discussed struggles with his self-esteem and needing to prove himself to his peers:

I haven't really had to fight for much until I got here, where I had to prove that I deserved to be here. That's been a battle in itself. Like I said, it's affected my self-esteem. Some days I don't feel adequate enough and it just- It kind of makes me lose motivation.... I felt like I wasn't supposed to be here sometimes and I was really inferior to a lot of my peers in the class. That's really recent, too. Just a recent struggle I've had with self-esteem and not feeling competent enough to teach students because sometimes my grades don't reflect all the other students in my class (Roger, Interview, 4/18).

As a Black male in education myself, I related deeply to these feelings. In predominantly white spaces, I have often questioned whether or not I truly deserved to be in meetings or departments, often due to not being able to identify with cultural norms exhibited in those spaces. This rang true for me both as a doctoral student and practitioner,

where I can recall several instances where I hesitated to give input or respond to a question, fearing my contribution would be incorrect and thus, validation of whatever stereotypes my white professors, peers, or colleagues may have assumed about me.

But what about in the classroom, once each MISTER begins teaching? For this study, it was also important to examine how each participant thought about the likelihood of being stereotyped in his teaching role.

Samuel felt that he would be met with preconceived negative expectations immediately:

I think the most important thing, too, is that once you get into the school that you go to, there's already going to be an expectation set out for you. And there's already going to be things against you when it comes to being in the classroom. You just can't be a lazy teacher, and an African American male, because they're going to be like, 'Yep. Told you so' (Samuel, Interview, 4/18).

Similar to his thoughts about issues of race, Chad was surprised by the general perceptions (or expectations) related to his identity as a Black male in the classroom:

I'll be honest. I didn't know. Like I said, before I got here, I didn't know teaching was for women...teaching was majority women and I've seen a lot of men in the classroom.....I didn't know people looked at it that way, honestly, until I tell people that I majored in education. 'Oh, you wanna be a teacher? Why you wanna be around kids?' That's where most kids are - in schools. Teachers teach kids. I don't know how to answer that question when they ask me that.... I didn't know people frowned upon that or kinda second-guess like 'What's his real motive?' I never heard that

before until coming here. I didn't know what I signed up for when I said I wanna be an education major (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

Andre expressed exasperation with similar stereotyping, albeit from a different angle than Chad:

I'm not going to allow me being that African American male teacher to be the thing that they have to be like 'oh that's the reason why he's a great teacher.' No, I'm a great teacher because I'm a great teacher. I prepare well. I execute well. I come up with creative lessons for my students well. Me being an African American male, that's just a plus (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

Samuel also talked about being assumed to be disciplinarians in the classroom:

They think that you're going to be the mean one. If you've got a bad child, they just come to you and let you harp on them and everything like that, but it's ever changing. You don't know if you're a disciplinarian or not, but it's that stigma that they have for male teachers (Samuel, Interview, 4/18).

Bernard also spoke at length about his frustration with positive assumptions about his teaching ability solely due to his Black male identity:

They just think that we're just going to walk in the classroom and we're just going to change the world....That is sometimes frustrating because it's just like you don't know anything about me. I could be the worst teacher in the world, I could be a liar, I could be a cheat. I could just be all these things but just because you looked at me, my outer appearance, you automatically assumed that I'm just going to be this great teacher.... It's just sometimes I question my strengths as a teacher. To have a lot of people just instantly come up to you, even white people do it a lot of times. They'll

say 'oh you're going to be a great teacher and you're going to inspire them. It's good to have black role models in the classroom' I want to change lives but allow me to get in the classroom before you make that generalization (Bernard, Interview, 4/18).

This assumption of greatness may lead to preferential treatment according to Roger, who spoke about having near-celebrity status as a Black male teacher in training:

But when I'm in elementary school, I get treated a lot differently. I'm looked at like, "Oh, he's black. He's so special and rare." At times, I think the girls ... I don't want to say they judge or get jealous, but it's like, 'Whoa. What's he doing that we're not doing?' You know? Unfortunately, it is because I am black and black men, especially I'm the only male, so it's rare for that to be seen in an elementary school, especially in the classroom. I think when I do come across it, it makes me feel good, but then also I know kind of like, 'Dang. If I wasn't a black male, I was just a white male, would I still get treated like this' (Roger, Interview, 2018)?

Roger continued, believing that being a Black male seemed to encourage preferential treatment in some ways.

That's sometimes not necessarily more positive, but you do get looked at and you get thought about more. As far as jobs, you always hear that, 'Oh, you're gonna get a job. You're a male and you're black. We need more of you' (Roger, Interview, 2018).

Here, I was reminded of various conversations with K-12 school leadership about programs such as Call Me MISTER upon hearing this from Roger. Almost without exception, superintendents and principals seem to be aggressively searching for Black male teachers, seemingly more than other demographics. I can always sense the underlying assumption

that – solely due to their rare occurrence – Black male teachers will be amazing for their children. While well-intentioned, such assumptions are reminiscent of the racist stereotypes of Black males automatically being great athletes or, as Brockenborough warned, supermen (2013). Such assertions dismiss the fact that 1) there are undoubtedly many Black men who are not fit to teach and 2) Black men who are great teachers (or, as in the participant's case, training to become great) have to master the same foundational knowledge as white teachers who dominate the profession, and sometimes more.

Shawn discussed one instance where he saw the complicated gender dynamics of the classroom:

And then in the classroom I think kids really do treat males a lot different. I even had a female teacher come up and tell me, I had to switch, cause she was a team teacher. She was like, she switched her team teacher with somebody because they treated the male with more respect. So she wanted a female team teacher. And I could kinda see sometimes but with me I always look at behavior as a respect thing. So and sometimes kids do look at males with more respect but I gain my respect through understanding. And I don't depend on me being an authority figure nor on me being a male, like my gender or any of that as a given for respect. But some teachers do and some students automatically respect you because of your gender or the fact that you're older or that you've got a college degree or the fact that you're a teacher (Shawn, Interview, 4/18).

Masculinity in the classroom. Participants gave insight regarding how their masculinity in particular could impact their entrée into the teaching profession.

Gil

Being masculine in a world that's mainly feminine can be intimidating to a lot of people. Having a good control over it, not losing yourself would be the best way to put it is something that's very important to have because I know a lot of times being masculine can come off as intimidating. Or it's going to be my way or the highway or very much imposing. A lot of the times because of that people can shove away from you, they can tend not to work with you. In an environment like teaching where you do have to work with others, you have to be able to work with children, especially having a good control over that is important (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

As part of this conversation, Chad and Gil spoke about assuming a different perspective as a male teacher as opposed to female teachers in the profession:

My opinions are very different sometimes than the females in my classroom. Our experiences are different. Not only in race, but as in sex and in gender. I think men see the world differently than women. We have different experiences being a man in society and being a woman in society. There is a difference. I bring a diverse perspective and diverse ideas to the table that some of the female students overlook or they don't think about because they're not a man (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

Gil agreed, believing that his Black male perspective adds something different to the classroom:

I may be one of the only males if not the only male in the school. Most likely, the only Black male in the school. I'm not going to let that be a detriment. I'm not going to let that hold me back. I'm going to use it as a tool to push forward and bring new ideas. Bring new experiences to the students, something that they might experience from the norm that their other teachers may have provided to them in the past and that

they've been experiencing so far up until they reach my classroom (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

Gil also mentioned past experiences with Black male teachers and how different such experiences were impactful for him:

Especially as a male student, there's a different level of comfortability with a male teacher than you have with a female teacher. Especially when I was in high school and had that Black male teacher. He was the first Black male I've had. I think I may have even had that class with my brother. I can't remember. I think I did. It was just interesting. The way I felt in the classroom, the type of work I put in. The way he interacted with us. It was just something that I hadn't experienced before (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

Expanding what it means to be masculine. Being hyper-aware of the aforementioned stereotyping in the classroom led to several participants wanting to re-define or expand traditional masculine ideals in the classroom. Antwan, for instance, felt that preconceived expectations for a male teacher's masculine performance should be challenged:

Whether you're masculine or feminine, it shouldn't dictate your role as a teacher or how you're going to be that teacher you say you're going to be, cause I know someone who's ... okay, he's not the most masculine guy, but he's a good-ass teacher. His classroom management skills is on point. His kids know when to shut up, know when to get right.... I don't think masculinity should dictate how good of a teacher you're going to be.... When I say that, I also say whether the teacher's heterosexual

or homosexual, that shouldn't have an effect on the teacher role, if that makes sense (Antwan, Interview, 4/18).

