African American Male Initiative

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Executive Summary
For nearly two years, the W. K. Kellogg foundation has funded the Kirwan Institute to expand the knowledge base and academic scholarship on African American males. The major goals we have met in this work include: A) updating the review of social science literature on African American males; B) assembling and learning from a national advisory board of scholars on African American males; C) completing a mapping project on the isolation of African American males from opportunities, a goal not explicitly recorded in our grant proposal; and D) convening a national conference on African American males that will culminate in a published anthology of emergent research and literature on African American males. We organize this report using these four goals as section markers, followed by two sections for our recommendations and references. We conclude with an Appendix evaluating our work for the Kellogg Foundation.

A wide range of statistics reflects the plight of black men in America: their high rates of criminality, incarceration, alcohol and drug use, unwed parenting, and premature death; their low rates of legal employment, high school completion, college attendance, and active participation in the lives of their children. In this report, we bring to light many key research, advocacy and policy initiatives. It is critical, however, to position them within a larger, structural context that acknowledges the cumulative interaction of systemic, institutional and spatial barriers impacting black males. Truly transformative efforts on behalf of black males can only be grounded in a deep recognition of and prescriptive attention to this structural context. Creating a more cohesive “field” of researchers and advocates whose practices engage this context can strengthen efforts to subvert racial hierarchy, construct communities of opportunity, and promote democratic practices for African American males, as well as for all members of society.

A. Literature Review

One of our objectives was to update the literature on African American males. We did this by completing a comprehensive review of the relevant social science literature, including information on policies and programs for black males. As the last such review took place more than a decade ago, we worked to determine gaps in the emerging literature and areas that need greater energy. We also sought to identify structural solutions to the crises that African American males face.
The authors of the original review determined that research on black males was situated in four main areas: education; psychological issues; politics and economics; and demographic and statistical data. Although these issues remain salient more than ten years later, several emergent themes have broadened the research field. These include the identity construction of black males; the community/environment/geography link with black male developmental outcomes; the impact of homelessness; the role of “other fathers” or “social fathers”; and the influence of music on the racial identity and academic achievement of black males.

Our analytic review of the literature has revealed that much of the research and scholarship on black males has been rooted in a “cultural” or “deficit” model in which disparities are attributed to black males themselves rather than to their environments or to institutional arrangements. Of course, there is often a complex interaction between the cultural and personal, on the one hand, and the institutional and environmental, on the other, an interaction the literature has largely ignored. In light of the overuse of the deficit framework, we have too little research that examines how structural factors impact outcomes in the areas of education, employment, and mental/public health for males. Furthermore, much of the research also concentrates on “young black males,” ignoring investigations regarding older males or young adolescent. Finally, the research is sparse on African American males who manage to successfully overcome the structural barriers they face. We bring attention to some of these barriers in our section on mapping the opportunity structures of African American males.

Recent Literature

1. Education

- Studies continue to show that teachers perceive males to be academically inferior, overly aggressive and lacking adequate leadership and social skills.

- Successful teacher interaction with black males involves smaller classes, proactive contact by teachers with their parents, and increased feedback to parents about their children’s progress and status.

- Several structural factors contribute to the disproportionate number of black males being suspended from school, including zero tolerance policies and the criminalization of male behavior.

- Gifted education classes are typically segregated environments in which students are chosen on the basis of standard IQ test scores rather than on the basis of other forms and measures of intelligence. These classes also too often feature teaching biases that favor whites over blacks.
Policy Recommendations

Pre-school Policies

- Efforts should be made to increase the academic involvement of fathers at all levels in their children’s education, especially at the pre-school level. School activities for black fathers should include both formal and informal opportunities so they can develop relationships with school personnel.

- Parents should be engaged in pre-school level activities that offer opportunities to increase their academic skills so they are better prepared to help their children. Studies have shown that low-income black parents tutored in mathematics improve the academic outcomes of their children.

- The components of highly successful programs that improve school outcomes should be examined and replicated. The Perry School Program and the Abecedarian project are examples of successful programs whose components included early-education, family support, home visits, group meetings with parents, and activities focused on social, emotional, cognitive and language areas for children.

Elementary School Policies

- Mandatory cultural competency courses and in-service training for teachers should be put in place that includes information on the learning styles and cultural background of many African American male students. Training should also include assisting teachers in recognizing and understanding their own biases and prejudices about African American males (and other historically marginalized groups).

- Strategic plans should be made to recruit and retain more black male teachers. Currently, black males represent 1% of the teaching force (Lewis, 2006). Recommendations to help with the recruitment and retention of male teachers include assigning male teachers a mentor, targeting black male high school students for recruitment into the teaching profession, increasing collaboration with 2-year institutions since most males attend community colleges, and using teacher preparatory programs to increase black male PRAXIS scores.

- Culturally specific programming that is attentive to learning styles.

- School personnel should keep records on the number of black male students who enroll and persist in gifted classes.

- After-school funding should be provided for programs with an emphasis on academic competency and social activities for black males in non-school hours.
Middle School Policies

- A “safety valve” process should be implemented in schools with predominately African American male students to track the number of males recommended for suspension. When the suspension rates of black males reach a critical level, school personnel should be alerted and strongly consider enacting policies to reduce the number of black males suspended.

- School social workers should take a more active role in questioning referrals from teachers and administrators. All referrals should include previously established, uniform data in order to reduce the overrepresentation of black males in special education (Mills, 2003).

- Comprehensive reevaluation of the use of zero tolerance policies in middle schools should be undertaken.

- Single sex classes should be offered for black males in math and science classes; their progress should be monitored.

High School Policies

- Schools should place equal focus on the academic competency of black male students and on improving their high school graduation rates.

- A dropout prevention program utilizing successful models based on best practices that specifically target African American male students should be established.

- School counselors should be more readily available to students and their families in order to better educate them regarding options for higher education, as well as the college application and financial aid processes. College preparation programs should be offered to prepare students for successful college outcomes. In addition, viable alternatives (such as trade schools) should be presented to males who are not college bound. This information should be provided at the 9th and 10th grade levels, not just during the junior and senior years.

- Black male students should be strongly encouraged to enroll in gifted and AP classes, with efforts made to ensure the presence of a critical mass of black male students in those classes.

College

- College programs and interventions that support males beyond their first year of college should be established. Studies have shown that males disidentify with college as they move through their college years, which may contribute to their high attrition rates.
Measures must be taken to ensure that black males are both academically and socially integrated into college to increase their retention rates.

Supportive measures for African American males enrolled in two-year colleges should also be developed and implemented.

**Future Research Directions**

- Future research and evaluations should disaggregate program data to examine African American male outcomes.
- New studies should examine the influence of male teachers, both black and non-black, on black male student outcomes.
- White and other non-black teachers who have had success in teaching black male students should be identified, and their methods and approaches should be studied and highlighted.

**2. Identity**

- Examining multiple aspects of educational institutions is essential to understanding how black boys define who they are and how they internalize the perceptions of school personnel and classmates.

- The literature analyzing the effects of the “burden of acting white” on black students has yielded conflicting findings. Further exploration is required to determine if this dynamic is significant to black male identity.

- African American gay and bisexual men who identified more positively with both the African American and gay communities reported higher levels of self-esteem.

**Policy Recommendations**

- Racial identity models for black males should examine their combined experience of being both black and male. Current models focus on either race or gender.

- Programmatic support for black males should continue throughout their college years to buttress their self-concept and self-esteem.
**Future Research Directions**

- More work on the implications for black males of “acting white” is needed to resolve conflicting and inconclusive findings in the existing literature.

- Future research should consider how African American males develop their concept of self as both racial and gendered individuals, and examine the impact of this within a social-political context.

- Research should investigate the normative development of black males and their identity when compared to the development of other adolescents.

- Studies should be done on the environments in which black males are living and learning, and the historical, political, and social implications of these environments on black males.

**3. Marriages and Family**

- The “dysfunction” of single-female-headed households is central to past and current research on the antisocial development of black males. However, some studies show that black males residing in single-female-headed households do not have worse developmental outcomes than do those in other family structures. This inconsistency warrants further review.

- Constellation studies are examining extended family structures, including non-resident fathers, “other fathers,” and “social fathers.”

**Policy Recommendations**

- Child support enforcement policies should be flexible and offer employment and support services for fathers (Mincy & Sorenson, 1998).