Kendrick was very open about how he was forced to re-evaluate his thoughts on masculinity as related to his role in the classroom:

I had to realize that some of my hyper masculine, not necessarily traits, but things that I picked up over time, might not be best in a classroom. Although they are genuine parts of me, but at the same time, they could be appropriate in one aspect, and not appropriate in another.... I'm evolving. Just looking at it from different perspectives. I'm not really trying to change myself or who I am on the inside, but be mindful of the experiences of other people, especially my students, that may not be the same as mine (Kendrick, Interview, 4/18).

Bernard spoke honestly about how his masculine presentation (and how others' perceive him as a result) affects him:

For masculinity and femininity, I said that I would be more closely related to the feminine side. I think that on this campus specifically that negatively affects me.... People automatically think that they know what I'm going to say because I'm a black gay male, so it's kind of like there's this expectation or this stereotype of what I'm going to say or what I'm going to be about, or I'm just going to be loud and proud and wave my flag everywhere. My black flag and also my gay flag. So it's this expectation that I'm just going to be far left on everything.... Going into the classroom, I think that depending on where you are, that's going to be a negative or it could be seen as you're just a black male. We need more black males, but in other places it's like okay, we don't need a more feminine male teaching our children or

teaching our boys to become essentially feminine. It's just kind of one of those things where you hope that people don't chastise you for having more feminine traits. But at the same time you're not stupid and you're not naïve to the things that could happen (Bernard, Interview, 4/18).

Bernard continued and spoke very honestly and openly about the additional care he has to take while navigating the teaching profession and the world as a Black gay male:

Sometimes I'm afraid that because I'm a black gay male that my students will look at me differently, only because I've had people from maybe my eighth grade to now look at me differently because of it. Sometimes I just have doubts about my own personal teaching abilities because I'm afraid that I'm going to be looked at as the black gay male and why would I want to learn from the black gay male? What can he teach me?..... I guess other than being male, being black, being gay shapes a lot of the ways that I see the world, only because it's something that is frowned upon.

Especially here, but also as a black gay male in the black community....when I make decisions I have to be conscious of the reactions to a lot of my decisions or a lot of things that I say (Bernard, Interview, 4/18).

Life Under the Magnifying Glass (or a Spotlight). Participants talked at length about the dynamic of simultaneously being hypervisible and yet seemingly invisible at the same time as Black males both on Clemson's campus and the world in general. Several participants talked about dealing with raised expectations as part of this conundrum. Marvin, for instance, felt pressure to work harder to make sure his mistakes are not highlighted:

I feel like a black male, we have always have to do it twice as more as the Caucasian people. We're always a step behind. We always gotta put the extra foot forward. That's really how I live my life, honestly....Caucasian people they can like ... They can get away with certain things. They can brush stuff off. We mess up, they're gonna point it out. So you always gotta be on top of your A game...as a black male in this world period (Marvin, Interview, 4/18).

Gil echoed Marvin's sentiments about the necessity of working extra hard: Being Black you have to work twice as hard at something. It's something that when I was younger I didn't really understand as much. It was pushed on me by my parents. It was something that I did. I'm glad I've done it because it's provided me a lot of opportunities that I know others may not have had being able to get into an institution like Clemson or being able to play soccer in college, things like that (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

This idea of having to work "twice as hard" than white peers seemed related to feelings of having additional attention on them. I have felt similarly at various junctures in my professional life as well, and found myself nodding frequently as participants continued their narratives. Tariq felt that being a Black male in a teacher education program meant having a constant spotlight on him:

Here at Clemson University, it's not really a common thing to find black male education majors. So really I just stand out in the Clemson community. So for me, it just puts a spotlight on people like me that are pursuing the education field and are African-Americans and a male (Tariq, Interview, 4/18).

Andre agreed as well, expressing dissatisfaction with the more intense scrutiny he felt he would face:

But being black and being a male and being an educator, being in this environment, man, I feel as though not only as a teacher do you have the expectation but being black and male and being an educator, the expectations are raised even higher. And the eyeball on you is much bigger. So you mess up, it's magnified times 10 compared to what your white counterpart, the female would do. And in my mind, I feel like that's the thing that has to change (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

Seeing a pattern amongst the participants, I followed up by asking one participant to clarify on whether he believes this feeling of being under a magnifying glass was at least partially related to his status as a MISTER, not merely because he is a Black male. Bernard shared his perspective:

I think it's a little bit of both because we take some classes that are not education specific, so a lot of teachers may not know that we're in Call Me MISTER.....But we take it with other education majors and so it's just kind of difficult to say oh, they're doing it because of Call Me MISTER. But then we know for a fact that some of the other classes, they have relationships with [the executive director and field coordinator]. So it's kind of like oh, since you're in Call Me MISTER we're expecting a lot more out of you (Bernard, Interview, 4/18).

Shawn talked about having to walk on proverbial eggshells as a Black male in a teacher education program:

In the program, I think it's just [that] you get a lot of attention you don't want. ...I mean, everybody don't want to be called out every class, you know, because I'll be in

class and like, "Oh, we have two males in the class also. And I mean, but other than that, it's a little hard sometimes....for instance a female could say something to a kid or to anybody and it be taken as a joke but if a male said it, it would be a lot different. So you know, for me, it was all about being more cautious about certain stuff (Shawn, Interview, 4/18).

Samuel had similar experiences regarding the at times harsh spotlight he felt, but talked about his approach to embracing it in order to change perceptions:

You can see that at first, but again like I said before, it's the way you shed your light, the way you show who you are and then that's when they start coming. So definitely it contributes to the preconceived notions that I said before and the things that they see when it comes to being African American, but I changed that perspective. I make sure I do that (Samuel, Interview, 4/18).

Antwan felt that this constant awareness of having increased attention takes its toll on him:

It's already a struggle being a black male in today's society, because it's just how this world ... well, the United States is. I'm not sure if it's like this in other parts, but we already have a target on our back for being Black 'cause we're good for nothing but being in a jail making whatever they do. However, it's an even more struggle being a male that's black and that's homosexual. ...That takes a toll on someone, especially someone like me.....It's a cruel world. I hate how we have to suffer and live in it, but that's just how it is. Got to do what you got to do (Antwan, Interview, 4/18).

Dealing with Isolation and Onlyness. Much of what participants mentioned earlier regarding the dynamics of feeling both invisible at some junctures and hypervisible in

others produced feelings of isolation. Harper et. al (2011) described this as *onlyness* - the psychoemotional burden of having to strategically navigate a racially politicized space occupied by few peers, role models, and guardians from one's same racial or ethnic group.

Feeling this way, Kendrick relays his thoughts on onlyness:

I'm in this box between the two extremes, and it's like nobody kind of wants me. So it's a lot, that's compounded. And that 'junt' [slang] gets at me every day.... That junt, it drains me emotionally.... Sitting down in all of your classes, and nobody sits beside you... They're going to group together, whether they know each other or not, whether they look similar, they wear the same clothes. We look completely different from them.... they feel uncomfortable (Kendrick, Interview, 4/18).

Antwan described feeling alienated at times as well:

If I didn't have any MISTER brothers, I would basically just be the only black person with a room full of white females. It's kind of hard.... you would go into a classroom and you would sit at a table by yourself. All the white people, they would just kind of separate themselves from you, if that makes sense. When you walk in class and you sit at this table, the whites will try to sit at any other table first before they actually come and sit by youYou try to not to be the outcast, but it's kind of hard being the only Black in the classroom (Antwan, Interview, 4/18).

Roger talked about looking forward to days where his coursework involved visiting a K-12 school (as opposed to a college classroom) because of the loneliness and related discomfort he'd become accustomed to while in a college setting, receiving the "the looks, you get the stares, the comments sometimes that just are sideways":

I get to do hands on stuff and I know people are gonna reach out and talk to me. The kids like me, so that's more exciting than going to the classroom where I'm sitting around with some girls who don't really care if I'm there or not. (Roger, Interview, 4/18)

Chad, although at times he may not have noticed his marginalized status, described how he felt awkward initially upon entering Clemson, to the point where his sense of alienation silenced him.