- Parenthood for men may be problematic because of their own poor or absent relations with their fathers. Programs are needed to assist men in building linkages and resolving issues with their own fathers (Roy, 2006).

- Fatherhood initiatives often focus on either the needs of fathers or their children. Programs should attempt, in a meaningful way, to incorporate the needs of both fathers and their children and recognize the contributions of fathers beyond economic support (V. Gadsden, personal communication, Winter 2007).

- The stigma of single-parent families should be unraveled and the work-family link revalued by assuring economic security for all family forms.
**Future Research Directions**

- New investigations should address how black male fathers contribute to their children’s development, particularly in the home. In addition, future investigations should address the outcomes of black male children residing with single and divorced fathers.

- A new wave of historical scholarship should continue to challenge the dysfunction thesis of the single-mother-household and its impact on black males and the black family.

**4. Mental Health**

- African American adolescents are at a greater risk of experiencing behavioral and emotional problems such as depression than members of any other ethnic group because they disproportionately reside in dangerous, segregated, and opportunity-poor communities.

- Suicide has become a significant public health issue for African Americans.

- Many barriers prevent African American males from utilizing mental health services effectively.

- Black male involvement in out-of-school time activities may be protective for their mental health.

**Policy Recommendations**

- Mental health research should consider the influence of environmental stressors, and peer and family support, on the mental health of black males.

- Researchers should focus on the reasons for the increase in suicidal behavior.

**Future Research Directions**

- Future research should examine the risk and protective factors associated with depressive symptoms among African American males. This would be beneficial in developing prevention and intervention strategies for those at-risk for developing these symptoms.

- Future research should determine the roles of peers and family members in supporting males during mental health crises, since black males are less likely to depend on mental health workers for support.
5. Economics

- Skill shifts in the market have expanded opportunities for higher educated black males who are also less affected by immigration.

- Lack of employment for black males is often due to a spatial mismatch between where they live and where appropriate jobs are available, as well as to deindustrialization and employment discrimination.

- The lack of work and connection to socializing institutions have been shown to be just as important as poverty and lack of well paying jobs to the “social disorganization” many black males endure.

- African Americans who migrate to the South for jobs enjoy better economic outcomes than do those who remain outside the South or those who migrate westward.

Policy Recommendations

- The Earned Income Tax Credit should be expanded for low-income men and for noncustodial fathers who are current in their child support payments (Holzer, 2004).

- Classroom instruction should be linked to the job skills needed in the current labor market, i.e., Career Academies (Holzer, 2005).

- Access to effective programs such as the Job Corps and Youth Services Corps should be increased for males who drop out of high school (Holzer, 2005).

- Employment discrimination enforcement agencies should establish programs to monitor the practices of wage and employment discrimination and conduct random job audits at the national, state, and local levels (Coleman, 2003).

- Metropolitan areas should have full employment policies and initiatives such as empowerment zones to alter the distribution of jobs in these areas (Stoll, 1997).

- Develop institutional and social connectors for African American males.

Future Research Directions

- Research is needed to examine further the impact of male migration to the South and foreign immigration to the U.S. on black male employment.
6. Incarceration and Juvenile Justice

- Statistical findings still show alarmingly disproportionate rates of black male imprisonment which is related to discriminatory perceptions, expansion of punitive policies, low levels of education attainment and unemployment, and under-employment.

- Young black males receive more severe sentencing for most crimes than do members of other race-gender-age groups. Black youths are 48 times more likely to be incarcerated for drug offenses than whites - for identical drug crimes. In some states, more than 90% of convicted drug offenders are people of color.

- Studies consistently indicate that people of all races use and sell drugs at remarkably similar rates. If there are significant differences in the surveys to be found, they tend to suggest that whites, particularly white youths, are more likely to engage in illegal drug dealing than people of color. Any notion that drug use among blacks is more severe or dangerous is belied by the data.

- Drug arrests climbed from 450,000 in 1975 to nearly 2 million in 2005, despite the fact that illegal drug use for most of that period was declining. African Americans make up only 13% of regular drug users in the United States, but are 63% of all drug offenders admitted to prison.

- More than 40% of young African American men believe they, personally, have been stopped by the police on the basis of race, and many others believe their family members have been.

- For those charged with first time drug offenses, black youths are 48 times more likely than whites to be sentenced to juvenile prison. Latinos are 13 times more likely than whites to land in juvenile prison for a first time drug offense.

- Racial disadvantage accumulates as offenders advance through the system. Blacks account for 26% of all juvenile arrests nationally, but they account for 44% of juveniles who are detained, 46% of those who go to adult court, and 58% of those who end up in adult prison. The rates for whites are reversed. Whites comprise 71% of all juvenile arrests, but 53% of those detained, 50% of those going to adult court and 25% of those in adult prison.

**Policy Recommendations**

- “In order to fully account for the impact of the penal system on labor market inequality, research should include the effects of noncustodial supervision and the employment experience of convicts after release (Western & Pettit, 2000, pg.11).”

- Mandatory sentencing laws should be repealed (Mauer, 1999).
“Efforts to reduce crime should not just target the offender’s criminal behavior, but should also include targeting the offender’s family and community. These efforts should also include improving the offender’s self-concept and self-esteem (Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004, pg.95).”

Funding for community-based interventions should be increased (Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004).

Policies should rely on research rather than rhetoric. Lawmakers must weigh the potential intended and unintended consequences of proposed changes in crime and drug control policy.

An approach to criminal justice that balances the needs of society, victims, and inmates should be adopted.

Truth-in-Sentencing and Three Strikes laws that have proven ineffective in the fight against crime and drugs should be repealed.

The 100-to-1 powder cocaine/crack cocaine ratio and other drug sentencing laws that have incarcerated nonviolent offenders while failing to capture “drug kingpins” should be reexamined and challenged.

Nonviolent, non-dangerous drug addicts and offenders in the prison system should be diverted and provided improved treatment and support services.

Nonviolent and non-dangerous juveniles should be diverted from confinement and their job and training opportunities should be increased.

Future Research Directions

- Strategies to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline should be research-based.
- The ways that black men have been constructed as targets of pubic policy should be examined.
- Rehabilitation options in community-based programs for youth offenders should be explored and enhanced.
- Research should be conducted on how to best prepare former prisoners for licit employment.
- An audit should be conducted of private correctional institutions to determine the physical conditions of the inmate population and the effectiveness of inmate rehabilitation programs in these institutions.
- The impact of drug courts should be studied.
7. **Homelessness**

- Homelessness is a gendered phenomenon, with an estimated 80–90% of the indigent population being male. It has damaging effects on health and well-being.

- The rise in homelessness is due to a number of structural economic and geographical shifts, including deindustrialization without adequate support and resources in the community.

8. **Music**

- The influence of music on the attitudes and behaviors of black males has emerged as a significant research theme, with emphasis on the effects of exposure to rap music and videos as well as the possibilities of using music as a culturally relevant tool inside and outside of the classroom.

**Future Research Directions**

- Future research on the impact of music should not be limited to the negative effects that rap music has on black male behavior. There should also be an examination of the possibilities of using music as a culturally relevant tool inside and outside the classroom.

**B. Advisory Board Interviews**

To meet our second goal, we assembled a national advisory board to assist the project team with guiding the social science literature review. The Board includes representation from various social science disciplines whose research interests and project agendas focus on black males. The members worked to identify new directions in research, initiatives, and policies that would improve African American male outcomes. Because scheduling an actual meeting proved difficult, we conducted numerous face-to-face and telephone interviews that provided insights into: 1) gaps in the research literature; 2) initiatives and polices that are particularly helpful to African American males, and 3) successful outcomes as they conceive of them. We summarize the Board’s conclusions regarding major gaps in the research literature below.

**Gaps in Research Literature**

- The myopic lens of pathology should be replaced with research on structural barriers.

- The racial dynamics of policy development should be examined.

- More empirical work should be done, including work that does not rely on census data.
A need exists to disaggregate the research findings by gender or race and to look at the combined impact of race and gender on black males.

Much more attention must be paid to the resiliency of those black males who manage to succeed in the face of significant structural and institutional obstacles to success.

C. African American Male Mapping Project

Drawing upon the Kirwan Institute’s expertise, we completed a mapping project designed to show black males’ spatial proximity to a range of important social opportunities, and to place the constraints that many males face in a geographical perspective to create more targeted and transformative responses. We examined the state of opportunity for black males in seven large, diverse metropolitan regions: New York, NY; Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI; Houston, TX; Atlanta, GA; Los Angeles, CA; and Washington D.C. The maps and observational report have been included in this report.

In each region examined, most African American males are spatially isolated within opportunity-deprived and distressed neighborhoods that are devoid of the resources most Americans take for granted.

The richness of these data provides a compelling new dimension for studying the relationship between African American males and opportunity in geographic, social, and economic terms, in both high and low opportunity areas. By understanding the mix of structural components in “very high opportunity” areas for black males (e.g., housing stability, childcare, criminal activity), critical solutions or policies may be implemented. Likewise, an understanding of how black males in “very low opportunity” areas persist and become successful can inform policies and solutions designed to assist in their development.

There is a growing body of literature and research on the importance of marginalized populations having physical and social access to a rich network of opportunities. It is not surprising then to find that access to opportunity matters for black males and that they are often concentrated in low opportunity communities. What may be surprising is that there is often great opportunity with better outcomes for black males in the southern part of the United States. This suggests the need for more targeted studies related to opportunity and black males as well as policies to more deliberately link black males to rich opportunity structures.

Future Mapping Research Directions

Future research should examine factors that contribute to African American male success across the opportunity spectrum rather than focusing only on males in very low-opportunity areas. Opportunity mapping may be the first step in conceptualizing future steps that contribute to the healthy development of black males. We argue that expanding and maintaining connections to the resources of opportunity is a key strategy for systematically improving the lives of African American males.
D. National Conference and Anthology

Based on the findings of the literature review and the conversations with the advisory board members, the Institute hosted a conference, entitled “African American Males: Beyond the School to Prison Pipeline and Moving toward Opportunity,” that examined the school-to-prison pipeline from a range of disciplinary perspectives. This was a highly successful conference attended by nearly four hundred people. Panels from the conference included: 1) African American Males and the Educational System; 2) The Impact of Health and the Economy on African American Males; 3) African American Males and Incarceration; and 4) The Dynamics of African American Male Opportunity.

We are assembling papers from the conference into an anthology for future publication. Topics include: schools and prisons, structural racism and street socialization, the educational risks of delinquent peer associations, and mental health issues.

E. Recommendations

Specific policy recommendations resulting from our literature review are in section E of this report. The recommendations in this section encompass strategies to support best practices and next steps for African American male scholarship and advocacy. Efforts to advance racial and ethnic justice, in general, and the welfare of African American males, in particular, have been too fragmentary, disjointed and sometimes counter-productive. We suggest organizing these strategies around the creation of a vibrant national African American Male Network that would facilitate more purposeful knowledge production, consensus building, and strategic collaboration within the universe of individuals and organizations already engaged in this work. Although the focus of this report is on the literature review and identifying gaps in the literature, we recognize that there is also a need to act—carefully and deliberately, based on what we know. Where things are still unclear, we suggest trying to gain greater clarity, not just in research, but also in well designed monitored pilots. For example, we suggest more closely linking black males to opportunity communities with social support.

To realize these vital objectives and create such a Network, we see a critical need for at least six components:

- Models of and support for collaboration within the African American Male field;
- a research advocacy database;
- support for racial justice research and advocacy centers;
- identification and support for transformative structural approaches vs. deficit models;
- program evaluation of promising African American male initiatives; and
development, support, and evaluation of a small number of comprehensive pilot projects in different parts of the country.

**F. References**

This section provides an exhaustive list of the journal articles, books and other sources utilized in this report.
African American Male Social Science Literature Review
A. African American Male Social Science Literature Review

(1994–2007)

Context

In August 1983, publisher John Johnson introduced *Ebony* magazine’s special issue on The Crisis of the Black Male as “an editorial response to underground rumblings we detected in hundreds of letters from our readers [who] said, almost without exception, that something strange and ominous is happening to Black males in this country and that someone should sound the alarm before it is too late” (Johnson, 1983). By the end of the 1980s, the “black male crisis” had become widely regarded as a self-evident feature of American life. A welter of symposia, conferences, journal and magazine articles, special reports, and scholarly and popular books have tracked the life chances of black males in general, and of young black urban males in particular. Virtually all of these accounts include statistics reflecting the plight of black men in America: their high rates of criminality, incarceration, alcohol and drug use, unwed parenting, and premature death; their low rates of legal employment, high school completion, college attendance, and active participation in the lives of their children.

Across these and other dimensions, the life chances of black American males have improved little overall in the last quarter century. In some cases, they have deteriorated further in spite of the fact that attention to the crisis has encompassed actions as well as words. For example, between 1989 and 1999 alone, the U.S. Congress held at least 10 hearings that expressly featured black men. Over the same period, Ohio, California, Indiana, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin established commissions or task forces to examine the challenges facing black males. In the late 1980s, the private sector also took up the cry. Among the most significant initiatives was the Kellogg Foundation’s establishment of the National Task Force on African-American Males in 1992. The Task Force, chaired by former Atlanta mayor and UN ambassador Andrew Young, issued its report, *Repairing the Breach: Key Ways to Support Family Life, Reclaim Our Streets, and Rebuild Civil Society in America’s Communities*, in 1996 (National Task Force, 1996). Numerous other entities, both public and private, have generated more narrowly targeted reports.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, African American individuals and groups have been at the forefront of the effort to “sound the alarm” regarding black male welfare. In 1988, The Center for the African-American Male at Albany State University, formerly the Center for the Study of the Black Male became the first institute devoted to the production and dissemination of research on black males (Majors, 1994). A similar center, the Morehouse Research Institute, was founded in 1990. The Institute, funded by major grants from the Ford and Rockefeller foundations, aims above all to “address the dearth of scholarship on issues impacting African-American men.”¹ To this end, the Institute publishes *Challenge: a Journal of Research on African American Men*. The year 1990 also saw the birth of the first national umbrella organization for black males, the National Council of African American Men, which publishes the *Journal of African American Male Studies*. Other prominent black-led groups that advocated for or provided services mainly

¹ See the Institute’s web site at http://www.morehouse.edu/academics/cenins/mri/index.html.
or exclusively for black males included The National Trust for the Development of African American Men, African-American Male Achievers Network, Boys-into-Men, the African American Male Institute, Men Against Destruction: Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder (MAD DADS), and Concerned Black Men.

All of this begs the crucial question: why have these efforts had so little apparent success at improving the conditions of black American males as a whole? Certainly, part of the answer is structural, having to do with macroeconomic developments and policy decisions that have exacerbated the decades-long trend toward rising income and wealth inequalities in this country. And, of course, to say that the African American male crisis has generated significant attention is not to say that it has generated attention sufficient to the magnitude and complexity of the challenge, or that those efforts have been well directed. So although mentoring programs and other direct service efforts doubtless have a part to play in ushering black boys into healthy and productive adulthood, they aim to prepare black males to function more effectively within preexisting opportunity structures; they do not aim at the transformation of those structures. It is this transformative lens through which we look as we consider our literature review.

Goal of the Literature Review

The first comprehensive research review of the social science literature on the life experiences of African American males, entitled Social Science Literature Concerning African American Men, was conducted by E.T. Gordon, E.W. Gordon, and J.G. Nembhard in 1994. Gordon et al. found that research on the issues impacting the well-being of black males did not emerge until the latter half of the 20th century. From 1950–1970, research on males framed their experiences through a “deficit” perspective. The deficit perspective argued that the economic and social problems of black males developed from their depraved genetic and cultural backgrounds. It also attributed black males’ supposed lack of responsibility for themselves and their families to the legacy of slavery. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, Gordon et al. found that research on this group shifted notably. Using the lens of institutional racism and discrimination, researchers considered how drugs, crime, violence, inferior schooling, economic instability, and substandard housing impacted the behavior and attitudes of males. Gordon et al.’s literature review categorized the issues facing males into four major categories: 1) demographic and statistical issues; 2) psychosocial issues; 3) political/economic issues; and 4) educational issues.2

Surveying the literature written from 1994–2007, the period after Gordon et al.’s initial review, this project updates the social science findings on African American males. The purpose of the review is to identify gaps in the literature, identify areas of investigation that show promise for increasing understanding of black males, and highlight research that explores the dynamics accounting for success in their lives.