My freshman year, I didn't speak a lot. I spoke in class, I asked questions, but just kinda interacting with people of the opposite race as me was really hard for me. I would say to myself, 'What do they speak?' Like they don't speak English. I'm thinking it's almost a foreign language (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

While it took some time, Chad acknowledged that this alienation eventually subsided at least somewhat:

I got comfortable and I realized, oh. We're human beings. These are just like you. No difference. They say, "What's up?" just like you say, "What's up?" They say, "Hey," just like you say, "Hey." They sleep just like you sleep (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

MISTER Magic: Values, Expectations, and Activities. For this study, it was important to also examine participants' feedback regarding Call Me MISTER and its programmatic features.

Brotherhood. Most participants felt that Call Me MISTER's framework placed supreme importance on intergroup relationships as a brotherhood. This was expected, given that "Brother's Keeper" is a key tenet of the program (Jones & Jenkins, 2012). Roger, for instance, felt that the sense of brotherhood allowed him to trust others more:

Just with my brothers here in the cohort, I've had to create that space of trust because at first it wasn't there I know the girls don't get this in my education program. They don't have the opportunity to go talk to other female professionals in the field. I think just that alone gives you expectation in what you need to do before you get into the classroom. It also gives you goals that you need to set (Roger, Interview, 4/18).

Andre felt that the brotherhood was intentional, rather than occurring by mere happenstance of fellow MISTERS also being Black men:

This is something that runs deeper than just African American males wanting to be teachers. This is something that's deeper than that. This is really a brotherhood of networking and, not networking just to be like he's graduating, I want him in my school. No, this is networking as in 'hey man, how you doing today? I heard you about to have a little man, how you little man doing?' So it ain't even academic (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

Kendrick felt that the shared mission amongst MISTERS in addition to shared identities helped:

One, it's a brotherhood. And especially being at a PWI... it's great to at least be around people that look like you.... the same goals as you, and might have similar experiences. Which makes it an easier transition, especially in a major that's so dominated with white females (Kendrick, Interview, 4/18).

Chad talked about the power of continuously cultivating these relationships within the Call Me MISTER network, not just at Clemson but among other institutions as well:

So, the MISTERS were constantly interacting with not only MISTERS in our own personal cohort, but you're interacting with MISTERS over the summer at the internship. You're interacting with MISTERS at the summits once a semester, you're getting to meet other guys, so you find things in common with other guys. You hear the other things guys are doing. So those different things, not only does it help you in the classroom, it also helps you in your coursework to get to that professional level as well.... I could at least name 20 guys now I could just call on standby if I needed something with my classroom (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

Personal Accountability. Participants frequently mentioned the importance of personal accountability as educators in training within the Call Me MISTER program. Holding themselves to a higher standard, despite the aforementioned challenges regarding race, gender, and other identities was a common thread among the interviews.

Samuel said that the accountability is amongst MISTERS, rather than simply coming from the administrator in charge of the program:

This is our cohort. This is us. This is what we do. So every opportunity we have, we're the forefront of it. The way people look at us, we're that. That's not [the coordinator] doing this, that's what we do. So we have to hold ourselves accountable. We have to continue to push to a higher standard to uphold the name of MISTER and just who we are as people (Samuel, Interview, 4/18).

Samuel and other participants underlined the importance of embracing the challenge of meeting high expectations set by Call Me MISTER by continuing to challenge themselves and each other to persist and be intentional in their actions. Chad, who exhibited this ethos throughout his other answers as well, talked about the importance of being intentional:

That's another benefit of Call Me MISTER, is just challenging your beliefs.

Challenging your belief systems, challenging, always asking why. So, why? Why did you decide to do this? Something we talk about, being intentional behind your actions, behind what you're asking, what you're saying (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

Bernard had some serious challenges as a MISTER that forced him to leave Clemson periodically before returning to his cohort with a newfound vigor. He shared that throughout this time, the field coordinator stayed in contact with him as he reflected on how he can take responsibility for forging his own path. He referenced the film "Rocky" while talking about perseverance and personal accountability:

It's not about how hard you get hit. It's about how hard you get hit and how you get up. So for me, it was kind of like that fighting. I need to get back. ... [the field coordinator] kept calling me and texting me and was still in contact with me. It kind of showed me that hey, they do care.... So we still have that relationship. Maybe MISTER was not the problem, or solely the problem. Maybe I played a bigger part into me having all these problems with MISTER than I want to give myself the credit for (Bernard, Interview, 4/18).

Samuel felt that this accountability lends not only to personal growth, but also to the success of every child in the classroom:

Our goal here at MISTER is to, we want to reach every child. We might not do that, but we want to reach every child. We know that every child has the ability to learn well, perform well in the classroom (Samuel, Interview, 4/18).

Andre, with the benefit of hindsight as a recent graduate, felt that this approach forced him to take responsibility for what happens inside his classroom as a teacher:

Understand that in your laboratory, which is your classroom, for 180 days, you have the power to really influence your kids the way that you believe is going to not only be beneficial to yourself because put yourself aside right now, you're talking about 50 lives right now. Put yourself aside and you're talking about influencing 50 lives that's going to benefit them.... I had to change some things about myself and....I thought when I was here in school, that was going to be a process that ended, like once you master something, all right, you ain't gotta worry about it no more. No. It's a saw that constantly needs to be sharpened (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

Andre also shared illuminating self-reflection that was prompted via conversations with the director.

[The field coordinator] used to talk to me about that a lot, man, like 'what about you makes you unapproachable?' That means you gotta change. It's not the person that needs to change. You gotta look at yourself. What about you makes you unapproachable (Andre, Interview, 4/18)?

Cohort respect for different masculinities. Several participants felt that Call Me MISTER helped them re-evaluate their perceptions about masculinity as well.

Kendrick, for instance, spoke about the diversity within his MISTER cohort:

Like, my roommate, although outside of him being a homosexual male, African-American male, he had both parents at home, he's like one of the middle children, he had lots of support. And I wouldn't say that he didn't struggle growing up, but he didn't see a lot of struggle. And my other MISTER brother that's in my class, is a white male, who grew up in Fort Mills, South Carolina, which is like 30 minutes

outside Charlotte, and it's an affluent area. His dad owns multiple businesses (Kendrick, Interview, 4/18).

Kendrick continued, speaking about masculinity and homosexuality in particular:

Masculinity, especially in the African-American community, and living with homosexual African-American males has opened up my viewpoint and my perspective on the issue. And so, I think, as one of my roommates states it, we live in a hyper-masculine society, especially in the African-American community, where feminism displayed by males is highly despised...in the black community, for the most part, it's despised to be a homosexual, especially if you're a male. And they receive a lot of hate for it (Kendrick, Interview, 4/18).

Antwan, Bernard, and Kendrick were forced to re-evaluate preconceived notions and stereotypes they held about Black men and Call Me MISTER specifically. Antwan said that he wanted little to do with his MISTER brothers at first.

After his initial apprehension with the brotherhood of Call Me MISTER, he befriended MISTERS who, at first, he stereotyped:

One of my MISTER brothers ... when I first met him, he had a durag on, baggy pants. I was like, "Oh, my God." I was like, "Oh, he look like he's going to be hard to work with." But he's actually one of my closest MISTER brothers here. I can go to him and talk to him about anything and he'd be right there with them, have a conversation with me. He'll probably curse me out and I'll curse him out, too, but it's all fun (Antwan, Interview, 4/18).

Bernard had similar skepticism as Antwan concerning Call Me MISTER, based on his expectations of what the program was looking for and the type of Black male he would encounter:

I hated Call Me MISTER. I felt like when I first got to MISTER, there was this narrative that I had in my head that there was this certain type of MISTER to come from a certain background. There was this story that there was some type of mostly financial struggle or like family struggle. I did not come from that. I was blessed to have both of my parents. Middle class...decent education. When they would tell their stories, I constantly felt on the outside because I could not relate to them on that level, and I felt like sometimes I was ostracized because of that.... For a long time I thought MISTER was ashamed of me and ashamed of my story. It took me leaving and coming back to understand that MISTER values stories and diversity. Everybody has something different that they can bring into the classroom. If people have similar experiences their stories are not the same (Bernard, Interview, 4/18).

Bernard continued his narrative by saying Call Me MISTER allowed him not only to become comfortable as a Black gay male, but also to familiarize himself with others unlike himself, expanding his network in the process. Conversely, he also felt that exposure to other men who shared his identity in some way definitely helped with his own evolution:

Once I started noticing that hey, there are guys that are feminine that are winning teacher of the year and becoming principals and seeing that front and center, looking at them and saying 'hey I don't know what your story is but you identify with one of my identities,' it's kind of like a guiding light. Hey, maybe one day I can get to that point. Maybe I don't have to be very manly and masculine and walk and

talk a certain way in order to accomplish the goals that I want to do in a classroom (Bernard, Interview, 4/18).