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2 Demographic and Statistical Issues: “Research studies in this category highlight the light of the African American male in terms of statistical findings that have led many to suggest that Black men are an ‘endangered species.’” Psychosocial Issues: “The emphasis of studies focusing on the psychosocial issues affecting African American males is on how these males behave and react to conditions in US society, particularly inequality, discrimination, and poverty.” Political/Economic Issues: “The emphasis in these studies is on economic conditions, the disproportionate suffering of African American males from economic downturns, and structural inequalities in the US economy.” Educational Issues: Studies in this category document and analyze “the continuing problems experienced by African American males in achieving academic success” (Gordon et al 1994).
Our analysis revealed that the landscape of research has not changed dramatically since 1994. The four major categories of issues remain salient more than ten years later. However, several emergent themes have broadened the research field. The first emergent theme from the past ten years investigates the identity construction of black males as both racial and gendered selves. These studies focused on the negative perceptions of black males by school personnel and other students. The negative perceptions are often internalized by black males leading to problematic behavioral outcomes. Homelessness is another new research category in the literature. Although limited in scope, the literature illuminates the strong association between homelessness, job loss, and mental and public health factors. A third emergent theme considers the influence of music on the racial identity and academic achievement of black males. Recent research has found that black male college students who listen to rap music that contains socially conscious lyrics had healthier male self concepts and racial identities than black males who listened to rap music that contained violent lyrics (Jamison, 2006).

There is also a growing body of research labeled “community/environment/geography,” which links developmental outcomes for black males to neighborhood and community factors. Crowder, Tolnay, and Aldeman (2001), for example, have demonstrated that black males from low opportunity areas in northern cities who migrated south increased their economic and job opportunities and had better social networks in their new communities of residence. Lastly, the previous review revealed that research on single-female-headed households showed that black males who resided in mother-only households have poor social and academic outcomes. This finding still holds true in more recent research studies. A growing body of research known as “constellation studies” recognizes that single-female-headed households may include extended family members and non-resident fathers. Therefore, research may begin to compare outcomes for males in mother-only households and mothers raising males with non-resident fathers, thus beginning to account for the diverse family structures of households with black male children (Zimmerman, Salem, & Maton, 1999).

Research on the family structures that black males reside in has also begun to examine the role of “other fathers” or “social fathers” – male relatives or family associates who act as role models – on black male development. The long-neglected influences of divorced fathers and single-parent father households have also begun to garner critical attention in the literature.

Our analytic review of the literature has revealed that much of the research and scholarship on black males has been rooted in a “cultural” or “deficit” model. In other words, the lens used to explain black male disparities in education and employment outcomes or their overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system was largely rooted in a framework that construed black males as the source of their own problems, giving little consideration to contextual or structural factors. Because of the overuse of the deficit-framework, less research is available that explains how structural factors impact outcomes in the areas of education, employment, and mental/public health for males. Because of this framework, we are under-informed about how some black males manage to avoid the pitfalls and hardships that beset other black males, despite structural constraints (Noguera, 2003). Furthermore, much of the research also concentrates on “young black males,” ignoring inquiries regarding older males or the early adolescent growth period for males. This gap in the literature is especially critical in the preadolescent years for male
development because the dearth of such research limits the development of interventions that may promote key substantive and transformative changes for this population. In addition, without studies on older males, the research loses the critical voices and experiences of mature males.

**Methods**

We conducted an exhaustive review of social science databases to locate scholarship on African American males written from 1994 through 2007. We limited the range of materials through the following qualifiers: 1) studies must include specific analysis of black males (studies using the generic category “minority” males were not cited); 2) scholarship must be published as a journal article; and 3) studies with small sample sizes (studies with two or fewer individuals) were largely excluded. (One exception to this rule regards studies on “gifted” children, some of which examine only one or two children; these were included in our review.) From the database searches, the project team culled pertinent abstracts. From the abstracts, we developed a list of primary categories and subcategories, cataloging each article according to this template.

This review is organized by the major themes found in the research on black males, which included: education, identity, marriage and family, mental health, economics, education, incarceration and juvenile justice, homelessness, and the impact of music. Our presentation of these findings include: 1) an introduction to the past research findings in each major area by Gordon et al. (1994); 2) an overview of the current research; 3) policy recommendations; 4) future research directions; and 5) where possible, a list of programs that may target interventions for black males.

**1. Education**

**Introduction to Education Literature**

The E.T. Gordon, E.W. Gordon, and J.G. Nembhard review identified several primary themes in the educational research literature on black males. These included: 1) racially disparate outcomes in educational achievement; 2) discriminatory practices of school personnel towards males; 3) the effects of teacher-student cultural differences on performance outcomes; 4) increased dropout rates and diminished higher education attendance; 5) the role and structure of the nuclear family on achievement; and 6) the impact of school disciplinary practices on the disproportionate suspension rates of black males (Gordon et al., 1994).

**a. Teacher Perception**

Ten years later, many of the themes identified in the Gordon et al. (1994) literature review remain relevant to scholarship on African American males. Research on the effects of teacher perception on black male educational outcomes consistently shows that teachers perceive males to be academically inferior, lacking adequate leadership and social skills, and often find them to be overly aggressive in the classroom. Much of the research on teacher perception has compared the opinions of black and white female teachers on the social and classroom skills of black and
white school children (Davis, 2003, 2006; Fuentes, 2003; Monroe, 2005; Neal, McCray, Webb-Johnson, & Bridgest, 2003; Rong, 1996). However, Rong (1996) studied the effects of teachers’ race and gender on their perceptions of the abilities of black and white elementary school children and found that teachers tended to rate students more highly if they shared the same racial or gender identity. White female teachers rated white female students the highest on social and academic outcomes and, similarly, black female teachers rated black female students the highest. The combined effects of race and gender on student ratings were stronger among white female teachers than black female teachers.

White male teachers tended to rate white male and female students more similarly than their white female teacher counterparts. White and black male teachers’ perceptions of black students were not included in this study because of the study’s randomized design and there were too few black male teachers for their results to be included. In short, Rong’s (1996) study showed that for female teachers, students of the same race and gender were rated higher than students who did not share this similarity. This study suggests the need for future research to examine the perceptions of male teachers, both black and white, on black male educational outcomes.

Studies have shown that successful teacher interaction with black males has involved proactive contact by teachers with their parents, increased feedback to males from teachers on their school performance, and instruction that occurs in smaller classes (Davis, 2003; Mckay, Atkins, Hawkins, Brown & Lynn, 2003).

b. Cultural Mismatch

The negative perception of black male students is foundational to another important theme in the Gordon et al. (1994) review: the cultural mismatch of black males and school teachers (Monroe, 2005; Rong, 1996). Teachers often view the displayed behavior of African American males as disruptive and deficient when compared to their peers. For example, “play fighting” was frequently read for males as aggressive behavior (Monroe, 2005). Because many teachers have little pre-service or in-service training in the cultural ethos or the social world of many black students, this may produce a cultural mismatch in the classroom (Weinstein, Curran in Monroe, 2005 pg. 79). Boykin (1984) illuminates several interconnected dimensions of black cultural ethos that may be emphasized by black students in the classroom, i.e., movement, verve, communalism, and expressive individualism. In addition, cultural mismatch in the classroom has been linked to the disproportionate placement of black males in special education and being suspended. Teachers who have little interaction with black male students not only sometimes view black males as overly aggressive but also lack the ability to control the classroom environments that contain males. This often leads teachers to remove black male students from their classrooms (Monroe, 2005).

c. Suspension

A number of studies examining school discipline observed the higher suspension rates of African American males (Raffaele-Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002; Raffaele-Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Monroe, 2005, 2006). In a 2002 study of a Florida school district, Raffaele-Mendez et al., found that black males in elementary and secondary schools received higher rates of suspension than
any other population. As students progressed into middle school, suspension rates increased. Raffaele-Mendez and Knoff’s (2003) research posited that the disciplinary perspective exercised by an educational institution affected suspension rates. Schools focusing on prevention, rather than punishment, for example, had notably lower suspension rates. Schools focusing on prevention demonstrated three characteristics: 1) the use of strategies like social skills training for students and behavior management training for teachers; 2) various opportunities for parental involvement, including the development of school plans for discipline; and 3) a perspective arguing that “responding to student’s needs and treating them with respect is effective in removing problematic behavior (p.274).”