Chad felt that the diversity amongst MISTERS helped him tremendously with his limited view of masculinity and homophobia.

I didn't know how to interact with homosexuals.... I think that's how my masculinity has gotten stronger. I've gotten more aware. I'm not that offended by it. I don't really say I have to respond or behave in a certain way because I'm a man.... I hug the other MISTERS. We live in close quarters. It's two to a room. I'm sharing a room with a guy. I shared a room with a guy who identified as different sexually than me. I don't think it gets any closer than that.... Some of our strongest MISTERS identify differently sexually. I won't say their masculinity is fragile, they're not as masculine because they identify in a particular way. It's no guideline to masculinity (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

Kendrick echoed Chad's thoughts on his own evolution towards different masculine presentations.

For homosexual men, that masculinity might not look the same way as it does for us, but it's differently masculine. And then, might be a mixture. You know what I'm saying, some heterosexual men might have masculinity that might look like homosexual men. Not saying it makes them homosexual or homosexual. Not really trying to blue the lines here, but there are definitely traits that could go back and forth. So just seeing that maybe like, I want to say, yeah...called into question what masculinity meant to me, and how it looked (Kendrick, Interview, 4/18).

Building Relationships Via Living Together. The MISTER living learning community is part of what facilitated the aforementioned evolution, accountability, and relationship-building, according to most of the participants. Andre was able to find common ground through shared struggles as a result:

As we had the chance to live together.... I really had the opportunity to really understand okay, where is it that this person is coming from? And I really had a chance to see what I call a struggle, he also calls one too. He's been through the same thing as well. So it really made me realize that we're not so different. Yeah, we come from different backgrounds but we're not so different (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

Chad made connections between the living-learning experience and its application to the classroom, feeling that building relationships across differences with MISTERS should help with his students as well:

The whole, the overall experience of being a MISTER...living with ten other guys in a cohort setting.... you're gonna meet some personalities in the classroom with your students. You've been living together now, I might deal with a student who's identical personality-wise as Emmanuel, so it's like, if I can deal with Emmanuel, then I can deal with this student. If I figure out how to meet common ground with Emmanuel, then I can meet common ground with Emmanuel in my classroom. But not only that, it's also looking at another lens is looking through that maybe I can't reach Emmanuel in my classroom. I reach out to Emmanuel from college, and say, 'Hey, I've got a student, you know, that's part of the network' (Chad, Interview, 4/18).

Samuel added that the living-learning community assists with accountability as well:

We're always with each other and we're making sure that, on campus, if they see something lacking or if we're not acting a certain way, then there going to tell you. They're going to let you know.... We check on each other about grades, we do contests.... we put money in a bucket and whoever gets the highest GPA gets the money out of the bucket....It's definitely fun but again, we're just pushing each other to move forward (Samuel, Interview, 4/18).

Kendrick suggested a similar perspective, expressing the importance of simply being able to bounce ideas off of other MISTERS and get exposure to different perspectives.

Key Activities. Beyond the key values mentioned earlier, participants also spoke at length about various specific activities within their Call Me MISTER cohort that impacted them. Some spoke of learning from each other and the value of mentors, while others spoke of social justice and inequality. Meetings were an important activity that helped participants challenge each other and think critically about issues that directly affect their lives and future careers.

Meetings. The Call Me MISTER cohort being studied meets on a weekly basis, every Monday. These meetings are usually discussion or activity-based and are a key component of MISTER interaction, with a mix of guests coming to speak to the group or MISTERS themselves leading the meetings:

Marvin felt that the meetings were beneficial in testing his skills as future teachers, getting immediate feedback from fellow MISTERS.

We have our MISTER meetings ... Hearing different point of views on how your race or masculinity can affect you as a teacher in how you get your views across. And how you get your teaching methods across and how it can affect ... It can positively affect and negatively affect your students (Marvin, Interview, 4/18).

Gil agreed, claiming that the emphasis on MISTERS presenting their own “mini-lessons was beneficial for them as pre-service teachers.

Chad, ever the open-minded individual, mentioned even inviting others to MISTER meetings.

I was always inviting my classmates to come check out our Call Me MISTER meetings. "Come see what we're talking about." Sometimes there's tough topics. Sometimes they're a little cringe-worthy..... Sometimes feelings are hurt there. That being challenged creates that growth, and then we address the elephants in the room all the time. Whether it's political themes, social themes, we're accomplishing more than just how to teach this lesson..... We address that, how does it feel to be in the Clemson classroom, and you're in there with 20 white women, and you're the only male. The other male is another Call Me MISTER, is one of your MISTER brothers. How does that feel? What's the dynamics in that (Chad, Interview, 4/18)?

Bernard also mentioned the importance of using these meetings as a strategy for how to handle various dynamics in the school system he will be working in:

It's preparing me with the tools and the techniques that I can even use starting in my own classrooms at Clemson..... I think without it, I feel as though a lot of conversations that I have in my actual classrooms would be really bad and very emotional and very one sided (Bernard, Interview, 4/18).

Mentoring Others. Each MISTER in the Clemson cohort is required to mentor younger children. Several participants felt that this was key for their development also. The cohort has a partnership with the local YMCA where MISTERS meet with younger students frequently in order to build mentor-mentee relationships. Shawn felt that this provided affirmation for his career path:

I really think it confirms it for you, just like, this is what I'm supposed to be doing. This is what I love to do. And this is the program for me. So that mentoring thing really hit home for me. I mentored about three or four people over the years but it's just that growth that you see in those kids.... And then some guys are just like, 'Oh, I can actually do this' (Shawn, Interview, 4/18).

Antwan agreed with this feeling of empowerment through mentorship, particularly as an educator learning to deal with different types of children. He reflected on his experience volunteering at one particular location:

It was very sad how kids are growing up and what they have to deal with. It's not like they can change it, because they're kids. I think with that, that helps me as an educator so when I get that classroom and I do approach students from that background that have had those type problems, I'll be well more equipped to handle that situation at hand, if that makes sense (Antwan, Interview, 4/18).

Shawn shared a poignant anecdote about one of his mentees and how it affected him.

When I was in school, the semester I was student teaching, there was a little boy outside the classroom all the time in the hallway, this was third grade. I was student teaching in another class and we would always see him in the hallway when my

class would go to the restroom, I'd see him in the hallway all the time. So I asked him, 'Why are you out here?' And he told me cause he was bad. And so I said, 'What do you mean, *bad*? What did you do?' And he told me, and long story short - his title, he kinda lived up to that title because he would tell me that 'I can't be good. Because I'm bad.' So you know, at that point it was in my head that I'm going to check on this guy every day. I'm going to do this. I'm going to do that, make sure that he's doing his thing so at lunch I would check on him. And a lot of times I would check on him, just an informal checking. Just to say, 'Hey, you good today?' And then eventually it came to the point where he would ask the teacher, 'Can I go talk to Mr. [last name redacted]?' ...And then it didn't become an official mentorship until we got hooked up with the YMCA and I requested it, and I'm like, 'Yeah. Give me him.' And then we started meeting every morning and every afternoon. And now he's an AB honor roll student (Shawn, Interview, 4/18).

Being mentored. Mentorship is also extended to the MISTERS themselves. This mentorship often takes the shape of weekly one on one meeting with the field coordinator, where MISTERS share the progress of their goals and are challenged to rise to expectations where necessary. Marvin and Andre both felt that the one on ones were extremely impactful for them. Andre was particularly effusive of his praise for both the coordinator and executive director of the program for their mentorship and guidance:

When it comes to being just a man in general, [the executive director and field coordinator] have really influenced me.... they've really shown me okay, as a man and being in charge of another person's life, you really have to make choices every day. So just making sure that the choices that you make are the right choices and not

only are they the choices that are going to be right for you, but you got to think about somebody else before you make a choice about yourself. So just really being selfless when it comes down to being a man who has a family.....One-on-one conversations...pretty much set the foundation of the type of educator that I perceive myself to be. So [the field coordinator] always harps on how he's not going to give me *the* way of doing something, he's going to give me *a* way of doing something.... They give us this knowledge and then they want us to reciprocate it in our own ways that match our certain personalities (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

Conferences and other activities. The cohort frequently takes trips to various conferences to network with MISTERS across the nationwide imprint in order to continue the focus on brotherhood and share information. Marvin, for instance, felt that the summits were helpful due to the success stories being shared, with different MISTERS being recognized for teacher of the year and even becoming principals early in their educational careers. These summits usually feature not only successful MISTERS as speakers, but also other motivational figures.

Andre was positively impacted by the speakers:

Hearing Dr. David [speaker at the annual Call Me MISTER Institute] talk about life and to see that people can be successful no matter what type of background they come from, it's great to hear these speakers come in and talk about their story.

People I think, I think people in this day in age get caught up a lot in the grand scheme of things. So like everybody knows that certain artists and blah blah blah, they are famous, but they don't fall in love with the process of it (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

Andre mentioned that teambuilding trips for the cohort built his morale and forced him to reflect more:

Whenever we would go on these certain trips together we would always have these team building exercises, kind of like these getting to know you and your personality, characteristic type things. And that really helped me as well because myself, I see myself as a very observant person. I'm a very auditory type learner. I'm very hands on as well, but auditory because I love to observe. I love to sit there and think about and reflect certain things before I actually make action on it (Andre, Interview, 4/18).

Gil felt that group discussions with a local church were eye-opening for him. He said that the predominantly white congregants often shared perspectives that caused him to reflect more on his role as an educator:

There's something that our cohort does where there is a local church in Seneca that we go to often. we'll have little group discussions I feel like is the best way to put it, where members of their church come and we come and we sit down and we discuss certain aspects of race and how being Black in today's world can affect us in certain ways....the majority of the members there are older. They're coming from a generation, a time where Black people were not seen as equal..... they want to try and understand the Black experience the best they can to help them better understand where they were wrong and how they can help themselves be able to be understanding towards Black people and other races as well (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

He believed that such interactions are valuable tools for them as MISTERS in order to learn about educating across areas of difference, especially for white students who may have been raised by racist parents:

We can help them to not become like that and to help them ... We're able to give them a viewpoint and an understanding so they can grow into better people (Gil, Interview, 4/18).

Documents

In addition to the rich information gleaned from participant interviews, I analyzed five key documents published by the Clemson Call Me MISTER program in order to gain further background context and observe how the program itself communicates its mission, particularly in relation to the prescribed research questions. The findings below were considered a valuable supplement to the semi-structured interviews discussed previously. The documents analyzed are first briefly delineated in the table below, followed by a discussion of the themes generated from their analysis.

Table 2: Description of Key Documents

Document Name	Document Type	Length	Brief Description
Call Me MISTER – Graduate Testimonials	Video	14 minutes, seven seconds	Video published by Clemson’s Call Me MISTER program featuring various MISTERS and their perspectives on the program and its impact
Call Me MISTER –	Video	Seven	Video published by Clemson’s Call Me

Dignitary Testimonials		minutes, 11 seconds	MISTER program featuring donors and university presidents who have supported the program
Call Me MISTER – The Re-Emergence of Black Male Teachers in South Carolina	Book	160 pages	Book authored by the executive director of Clemson’s Call Me MISTER program (and the entire initiative) that details the program’s rationale, intended impact and key features; MISTER narratives are interspersed throughout
Call Me MISTER bulletin board	Physical artifact	N/A	Large physical display in the hallway of Clemson’s Call Me MISTER offices, featuring articles and pictures of MISTERS
Official Clemson Call Me MISTER Website	Online source	N/A	Main online hub of Clemson’s Call Me MISTER program with links to aforementioned videos and listing all other Call Me MISTER institutions

What Is Your Story? Of all the documents collected, the book written by the founder of the program was most insightful into the program’s mission and the research questions posed by this study. Throughout the text, the authors place emphasis on telling stories, allowing the narratives of individual MISTERS to illuminate the program’s mission

rather than rote descriptions of key features. MISTER narratives are interspersed throughout, ranging from a few paragraphs to several pages in length.

This approach is also echoed in the graduate testimonials video, where MISTER graduates spend the bulk of the time speaking about their personal journey and how it brought them to Call Me MISTER. Such an approach jibes with the CRT framework of this study with the emphasis on MISTER personal stories as counternarratives to pre-existing tropes about Black males, particularly within the educational context. Additional videos published by Clemson about the Call Me MISTER program focus on spotlighting the stories of individual MISTERS as well.

Call Me MISTER and challenging racism. Of the documents I collected from the program, only one *directly* referenced racism and its relation to the Call Me MISTER in the broader context. This was expected, given the program's vast audience and various donors who may be more hesitant to support a program with an overt mission towards racial justice and addressing white supremacy. Some of these donors, such as Wells Fargo, have representatives who are included in the dignitary testimonials video touting the potential impact of the program. Nevertheless, the program's subtle messages and framing of its rationale provided tangible connections to explore.

In part one of the book, Jones & Jenkins (2012) paint a picture of devastation in the deep South in the aftermath of slavery and Jim Crow, where institutionalized racism continues to have a deleterious impact on the psyche of Black men:

The stereotypical image of black men comes right out of the days of slavery. The perception that they are shiftless, lazy, unaccountable, and irresponsible is perpetuated as young men internalize that message and come to view themselves

that way. They see themselves as gang members and criminals. Going to jail becomes a badge of honor (Jones & Jenkins, 2012).

This text and the promotional video featuring graduates both use this context as a rationale for focusing on restoring pride, dignity, and defeating popular stereotypes. Part of restoring or re-imagining an image for Black men seems to also involve changes in appearance. Several of the MISTERS in the graduate testimonial are pictured wearing either a shirt/tie combination or a full suit. On the cover of the Jones & Jenkins (2012) text, three MISTERS are also depicted wearing suits along with serious facial expressions while standing together in front of what appears to be a dilapidated schoolhouse. This paints a picture of the mission of Call Me MISTER, implying the transformational work being undertaken by its participants, almost depicted as saviors for communities in terrible shape.

The program is deliberate in its focus on mentorship and role modeling as part of its messaging about this restorative work. The graduate testimonial video features a university president praising one of the MISTER graduates for being a role model to children in South Carolina, with input from other MISTERS about the importance they place on mentoring students not only as role models, but for those students to then become role models themselves.

Of MISTERS and Men. How does masculinity or manhood factor into the messaging for this program? There is a prevalent theme centering on the restoration of manhood, equated with the aforementioned return to pride and dignity. Jones & Jenkins (2012) discuss the decline of the Black community as a whole, focusing on the plight of Black men:

“Children who are as young as twelve seem to be fearless about the prospect of incarceration. With the backing of his peers, the young man who comes to embrace prison life feels on top of his game. He gains in street confidence. So what if he spends two weeks, a month, or 3 months in jail? He will be coming back, with another tattoo, to the applause of his peers (Jones & Jenkins, 2012, p. 87).”

Jones & Jenkins (2012) ensconce the symptoms of oppression within the larger narrative of white supremacy and harmful effects of even seemingly positive legislation such as *Brown v. Board*, as key CRT theorist Bell (1979) also argued decades before.

The program does adhere to some facets of popular patriarchal or hegemonic masculine narratives (Connell, 2005), or at the very least, gender-based stereotyping in its communication of its mission via the documents I collected. For instance, while setting the historical context and rationale for the program, Jones & Jenkins (2012) lament the absence of strong Black men as heads of households and frame the aforementioned return to pride and dignity as connected to this image. This is augmented by references about perceived gender differences in the classroom by one MISTER in the graduate testimonial:

Support by a man is a little bit different. I think, you know, we have a little bit more patience...certain things don't bother us as much (Clemson, 2010)

Brotherhood. Brotherhood is a significant theme from the documents collected from the Call Me MISTER program as well. Repeatedly in the graduate testimonial video, MISTER alums spoke about the importance of brotherhood and having a sense of community among Black males with a shared mission:

It's different because I feel like it's more of a family environment and more so than a program....it was a family. I stayed on campus with the guys. Went to class together,

ate together you know, joked around together. A lot of the personal things that I went through in life they knew about....and so more than seeing it as an education program at Clemson I saw it as my extended family at Clemson (Clemson, 2010).

Brotherhood is also highlighted elsewhere. MISTERS are frequently pictured standing near fellow MISTERS in the documents collected, and Jones & Jenkins (2012) repeatedly refer to the brotherhood motif throughout the description of how Call Me MISTER functions as a program.

Chapter V: Discussion, Implications and The Future

This case study purposed to explore the experiences of pre-service teachers at the Clemson Call Me MISTER program via a critical race theoretical lens. Semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection, buttressed by collection and analysis of documents produced by the program itself.