Many studies reveal that several structural factors contribute to the disproportionate number of black males being suspended: zero tolerance policies, criminalization of males in the school system, and multiple suspensions of individual males that do not work and instead exaggerate the rates of suspensions for males (Fuentes, 2003; Monroe, 2006; Raffaele-Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Rios, 2007; Saunter, 2001). The increased school suspensions of black males have also been linked to their overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system (Fuentes, 2003; Monroe, 2006; Rios, 2007; Saunter, 2001). The impact of school suspensions on black males entering the juvenile justice system and often later being incarcerated has far-reaching and deleterious effects. As Mark Soler, Executive Director of the Center for Children’s Law and Policy notes, “the pathway from school to prison for African American Males not only contributes to their high incarceration rates but also to their inability to support themselves outside of the underground economy and to be[ing] good fathers and husbands (Fuentes, 2003, pg. 20.)”

d. Special Education

Cultural mismatch influences the classification of special education for black males. In one study, Herrera (1998) found that race predicted special education enrollment rates. Surveying ten cities, the author found that schools with the highest proportion of white teachers also had the largest number of African American male students enrolled in special education, while those cities with higher proportions of black teachers had lower rates of black male placement in special education (Atlanta, Washington, D.C.). Moreover, those cities with the very lowest proportion of black teachers, such as New York, Milwaukee, and San Diego, had uncharacteristically high rates of black male special education enrollment, with one out of every six African American males placed in special education. In a 2003 study, Sherwin and Schmidt suggested that the over-identification of special needs resulted from teachers’ and administrators’ misinterpretation of cultural “communication codes.” Researching two California communities, Santa Fe and Havenheast, the authors found that African American males consistently greeted one another with a “mock battle greeting.” While African American males engaged in “mock battle” behavior in both communities, verbally aggressive behavior was not observed generally among other male groups in the Santa Fe community. Because of cultural differences in communication styles in the Santa Fe community, administrators, and staff members observing different codes were more apt to punish this perceived aggressive behavior practiced by African American male youth.
e. Gifted Education

One area not addressed in the Gordon et al. (1994) review was black males in gifted education. In a 1995 study, Ford revealed that gifted education is a segregated environment, with very few black males in advanced classes. Identifying causes for the absence, she asserts that a key factor is the typical identification of “giftedness” with exclusive reference to IQ scores. Students who display intelligence in other areas are often overlooked, and as result, become underachievers or consistently perform poorly on standardized tests, which may be biased against them in the first place. Ford also suggests that differences in cultural learning styles affect minority students’ underrepresentation in gifted education. She summarized that African American students were more concrete learners than abstract ones, and that most teachers are not able to identify the skills of minority students. This difference was exacerbated by the lack of training offered to teachers in the area of gifted education: 61% of teachers had received no training at all.

Because of the structural and cultural factors that contribute to the low number of black males in gifted education, several suggestions were made in the literature to improve outcomes for males in gifted classes. The suggestions included recordkeeping of school personnel on how many students are enrolled in classes and persist in classes, culturally responsive classrooms that support the learning styles and cultural ethos of black male students, and mentors to help develop the talents of students (Grantham, 2004; Moore, Ford, & Milner, 2005; Whiting, 2006.)

f. Higher Education

Gordon et al.’s (1994) literature review revealed a growing knowledge base examining the falling enrollments and graduation rates of African American males in higher education. Among the factors contributing to this trend, they identified problems with standardized tests, resistance to seeking support, and insufficient teacher-student interaction. While our research illumined the same impediments, we also located important scholarship focusing primarily on the successful performance of African American college males.

A central theme in the research on African American male college success was the necessity of sustained institutional support. In a 2003 study, Bonner found that institutional support was a key factor for the retention and success of African American males, and that predominantly white institutions (PWIs) provided less institutional support than historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). A 2000 study by Brown concluded that African American men heavily favored instrumental support in the university, a form of academic attention that provides “individuals with advice or guidance concerning possible solutions to problems.” According to Brown, HBCUs were more adept at providing instrumental support than PWIs. Similarly, Bonner (2003) noted that African American males had more contact with faculty at HBCUs than at PWIs, and felt that their needs were better met at HBCUs. Finally, Fleming (2002) found that the predictive validity of the SAT was better for black freshman males in HBCUs than for black freshmen in PWIs where black males underperform based on the prediction of the SAT.

g. Successful African American Male College Students
Harper’s (2006) research argued that along with institutional support, peer support is an important factor in African American success in higher education. Examining 32 high-achieving African American males from Research I universities in the Midwest—defined as those students having greater than 3.0 cumulative GPAs, who were involved in leadership in campus organizations, and were recipients of numerous honors and awards—Harper found that the peer support these males received counteracted the “acting white” hypothesis presented by Fordham and Ogbu (1986). Peer support, as Astin (1993) argues, may be a very important element of the successful college experience for African American males (Harper, 2006).

While Harper’s study demonstrated that African American male success was buttressed by peer support, a 2003 study by Moore, Madison-Colmore, and Smith suggested that these students thrived on a “prove-them-wrong-syndrome.” In a sample of 24 African American male college students in the engineering field, the authors determined that the students were able to persist in rigorous academic programs by developing a coping mechanism of “positive vigor.” Rather than ignoring hardships, the difficulties strengthened their resolve, inspiring their success. As one male college student stated, “I pretty much know when I come into a class that I’m either getting an A, A-, B+, or B-. Regardless of what you think of me, I am going to get one of these grades (Moore et al., 2003, pg.68).”

Another study found that spirituality was important to the success of black males. Herndon (2003) conducted a qualitative study using 13 African American college males at predominantly white institutions to assess spirituality. Through interviews, he ascertained that spiritually focused African American males are more likely to succeed in college because spirituality bolsters resilience and provides a sense of purpose and support from their religious community.

h. Two-Year Institutions

The majority of African American males attend two-year institutions (52%) and not four-year institutions (Horn et al., 2002 in Flowers, 2006). While most research on African American males in higher education focused on the conditions provided by PWIs or HBCUs, Flowers’ (2006) research examined the underexplored domain of public two-year institutions. In his sample of 467 African American males seeking postsecondary education, Flowers (2006) found that black males at four-year colleges were more likely to participate in study groups, converse more with faculty members outside of class, and reported feeling more academically and socially integrated at higher education institutions than their black male community college counterparts. Given the increasing presence of black males at two-year institutions, Flowers (2006) recommends that administrators and college counselors develop appropriate methods to ensure that African American males are being engaged academically and socially at two-year institutions.

Policy Recommendations

Pre-school

- Efforts should be made to increase the involvement of fathers in the pre-school activities of their children, at the local level. School activities for fathers should be both formal
and informal opportunities and should be structured to develop relationships between black males and school personnel.

- Parents should be engaged in pre-school level activities that offer opportunities to increase their academic skills so they are better prepared to help their children. Studies have shown that low-income black parents tutored in mathematics have improved the academic outcomes of their children.

- The components of highly successful programs should be examined and replicated. For example, the Perry School Program and the Abecedarian project included early-education, evaluation design, family support, home visits, group meetings with parents and activities focused on social, emotional, cognitive and language areas for children.

- Develop alternative ways to select students for placement in AP courses to increase the number of black males.

- Develop greater institutional support for black males in PWIs.

**Elementary School Policies**

- Mandatory cultural competency courses and in-service training for teachers should be put in place that would include information on the learning styles and cultural background of many African American male students. Training should also include assisting teachers in recognizing and understanding their own biases and prejudices against African American males (and other historically marginalized groups).

- Strategic plans should be made to recruit and retain more black male teachers. Currently, black males represent 1% of the teaching force (Lewis, 2006). Some suggestions offered to help with recruiting and retaining male teachers include assigning male teachers a mentor, targeting black male high school students for recruitment into the teaching profession, increasing collaboration with 2-year institutions since most males attend community colleges, and using teacher preparatory programs to increase black male PRAXIS scores.

- Culturally specific programming that pays attention to cultural specificity and learning styles.

- After-school funding should be provided for academic competency and social activities for black males in the non-school hours. Research has shown that in the non-school hours black males spend more time watching television than their white peers.

**Middle School Policies**

- A “safety valve” process should be installed in schools with predominately African American male students to track the number of males being recommended for
suspensions. When the suspension rates of black males reach a critical level, school personnel should be alerted and should enact policies to reduce the number of black males being suspended.

- School social workers should take a more active role in questioning recommendations by teachers and administrators in order to reduce the overrepresentation of black males in special education (Mills, 2003).

- Comprehensive reevaluation of the use of zero tolerance policies in middle schools should be undertaken.

- Single sex classes should be established for black males in math and science.

**High School Policies**

- Schools should place equal focus on improving academic competency and high school graduation rates for black male students.

- A drop-out prevention program that specifically targets African American male students should be established.

- School counselors should make sure that students and their families are aware of the college admissions process, critical aspects of the financial aid process, and how to prepare for successful college outcomes. In addition, viable alternatives should be presented to males who are not college bound.

- Black male students should be strongly encouraged to enroll in gifted and AP classes, with efforts made to ensure the presence of a critical mass of black male students in those classes.

- School personnel should maintain detailed records on how many black male students are enrolled in gifted and AP classes and how many persist in those classes.

**College**

- College programs and interventions that support males beyond their first year of college should be established. Studies have shown that males disidentify with college as they move through their college years, which may contribute to high attrition rates.

- Measures must be taken to ensure that black males are both academically and socially integrated into college.

- Supportive measures for African American males enrolled in two-year colleges should be developed and implemented.
Helpful Programs

- AVID- http://www.pac.dodea.edu/edservices/EducationPrograms/AVID.htm
- The Carolina Abecedarian Project— http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/
- Perry Preschool Program- http://www.highscope.org/Research/PerryProject/perrymain.htm
- The Meyerhoff Program- http://www.umbc.edu/meyerhoff/
- Trio Program- http://www.coenet.us/ecm/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home
- Youthbuild- http://www.youthbuild.org/site/c.hT1RI3P1KoG/b.1223921/k.BD3C/Home.htm
- Project Peace- http://www.doe.state.in.us/sservices/peace/welcome.html

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Future Research Directions: Education

- Literature on black males at the pre-school level should be expanded.
- New studies should examine the influence of male teachers, both black and white, on black male student outcomes.
- White teachers who have success with teaching black male students should be identified and their methods and approaches should be studied and highlighted.
- Future research and evaluations should disaggregate program data to examine African American male outcomes.
- Future research should also do a better job of pairing research findings to current policies to advance new intervention strategies, particularly in implementing effective pedagogy.

2. Identity

Introduction to the Literature on Identity

Examining educational institutions is essential to understanding how black boys define who they are and how they internalize the perceptions of school personnel and classmates (Davis, 2001). Black boys occupy a complex position within the educational system; they are viewed negatively inside the classroom as being disobedient and disruptive and yet loved outside of the school walls as the center of “popular youth sub-culture” (Davis, 2001). This conflict is a significant factor in the school experiences of black males. Often, the negative perceptions of black males held by school personnel and other students do not remain unnoticed by males. Consequently, black males may resist these stereotypes by disidentifying with school or displaying defiant behavior.
Middle schools are generally the site where males begin to construct their identities. Secondary schools often mark a shift in the schooling environment that becomes more individualistic and emphasizes strict discipline in classroom behavior and policies, i.e., zero-tolerance to regulate students’ behaviors. Unfortunately, the policies and discipline procedures in middle schools often have deleterious effects on black male school outcomes (Davis, 2001; Hudley, 1997; Monroe, 2005).

a. Acting White/Disidentification

The literature analyzing the effects of the “burden of acting white” on black students has been conflicting. Introduced by Fordham and Ogbu in (1986), the authors argued that the burden of “acting white” was a significant factor in the black-white achievement gap and was one of the major reasons for black students’ poor performance in school. In order to avoid “acting white,” black students developed an oppositional identity to high achievement which is associated with acting white. Studies by Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (1998) and Cook and Ludwig (1997), however, found little evidence to support the oppositional identity or a “burden of acting white” among black adolescents. In Tyson, Darity, and Castellino’s study (2005), the authors found that many black students opted out of advanced courses, but none did so because of concerns about negative peer reactions to achievement. Instead, black students’ course choices reflected how well they thought they would perform in them.

Two studies, which focused on the academic disidentification of black males in educational settings, may be critical in understanding how to design supports for male students. Osborne (1997), found that disidentification from 10th-12th grade was significantly stronger for black male students. As black males advanced through high school, their school engagement and academic self-concept did not increase as it did for other groups. In a study on college males, Cockerley (2002) showed that black males’ academic self-concept decreased from freshman year to their junior and senior years. In short, both studies show “that the longer black males stay in school the more detached their academic self-concept and self-esteem became from academics.” Both studies suggest that programmatic supports for black males in educational settings should not be limited to their freshman year but should continue throughout their years in college.

b. Sexual Orientation

Using the Integration Mode of Racial-Ethnic Sexual Identity Acculturation scale, Crawford et al. (2002) found that African American gay and bisexual men who identified more positively as being African American and gay reported higher levels of self-esteem, HIV prevention self-efficacy, stronger social support networks, and greater levels of life satisfaction than gay black men who reported less positive feelings about being African American and gay.

Policy Recommendations

- Racial identity models for black males should examine their combined experience of being both black and male. Current models focus on either race or gender.
Programmatic support should be available to black males throughout their college years to buttress their self-concept and self-esteem.

**Future Research Directions: Identity**

- To clarify existing conflicts, literature on the implications of “acting white” should be studied further.
- Future research should consider how African American males develop their concept of self as both racial and gendered individuals; currently there are no models that simultaneously address both race and gender.
- Research should investigate the normative development of black males. There is a substantial body of research on the maladaptive development of males but very little research that examines normative patterns of growth for males.
- Future studies should focus on African American adolescent racial identity development; most studies have examined college age males and adults.

### 3. Marriage and Family

**Introduction to the Marriage and Family Literature**

The “dysfunction” of single-female-headed households was central to past research on the impact of family structure on the antisocial development of black males (Gordon et al., 1994). According to the previous review, black males raised in father-absent households were more likely to have lower educational achievement, earlier onset of sexual activity, lower self-esteem, and greater likelihood of participation in criminal behaviors. The high rate of father-absence in black families was identified as one of the primary factors contributing to the catastrophic outcomes of black males. More importantly, previous research conveyed that the impact of father-absence was far-reaching, spanning from education to incarceration, and its detrimental effects were long-lasting, impacting even the adult lives of men (Gordon et al., 1994).

**a. Family Structure**

The majority of current research still maintains that single-female-headed households produce lower positive outcomes for black males, especially in comparison to single-father-headed households (Rodney & Mupier, 1999). This raises a serious issue since the number of African American males raised in single-female-headed households has steadily increased since the last review (Gordon et al., 1994). There is a growing body of new research, however, suggesting that black males residing in single-female-headed households do not have lower developmental outcomes (Battle, 1999; Battle & Scott, 2000; Zullig, Valois, Huebner, & Drane, 2005). An emergent tactic in family structure research is to examine family constellations. Constellations...
take into account extended family members and non-resident fathers, which will permit the comparison of outcomes for black males across a range of family structural settings (Zimmerman, Salem, & Maton, 1999).

Two studies, Battle and Scott (2000) and Battle (1999), found that African American males in mother-only households scored better on standardized math and reading tests than those in father-only households. Battle’s research also found that when socioeconomic status was added to the analysis, the outcome remained the same, implying that economic status is less significant than family configuration. Battle (1999) suggests that children in all types of family configurations have the potential to do well socially and academically; however, their effective functioning depends on the type of resources and strengths that their families provide to counterbalance problems. Battle and Scott (2000) posit that African American mothers are apt to seek out resources such as supplementary academic activities and assistance from teachers or community members, as well as utilize their support networks for their sons’ development.