Findings were guided by the study's three overarching research questions and associated subquestions:

- What motivates MISTERS to teach?
 - Do MISTERS see their role in the classroom as centered around racial uplift?
 - How does their K-12 experience inform their desire to teach, if at all?
- How do MISTERS' individual raced and gendered identities impact their desire to teach and perceptions about the profession?
 - Do/How do their other identities impact them as well?
 - How do MISTERS see others' perceptions of these identities?
- How does participation in the Call Me MISTER program serve as a counterspace from institutional racism?
 - What activities do MISTERS find most beneficial?
 - What does the program itself purport to provide regarding counterspaces?

Discussion of Significant Findings

Finding One. Participants had a desire to provide representation through role modeling and mentoring as a key motivational factor to teach. Findings from this study relate to earlier research from Irvine (1990), who found that Black teachers play an important cultural role in the classroom. Participants had both positive and negative experiences in K-12 education as younger students that influenced their motivations, but at the very least, each seemed to want to become the kind of teacher they wished they had more of in their hometowns – even for Chad, who had no shortage of Black (male) teachers growing up. Findings also relate to that of Villegas & Irvine (2010), who found the “role modeling” angle to lack substantial backing within the literature but nonetheless worth exploration. This is consistent with the Call Me MISTER program’s stated mission and goal, where the word “role models” is a part of the titular acronym.

This is a theme repeatedly frequently within the popular conversation around the need for Black male teachers. Indeed, even in my own conversations with well-meaning educational leaders, the need for Black male role models (primarily for Black boys) is touted as a primary rationale for recruiting more Black men to teach. It makes sense, given the proliferation of evidence, both in the literature and anecdotally, about Black boys’ mistreatment in the K-12 school systems (Ferguson, 2001; Noguera, 2008). However, such framing is reductive and discounts the potential impact upon other students as well.

Participants understood this and deemed the distinction as important. While MISTERS in this case study do see their role as important for racial uplift and acknowledged the impact they wish to make upon Black students in particular, they saw

their role as teachers as analogous to advocacy for *all* of their students. The Clemson Call Me MISTER program itself tailors its messaging this way as well; MISTERS are often shown in publications teaching students of all races and genders, not just focusing on Black boys. This is particularly relevant, considering recent findings by Cherng (2016) suggesting that children of all races actually may prefer minority teachers over white teachers.

Findings indicated that advocacy is part of this role modeling. Several participants offered responses aligned with CRT's emphasis on social justice, mentioning their value of equity over merely equality. While acknowledging the challenges of institutionalized poverty, racism, and other societal ills on the children they may teach, participants took a sense of ownership in their desired approach to the classroom, embracing the opportunity to be an advocate and, as much as possible, right any perceived wrongs suffered by their students outside of the classroom. In this case, it seemed that most participants, at least regarding their approach to teaching, bought into the narrative of Black male teachers as almost superhero-like figures (Gunn & Morris, 2013) at the very least as a strategy to bring out the best in themselves.

Finding Two. Participants actively pushed against stereotyping in the classroom and in their daily life. Participants universally desired to live lives counter to popular stereotypes often applied to Black men, inside and outside of the classroom. This finding is consistent with that of Harper's (2009) CRT counternarratives from Black men in college, divulging that students actively resisted stereotyping on campus via academic performance and extracurricular activities. Within their role as pre-service teachers also, participants shared a collective desire in being living, breathing counternarratives to change perceptions and actively resist stereotypes. Additionally, the jarring dynamic between

participants either feeling assumed to be either inferior or assumed to be superior as teachers solely due to their race/gender hearkens to the concept of bipolar masculinity (Cooper, 2006), albeit within the teaching context.

Participants' collective desire to eschew stereotypes was also consistent with what the Call Me MISTER program promotes about itself, both in its literature and in promotional videos, concerning changing the narrative for Black males in society through raised expectations and establishing a higher standard of excellence.

Given findings by Steele and Aronson (1995) about stereotype threat and its adverse affects on marginalized communities, the fact that participants in the study herein were focused on avoiding them suggests that this Call Me MISTER cohort has been successful in preparing participants for this dynamic, both in their time as students and also once they become K-12 teachers.

CRT's focus on racial realism, that is, accepting racism's inevitability and striving or resisting under that assumption (Bell, 1991), is applicable here. Several participants, in their narratives about stereotypes, mentioned attire, whether in the context of past experiences or MISTER program expectations. While there was nothing to suggest they believed wearing suits or "dressing up" completely insulated them from racist stereotyping, there was nonetheless a prevalent subtheme that attire is important in a world where if you are Black, you must be twice as good or "work twice as hard," as Gil stated. It is important to note that I, at least on some level, subscribe to this in my own professional life. Given a personal assumption that I would not be taken as seriously as my white colleagues in professional settings, I have often opted for dressier attire after seeing a difference in perception compared to when I was dressed more casually.

This assumption is, of course, ultimately a fallacy, given that racism, like sexism, homophobia and other forms of oppression, is insidious and contortions of attire (or speech, mannerisms, etc.) do nothing to challenge it systemically. However, the broader narrative of needing to look, act and *be* better than expected resonates as a strategy to resist racism throughout history as a method to highlight humanity by presenting the most excellent version of oneself, predating the Civil Rights Movement as “politics of respectability (Higginbotham, 1993).” This is a tradition borne of generations of resisting against white supremacy and despite the awareness of the permanence of racism and the comparative futility of such efforts to eradicate it, participants in this study used their attire to avoid the deleterious effects of stereotyping.

Politics of respectability, while seen as effective in some ways as a strategy, is also a subject of controversy regarding its true efficacy as a model for social change. Coined by Higginbotham (1993) as a way to name the tools for survival used by Black women in the Black Baptist church, colloquially the concept has been more broadly applied to conservative sartorial and behavioral choices regarding Black males as well. For instance, Hampton University, an HBCU, was criticized in 2012 for banning cornrowed and dreadlocked hairstyles in its business school (Gaynor, 2012). Morehouse, renowned for its reputation for educating Black males, emphasizes similar notions of respectability in its Code of Conduct, where attire such as sagging pants and durags are banned from campus (Morehouse, 2018).

What does it mean that at least to a degree, this Call Me MISTER program ascribes to such politics as well? Undoubtedly, this dynamic cannot be completely disconnected from the need for key donors, who may look more favorably upon a program featuring Black

males in attire more palatable to white audiences who may automatically stereotype them otherwise. This makes sense, particularly when viewed through the aforementioned CRT lens of interest convergence (Bell, 1992). But it also reflects the impact of the white gaze upon what is deemed “professional.” Would this program and others focused on mentorship of Black men replicate the same expectations and “clean-cut” professional norms if completely removed from the specter of white supremacy?

Finding Three. Participants felt their Black masculinity made them simultaneously hypervisible and invisible in societal/classroom contexts. This dynamic is consistent with my own lived experience as a Black male who has attended PWIs for both undergraduate and graduate degrees. I can recall feeling extra pressure to attend class due to the virtual guarantee that my absence would be noticed by my professor, as also mentioned by one of the participants in this study. This supports findings from Smith, Mustafa, Jones, Curry & Allen (2016) regarding the hypervisibility and hypersurveillance experienced by Black males on predominantly white college campuses. The feeling of not being valued or *seen* (invisible) by some while yet being constantly watched by others is not a dynamic that is unique to these MISTERS or solely Black males on campuses like Clemson. In my own work with Black students – both male and female – I have heard similar perspectives regarding their experiences on a predominantly white campus.

Participants, while acknowledging the feeling of being placed under a “magnifying glass” as a Black male education major at a PWI, also felt this could be used as a spotlight. Similar to Lynn’s findings (2002), these young men felt that this hypervisibility could be used as an advantage in some ways in the classroom to connect with students. In ways

consistent with what the Call Me MISTER program posits in its own literature, participants considered their “special” status as Black male educators as an inroads to greater classroom success.

It is also important to acknowledge the ways in which participants who identified as gay experienced the world in comparison to their peers. In addition to the oppression their MISTER brothers felt due to racism, these individuals felt the additional pressure of their sexual orientation – and others’ perception of their masculinity as a result – negatively affected them in their daily lives. This underscores the importance of work by Strayhorn & Tillman-Kelly (2015), who explored Black gay males’ construction and presentations of masculinity in higher educational contexts. Also, as Brockenborough (2012) noted, it is important to situate these narratives within the broader context of expanding heteropatriarchal scripts for Black male educators. These experiences are complex, nuanced, and deserving of further exploration regarding hegemonic masculinity. For instance, Antwan and Bernard’s stories as openly gay men in this program were divergent in significant ways from their peers who did not have to worry about dealing with homophobia, either on campus or in the classroom as a teacher in the future.

Finding Four. The MISTER brotherhood served to expand participants’ perception of masculine scripts. The insight given by participants regarding their evolving views on masculinity is instructive, both regarding Black men in higher education and in the K-12 education field. One could argue that the participants’ very existence in their chosen career paths represents a revolutionary departure from traditional masculine scripts. In my practitioner role, I recall attending one event for Call Me MISTER where a keynote speaker (Call Me MISTER, 2016) repeated the phrase “This is man’s work” in

relation to teaching; changing masculine ideas regarding this profession is definitely a priority for the program in general.

Participants talked at length about their evolving views of masculinity, where some even had homophobic views before joining Call Me MISTER. These individuals found brotherhood with Black men of different sexual orientations and subsequently re-evaluated their perspectives. This is of particular importance regarding the impact of living-learning communities on Black male students on college campuses. It was fairly obvious throughout the interviews (and reinforced in the documents) that the close proximity of MISTERS – diverse in other contexts outside of shared race and gender - forced them to develop relationships across differences. As related to this study's partial focus on Black masculinity, participants were seemingly set on a path towards redefining their notions of manhood (Neal, 2005) due to the natural process of becoming more acquainted to their brethren who shared living spaces with them.

However, that does not mean the absence of pushback related to hegemonic masculinity in certain contexts (Connell, 2005). For instance, concerning masculinity in the classroom, Chad's input about his motivations being questioned is consistent with findings by Sargent (2000) about male elementary teachers and conflicts between established gender norms and his role as a teacher. As young men, some MISTERS still held on to some aspects of hegemonic masculinity even while evolving on others. For instance, a couple of participants also mentioned traditional masculine tropes (Sargent, 2000) when discussing their classroom approach and expectations, particularly as they may differ from that of (white) female teachers.

This was also echoed somewhat within the Call Me MISTER book at the societal level, particularly in discussions about Black pathological narratives concerning the destruction of home life and lost sense of dignity for Black males in the household. It is important to note that the program does not situate the “Black male problem” within the context of increased Black female empowerment, as other, more toxic narratives have done in the past (Frazier, 1935; Moynihan, 1965).

Finding Five. Participants felt that the brotherhood and mentorship facilitated by Call Me MISTER was critical to their development and support on a predominantly white campus. While there is a paucity of in-depth research about the Call Me MISTER program within the literature, this theme resonates nonetheless with findings from Bristol (2015) about the importance of mentorship for Black male teachers. Participants frequently expressed in various ways how the sense of community created by Call Me MISTER helped insulate and empower them on a campus where several felt *niggered* (Harper, 2009) on seemingly a daily basis. The shared brotherhood provides a layer of protection and support as a confidence builder for them to fortify themselves.

The importance of community for Black males, specifically on a college campus, is also underscored by my own experiences administering Black male-focused programs at a PWI, where I have seen firsthand the positive impact that a strong emphasis on brotherhood can have on students’ collective sense of belonging. From a CRT perspective, this underscores the importance of counterspaces as a means for resistance to racism, both interpersonal or at an institutional level.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The study also has implications for practitioners. Despite the presence of numerous financial barriers for entrée into the teaching profession (Ahmad & Boser, 2014) and the Call Me MISTER program's emphasis on financial assistance to address them, finances were not mentioned as a key motivator for participants as a whole. While it is obvious that financial considerations would not likely be a motivating factor for anyone to enter the teaching profession (Allegreto & Mishel, 2016), it is nonetheless noteworthy that there was very little mention of the financial incentives provided by Call Me MISTER among participants. Administrators of teacher education programs focused on recruiting greater racial and socioeconomic diversity could apply such findings by ensuring pre-service teachers they recruit are truly committed to the *calling* of teaching. This could be achieved via a rigorous selection process. For instance, potential candidates could submit essays detailing their teacher rationale and participate in an interview with key stakeholders to ascertain their motivations and educational goals. This, in addition to a requirement of prior in-classroom experience (to show a steadfast commitment to teaching) could prove useful in identifying individuals who feel *called* to teach, rather than those who may just pursue the profession due to a lack of other options or a desire for solid benefits.

Based on comparing how participants in this study discussed their masculinity and how the program has promoted itself through that lens, a revision of pre-existing narratives about Black masculinity and its relation to racism is necessary. Practitioners for the Call Me MISTER program could also make this narrative more inclusive of Black gay/bi males and their experience as well, hearkening to Bernard's input about his initial apprehension about how he would be received by Call Me MISTER as a gay male. This could

include intentional inclusion of MISTERS who may not fit into the usual framework of hegemonic masculinity, either via sexuality, mannerisms, or appearance. Revision of masculine narratives could also involve more inclusive language in texts such as the Jones & Jenkins (2012) book to allow for less patriarchal notions of family within the context of education.

Also regarding Black masculinity, the study's findings prompt a re-evaluation of the role of Whiteness in education and Black masculine presentation. What does it mean to be Black and masculine if certain aspects of that identity are implicitly encouraged to remain hidden, whether due to racism and established white norms or traditional patriarchal standards about what manhood looks like? Particularly regarding Black male teachers, it is important to explore what it means to be Black, male, and racially and/or politically neutral in the classroom, as two of the participants alluded to in their interviews while discussing their pedagogical approach. Does a Black male teacher's political positionality change how his students may relate to him? Delving deeper into a comparison of Black male teachers who merge their identities and personal politics into the curriculum with those who generally avoid such approaches could have important implications for training within teacher education programs.

This study's findings are also instructive for PWIs wishing to improve the experiences of their Black male students. How MISTERS thrive in spite of experiencing institutionalized racism in various forms, prompts the need to question what can institutions do to eliminate the need for such counterspaces. The insight from participants about their living-learning community and experiences in a mostly-white teacher education program should provoke decision-makers to examine the cultures within their

own departments, school districts, etc. and critically question whether such environments are culturally competent and safe for students of color, whether through focus groups, surveys or other means. If such environments are found to be oppressive (and thus, antithetical to the stated mission and objectives of any university or school district aiming for inclusion), then steps should be taken to correct the environment and systems that allow such oppression to occur. CRT's focus on systems mandates such steps, rather than merely creating affinity groups that may serve to help students survive, but do little to change the racist organizational culture.

This does not mean simply creating symbolic positions such as chief diversity officers who may, despite ranking high organizationally, have little power to create institutional change alone. Rather, changing the culture requires the more in-depth work of examining hiring practices and recruitment for diverse faculty, staff and students in order to shift demographics towards true diversity, rather than one person of color on a brochure full of white faces. Beyond demographics, the work of changing institutions to eschew white supremacy also means intentional allocation of substantial resources to support initiatives such as Call Me MISTER that overtly focus on embracing underrepresented or marginalized populations. Such funding should include scholarships for students, given that socioeconomic inequality may prohibit qualified students from diverse backgrounds from even applying for an institution. Without funding, these initiatives will fail.

Limitations

It is important to briefly note the limitations of this study. First, given the small sample size, the results are not generalizable. This is true, both for Black men in education as a whole and also for the Call Me MISTER program nationwide. Given the variance in

institutional culture and thus, individual program dynamics, it is unlikely that I would be able to say with any certainty that the findings from this study would be completely applicable even across all similar programs.

Additionally, I acknowledge that my role as a Call Me MISTER program administrator and also, as a researcher could have potentially limited the honesty of the participants. As a colleague of their program coordinator, it is possible that they saw me as an authority figure and thus, MISTERS may have been either less open about their experiences or more flattering about the program itself in order not to present Call Me MISTER in a negative fashion.

Conclusion: A New Narrative For Further Exploration

This study explicitly focused on the usage of MISTER stories. In conclusion, what new counternarratives have emerged from the themes discussed here? First, these are stories about Black males who, by virtue of their participation in such a program as Call Me MISTER, are combating the deficit model daily. Instead of asking “where are the Black male teachers?” and “why aren’t more Black men teaching?” etc., more utility could be gained from examining narratives of successful individuals and what support systems enabled their persistence. Black males like the participants in this study are examples of individuals who are defying any perceived odds, stereotypes, and societal challenges to become teachers.