Gutman and McLoyd (2000) also examined the effects of poverty on black elementary and middle school students. Their study was both critical and uncommon because they compared families of high-achieving and low-achieving African American elementary and middle school students living in poverty and identified differences between both groups of parents on how they managed their children’s education within their homes, schools, and communities. The authors discovered that the parents of the high-achieving students were more proactive in their children’s education while parents of low-achieving students were more reactive. In other words, the authors indicated that parents of high-achieving students initiated contact with schools to monitor their child’s progress, while it was uncommon for parents of low-achieving students to visit or have contact with the schools unless it was initiated by the school. In most circumstances, the communication initiated by the school was caused by the students’ academic underachievement or behavior infraction. The parents of high-achievers reported augmenting their children’s educational experience by enrolling them in programs promoting academic achievement, peer relations, and social skills. Within the home environment, parents of both high achievers and low achievers reported that they assisted their students with schoolwork, but parents of high achievers indicated that they also organized scheduled time to work on homework, created additional math problems, and assigned extra assignments in the areas of reading and writing.

Much of the research on family functioning addresses the impact of parental support and style on improving black male educational outcomes (Argyle & Henderson, 1985; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Shearin, 2002). Research has shown that authoritative parenting—providing children with warmth and love while also maintaining authority (Mandara, 2006; Tolan, & Gorman-Smith, 1996—best supports the rearing of African American male children. Parents who used an African American version of authoritative parenting—teaching their male children about cultural heritage and encouraging resiliency despite racial impediments—who were actively involved in monitoring their children’s academic progress, and who were active in diminishing their children’s counterproductive use of time, were better able to cultivate an environment in which African American males were more likely to succeed in school.
b. Fatherhood

Past research on African American males and fatherhood has represented African American men as incompetent, unreliable, untrustworthy, sexually predatory, and erratically present in the lives of their children (Gadsden & Smith, 1994; Hurd & Rogers, 1998; Smith, Krohn, Chu, & Best, 2005). Due to this negative representation, African American fathers have been largely “invisible” in past research examining the development of children and the functioning of African American families (Coley, 2001). When examined in the literature, the contributions of African American fathers were framed almost exclusively in terms of their capacity to provide economic support for their children (Hurd & Rogers, 1998; Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 1999; Gadsden & Smith, 1994). This frame is limited. For example, in a 1999 study, Roy interviewed 40 African American fathers in a community-based parenting program in Chicago and found that fathers understood themselves not merely as providers in their children’s lives, but as vital caregivers.

Current research shows that fathers are not only caregivers but that many fathers actively engage in protecting the safety and well being of their children and spend productive time with their children. In a 2005 longitudinal study by Smith, Krohn, Chu, and Best (2005), the authors determined that young African American fathers spent an equal amount of time with their eldest child (eldest children were examined because of the young age of the fathers) as fathers from other racial and economic backgrounds. This study also found that fathers who received public assistance were more likely to live with their eldest children than those fathers not receiving public assistance. Because the support received was in the areas of housing, food, and healthcare assistance, rather than in cash benefits, the study determined that the public policy in place was providing support as intended. This is especially significant information in that it points to the familial benefits that attach to “upgrad[ing] fathers’ employment potential and earning power” (Smith et al., 2005, p. 997).

Several studies have found that lack of employment status is a key impediment to black fathers’ involvement with their children (Anderson, Kohler, & Letiecq, 2005; Dallas & Chen, 1998). Studies have shown that a father’s employment status can be linked to the amount of contact with children, participation in educational activities, and quality of parent-child interaction. The lack of viable employment for fathers can also cause depression in black men. In a 1996 study, Fagan examined the way in which 33 low-income African American fathers interacted with their pre-school age children during play. He observed the father’s responsiveness to his child during play interactions was significantly related to his employment status and self-esteem. Depression brought on by resource challenges, i.e., inability to pay child support, limited access to reliable transportation, and lack of permanent housing, may inhibit fathers’ ability to respond to the needs of their children (Anderson, Kohler, & Letiecq, 2005). On a positive note, high quality mother-father relationships were significant predictors of father involvement with their child and may serve as a buffer to other life stressors for fathers (Downer & Mendez, 2005; Fagan, 1996).

c. “Other Fathers”

Because there is still a significant number of African American children who do not have contact with their biological fathers or have “absent fathers,” researchers have begun to look at “other
fathers” or “social fathers” and the impact that these “non-biological fathers” have on African American children (Hunter, Friend & Murphy et al., 2006; Coley, 2001; Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 1999). “Social fathers” and “other fathers” can be defined as brothers, brothers-in-law, grandfathers, uncles, male mentors, or any male relative or family associate who acts as a role model by sharing their values and displaying father-like or appropriate behaviors to a child (Hunter, Friend, & Murphy et al., 2006; Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 1999; Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003). Fifty-one percent of children in the Jayakody and Kalil (2002) study had “other fathers” or “social fathers.” They found that the presence of a “social father” who was a male relative was associated with a higher level of the child’s readiness for school (Jayakody & Kalil, 2002).

In a 2005 study, Downer and Mendez (2005) examined African American fathers and “social fathers” to determine their levels of involvement with their pre-school children attending Head Start. Father involvement was defined using three distinct activities that support and contribute to children’s learning: general childcare activities, home-based educational activities, and school-based educational activities. The results of their study found that African American fathers participated in a wide variety of childcare activities with their children. The most common weekly activities included playing with toys or games indoors, talking about what happened at Head Start, taking children along while doing errands, and involving the child in household chores.

Another group of fathers that has received very little attention are the African American fathers who are full-time parents. Coles (2002) suggests that single African American fathers who are fathers full time exist in higher frequencies than single white fathers. In Coles’ study, ten African American fathers were interviewed regarding the reasons why they wanted to become parents. Coles found that the men’s motivations “centered on fulfilling a sense of duty or responsibility, reworking the effects of having had weak or absent fathers themselves, wanting to provide a role model for their children, and fulfilling an already established parent-child bond” (p. 412). Eggebeen, Snyder, and Manning’s (1996) study reported that 15.5% of single-parent families are headed by single fathers (as cited in Coles, 2002) and African American single fathers make up roughly 6% of those custodial parents (National Urban League, 1998 as cited in Hamer & Marchioro, 2002).

Hamer and Marchioro (2002) note that some reasons for the increase in African American single-father households are that African American males who have never been married are gaining custody of their children due to the mother’s incapacity to provide financially for her children, parental unfitness, either physically or psychologically, and because of the mothers’ lack of desire to perform a maternal role full time. In a study of 24 African American men from a poor Midwestern area, Hamer and Marchioro found that generally, the men in these studies became parents by “default” and were reluctant to take on the role of being a full-time single parent. Although the number of African American single fathers is increasing, there are still many social and economic disparities affecting other African American men in becoming custodial parents. These disparities include jobs that provide lower income wages than white male jobs, work schedules with non-flexible hours, and health insurance that is not affordable (Hamer & Marchioro, 2002).
d. Mate Selection/Divorce/Domestic Violence

Research found that African Americans divorce at higher rates than other races, double that of whites (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995 as cited in Pinderhughes, 2002), and that they have poorer marital satisfaction than whites (Broman, 2005). Orbuch, Veroff, Hassan, and Horrocks (2002) suggested that race and education were the only two variables predicting the risk of divorce over time. However, they also found that increased education does not protect African American males from divorce (Orbuch et al., 2002). In their study of 174 African American couples in Michigan, Orbuch et al. found that African American men who were married to career women reported less marital well-being. The researchers hypothesized that this dissatisfaction emerged from the men not being able to fulfill the “traditional” gender role of male as provider or breadwinner. Others suggest that the unequal ratio between black males and females has also lead to divorce and decline in marriage for the African American male (Pinderhughes, 2002). Researchers have indicated that economic and societal constraints such as racism, inadequate education, high unemployment, underemployment, and disadvantages in training, hiring, and job maintenance play a significant role in black family functioning and marital stability (Lawson & Thompson, 1995; Wilson, 1996 as cited in Taylor, Tucker, & Mitchell-Kernan, 1999; Zuberi, 1998).

Economic constraints have been found to be highly associated with spousal abuse in African American families living in high-risk environments plagued by poverty and alcohol-related problems for males (Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 2000; Caetano, Schafer, & Cunradi, 2001). Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, and Schafer (1999) found that African American couples with alcohol problems present were at a ten times greater risk for having male to female partner violence than those couples without male alcohol-related problems. Hampton and Gelles (1994) remarked that abuse toward women in African American families was 113 per 1000 and only 30 per 1000 in white families, according to The First National Family Violence Survey (Strauss, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980 as cited in Hampton & Gelles, 1994).

Policy Recommendations

- Child support enforcement policies should be flexible and offer employment and support services for fathers (Mincy & Sorenson, 1998).