Second, the success of a program such as Call Me MISTER, with its explicit focus on students from marginalized communities, should be added to the already-complex narrative of PWIs such as Clemson and their ties to historical oppression. Given the proliferation of American universities with connections to slavery either directly or

indirectly (Wilder, 2014) and the vestiges of those ties that still remain on their campuses via building names and other means, the narratives of thriving programs focused on racially marginalized students in settings founded upon (or, at the very least, decorated with symbols of) their exclusion should prove insightful for both practitioners and researchers.

It is important to examine opportunities for further research to build upon these new narratives. For one, the experiences of Black female pre-service teachers are worthy of more examination. This is of particular import, given the urgency of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) and the likelihood that Black women experience oppression very differently than the Black men featured in this study. While Black women occupy a larger percentage of the teaching force than Black men, the reality that their numbers are declining as well should generate impactful research about expanding a pipeline for them as well. This is particularly urgent, given recent evidence by Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda (2015) and Morris (2016) spotlighting the racial discrimination faced by Black girls in schools compared to other races.

Given that Antwan and Bernard's experiences as openly gay males differed from that of their counterparts, additional research is recommended to explore how gay/bisexual Black men navigate heteropatriarchal spaces in education. What does it mean for a gay Black male who, as one MISTER suggested, may face apprehension from parents about teaching their children? The profound impact of facing discrimination due to both race and sexual orientation within the educational context is worth exploring in a robust study in order to mitigate the erasure of marginalized voices.

Additionally, I initially intended to add observations as a third means for data collection. Unfortunately, I was not able to observe the participants collectively. However, further research that includes observation of MISTERS in a setting together, such as a weekly meeting or within the living-learning community, should prove insightful in order to gain knowledge about the interpersonal dynamics that drive the cohort. A dutiful researcher could glean information from observational interactions that would be nearly impossible to capture simply via interviews, where one can only learn about peer-to-peer relationships secondhand instead of witnessing them in first person.

Also, further research could focus on other MISTER programs nationwide. A multi-case study examination of the Call Me MISTER program, for instance, could lessen some of the aforementioned study limitations and illuminate key commonalities or differences between programs in different states. This could be particularly insightful given the diversity of institutions that host a Call Me MISTER program on their campus (HBCUs, PWIs, four-year and two-year institutions). Alternately, a comparative case study could focus on Call Me MISTER and other similarly-missioned programs aimed at recruiting and/or retaining teachers of color. The analysis brought forth from such a study could be vital for practitioners looking to implement best practices for Black male teachers, both pre-service and in-service.

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Appendix A

Letter of Invitation To Interviewees

I am currently involved in a research project exploring the narratives of current MISTERS as they train to become teachers. This study uses a critical race lens to examine why MISTERS want to teach and how their race, masculinity, and other aspects of identity may influence these motivations. The study will be performed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for my doctoral program at the University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education.

Your participation in this study will be crucial in providing valuable insight towards better understanding of Black males who decide to pursue teaching careers, despite being severely underrepresented in this profession. You qualify for participation due to being either a sophomore, junior or senior in the Call Me MISTER program. Your participation will consist of the following:

- One-to-two approximately 45-55 minute semi-structured interviews, with the second interview taking place only if needed to sufficiently cover interview questions
- A brief "member check" follow up phone call to ensure proper representation of your responses
- Attending a standard leadership seminar/other activities with other MISTERS, where the researcher will observe and record his observations as a bystander.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you may withdraw from this study at any point without penalty. This study is in no way associated with a class grade or any other incentives that would affect your desire to participate. To ensure the maximum amount of confidentiality, your name will be changed to a pseudonym.

There are no inherent physical risks involved with this project. However, it is possible that you may experience some discomfort when dealing with questions about issues such as race, gender, masculinity, etc. You are free not to answer such questions and to decline from participation at any point.

Thank you for your assistance in this study. Please do not hesitate to contact me at cel@uga.edu if you have further questions about your participation.

Signature

C. Emmanuel Little

478-445-8594 (office)/478-320-4181 (cell)

Appendix B

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

CONSENT FORM

Uncovering the MISTER Magic: Critical Race Counternarratives of Black male pre-service teachers

Researcher's Statement

I am asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

Investigators: *Karen Webber*

C. Emmanuel Little

Institute of Higher Education

Institute of Higher Education

kwebber@uga.edu

cel@uga.edu

706-542-6831

478-320-4181

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the motivations of MISTERS to teach, using a critical race lens to examine how their Blackness, masculinity, and other factors

influence such motivations and perceptions. You were chosen for this study due to your tenure in the Call Me MISTER program at Clemson University . Given that you are MISTER with at least one year in the program, you have had ample time to absorb much of the culture surrounding Call Me MISTER and the institution that you attend. Given that key research questions guiding this study, you are likely to have insight relevant to its purpose.

Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to ...

- Participate in one 45 -55 minute semi-structured interview. Depending on your responses, the interview may take more or less time than estimated. Such an interview will have pre-arranged questions focused on your motivations to teach, your experience in Call Me MISTER, feelings about race, masculinity, and other aspects of your life story thus far, particularly as they connect to your desire to teach. Follow up questions may be asked where appropriate, for instance, to further illuminate items mentioned earlier in the conversation.
- The researcher will also sit in on at least one of the pre-arranged MISTER leadership seminars and/or other program activities (this will require no additional time commitment on the part of the participant, outside of attendance as usual).
- As a debriefing, a member check in the form of a 20-30 minute phone call will follow before the conclusion of the research to ensure that nothing was missed or misinterpreted by the researcher.
- The total estimated length of your participation in this study, from introductory message to completion of member checks, is approximately three months.

Risks and discomforts

There are no known inherent physical risks associated with participation in this study. However, it is possible that you may experience discomfort when speaking on issues of race, gender, or other aspects of your identity. You are free to decline any questions that you do not wish to answer or pause/stop the interview for any reason.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits attached to participation in this study. However, the findings based on your participation could benefit the national conversation around Black males in education, particularly regarding experiences of Black male teachers.

Incentives for participation

Participants will receive no incentives for being included in this study.

Audio/Video Recording

Audio recording devices will be used in order to ensure the researcher catches every detail regarding the interviews and observations. Recordings will be archived after transcription and stored on a password-protected computer.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The names of all participants will be changed and given codes or pseudonyms in order to protect the confidentiality of all human subjects involved. The data (recordings, notes, etc.) will be stored on a password protected computer used by the researcher. Hard copies of field notes and other sensitive data will be stored in a locked cabinet within the researcher's office. This study may be discussed or presented in public forums or

publications, but all names and identifying information will not be revealed. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia responsible for regulatory and research oversight. Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

Taking part is voluntary

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to stop or withdraw from the study, the information/data collected from or about you up to the point of your withdrawal will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed. Your decision about whether or not to participate in the study will have no bearing on your grades, class standing, or participation in the Call Me MISTER program.

If you have questions

The main researcher conducting this study is *C. Emmanuel Little*, a graduate student at the University of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact *C. Emmanuel Little* at [cel@uga.edu] or at 478-445-8594. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Call Me MISTER

1. Why do you want to teach and why did you choose Call Me MISTER in order to become a teacher as opposed to a “traditional” teacher education program?
2. What activities within Call Me MISTER do you feel are most beneficial to your rationale for becoming a teacher?

Race & Education

1. How has your race shaped you as a person? How do you feel race influences how others see you?
2. Have you experienced racism in a school environment? What did that look like? How did it make you feel?
3. How do you see your role as a teacher in addressing racism or racist environments?

Masculinity and Education

1. Did you have any male teachers throughout K-12 schooling? Tell me about them.
2. How do you think your masculinity currently affects your experiences in a teacher education program? What about in your future career?
3. Has participation in Call Me MISTER affected your views on masculinity in any way? If so, how?

Intersections and other identities

1. We’ve talked about how your Blackness and your maleness may affect your experiences separately, but what about together? Tell me about how being Black and male shapes your worldview.

2. Given that the teaching force is overwhelmingly White and female, what are your expectations concerning how you will navigate this space as a Black male?
3. Race and gender are only two parts of a multifaceted identity. Besides these, are there any other identities influencing how you see the world and how the world sees you?
 1. How are these additional identities relevant to your desire to teach?
 2. Are there any of these identities that you see as most important? Why?

General

1. Are there any other insights relevant to this study that you would like to share?
2. Do you have any questions for me, the researcher?