- Parenthood for men may be problematic because of their own poor relations with their fathers. Programs should try to build into their framework ways that may assist men to build linkages with their own fathers (Roy, 2006).

- Fatherhood programs/initiatives often focus on the needs of fathers or their children. Programs should attempt in a meaningful way to incorporate both the needs of fathers and children and recognize the contributions of fathers beyond economic support (V. Gadsden, personal communication, Winter 2007).

- The stigma of single-parent-families should be unraveled and the work-family link revalued by ensuring economic security for all family forms. This could be facilitated by reform of the low-wage labor market and affordable childcare.
Create support of “social” and “other” fathers for black males.

Support parents of African American males to be more proactive in the education of their sons.

Future Research Directions: Marriage and Family

- New investigations should address how black male fathers contribute to their child’s development, particularly in the home. In addition, future investigations should address the outcomes of black male children residing with black male single and divorced dads.

- A new wave of historical scholarship should continue to challenge the dysfunction thesis of the single mother household and its impact on black males and the black family.

- A new wave of historical scholarship should continue to challenge the single mother household “dysfunction thesis.”

4. Mental Health

Introduction to Mental Health Literature

Family dynamics is central to the mental health literature on black males. E.T. Gordon, E.W. Gordon, & J.G. Nemhard’s literature review revealed that prior to 1994 studies on the mental health of African American males focused on how males behaved and responded to the societal conditions of inequality, discrimination, and poverty. Some of the main issues found in the past review on male psychosocial issues include:

- pathology of the black family (single-female-headed households)
- relationships between black males and females
- coping strategies for addressing the stresses of racial stereotypes, institutional racism, and poverty

A key critique of the past review was that the mental health literature did not consider the influence of environmental stressors on the mental health of black males.

a. Depression

African American adolescents are at a greater risk for experiencing behavioral and emotional problems such as depression than any other ethnic groups because they reside in high-risk urban
segregated communities (Kubrin, Wadsworth, & DiPietro, 2006; Goodman, 1999; Taylor, 1996 both cited in Hammack, Robinson, Crawford, & Li 2004), which may be highly stressful (Myers, 1989 as cited in Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, & Maton, 1999, Cunningham, 1999). Researchers defined these high-risk environments as communities that are segregated from mainstream society by high poverty, a lack of jobs (Kubrin et al., 2006), and high rates of exposure to violent crimes and homicides (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000).

Kistner, David, and White (2003 as cited in Kistner, David-Ferndon, Lopez, & Dunkel, 2007) found that African American boys showed more signs of depression when compared to African American girls, white girls, and white boys, with all children in grades three through five. In a longitudinal follow-up study, Kistner et al. (2007) examined ethnic and sex differences in depressive symptoms along with possible mediators such as academic achievement and peer acceptance of those differences among African American and white children. Results of the study revealed that among African American children, black boys still had a much higher frequency of symptoms of depression than black girls. African American boys reported more depressive symptoms as the school year went on while African American girls and white boys and girls reported either less severe depressive symptoms or about the same level of severity over the school year. Lower academic achievement scores were associated with increases in depressive symptoms for African American boys and white boys and girls. However, in a study by Bynum and Kotchick (2006) African American adolescents who reported a more positive relationship with their mothers and greater autonomy were more likely to report more positive self-esteem, less symptoms of depression, and fewer behaviors that were delinquent.

Other studies on African American male depression revealed that high exposure to violence was “significantly associated” with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression in African American males which could not be alleviated by social support (Farrell & Bruce, 1997; Gorman-Smith, Henry, & Tolan, 2004; Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998; Hammack, Richards, Luo, Edlynn, & Roy, 2004; Kliwer et al., 2004; Kliwer, Parrish, Jackson, Walker & Shivy, 2006; Paxton, Robinson, Shah, & Schoeny, 2004; Sullivan, King & Farrell, 2004). Studies have linked higher depression rates in black males to substance and sexual abuse (Friedman, Granick, Bransfireld, Kreisher & Schwartz, 1996; Friedman, Terras, & Glassman, 2000; Herd, 1994 as cited in Washington & Teague, 2005; McCluskey, Krohn, & Lizotte, 2002; Moisan & Sanders-Phillips, 1997; Stewart, 2003). African American males may be at a higher risk for substance abuse and drug-related problems than their white counterparts due to being bombarded by what Pierce (1970 as cited in Washington & Teague, 2005) called “microaggressions.” Microaggressions “are defined as insults (verbal/nonverbal, visual, or both) directed toward people of color, frequently automatically or unconsciously (Washington & Teague, 2005).” In addition, African American boys who physically matured early were placed at-risk for higher levels of depressive symptomology (Ge, Kim, Brody, Conger, Simons, Gibbons, & Cutrona, 2003).

b. Suicide

Suicide has become an important public health issue for African Americans in recent years, specifically among youth (U.S. Public Health Service, 2000 as cited in Joe, 2006). In 2004, suicide was found to be the third leading cause of death among 15 to 24- year-old African
According to Joe’s (2006) study, suicide rates peaked for African American males at ages 20 to 24 and 25 to 29. The highest rate in this age-period-cohort analysis was seen in the 25 to 29 age group of males, with 41.05 per 100,000 African American males committing suicide. Even though the suicide rate for African Americans (6.2 per 100,000) is lower than the rates for whites (12.4 per 1000,000), suicide appears to be a greater risk for young African American men than young white men, as black men represented 84% of suicide victims in the African American community (Joe & Kaplan, 2001). Between 1980 and 1995, the suicide rate among African American youth, ages 10 to 19 more than doubled compared to whites (American Association of Suicidology, 1996, as cited in Joe & Kaplan, 2001). Some studies, such as Kubrin, Wadsworth, and DiPietro (2006) have argued that the increase in black male suicide is linked to deindustrialization and extreme poverty in communities in which African American males reside.

Protective factors against suicide for African American youth have also been identified throughout the literature. Foremost among these were strong kinship ties and social support (Gibbs, 1988 as cited in Joe, 2006). Black males residing in the South has also been linked to lower suicide rates (Wingate, Bobadilla, Burns, Cukrowicz, Hernanadz, Ketterman, Minnix, Petty, Richey, Sachs-Ericsson, Stanley, Williams, & Joiner, 2005). For example, Wingate et al.’s (2005) study indicated that African American men who resided in the South reported the lowest scores of any group on the suicide scale. Gibbs’ (1997 as cited in Wingate et al., 2005) suggested that the context of the South likely buffers against suicide because there is low racial integration or the separation of different racial groups and cohesion among individuals within each racial group. Gibbs (1997 as cited in Wingate et al., 2005) also stated that if social agencies were not present to provide essential services to African Americans in the South, the “extended family, kin networks, and the African American church fulfilled those needs” (pg. 618). Joe (2006) suggested that strengthening social supports and religious beliefs and curtailing income disparities may reduce the risk of suicide among African Americans. Moreover, research has found that lower occupational and income inequalities between whites and African Americans reduced the risk of suicide among African American men (Burr, Hartman, & Matteson, 1999 as cited in Joe, 2006).

**c. Coping Mechanisms**

According to Bonner (1997), because some African American males live in high-risk environments or “cultural cocoons,” they are given little opportunity to develop appropriate coping and adaptive skills. Sparks’ (1996) study on coping processes of African American adolescent males living in violent communities found that the 27 African American males, aged 13-19, used five types of coping strategies. These processes included and are defined as “confrontative coping,” using aggressive efforts to alter the situation; “distancing,” using cognitive efforts to detach oneself and to minimize the significance of the encounter; “self-controlling,” attempting to regulate their own feelings and actions while in the midst of a violent encounter; “escape-avoidance coping,” employing wishful thinking and/or behavioral efforts to
escape or avoid the emotional reaction associated with the situation; and “planful problem solving,” making a plan of action and sticking to it” (p. 11). Cunningham (1999) suggests that providing “psychological armor” would allow African American males to effectively cope within their high-risk environments. The author describes “psychological armor” as the competency and self-worth needed to confront hostile situations and individuals” (p. 584).

d. Treatment

The research suggests that there are a high number of barriers to African American males’ utilization of and participation in mental health services (Jackson-Gilfort, Liddle, Tejeda, & Dakok, 2001). Researchers suggest that adolescent African American males’ reluctance to discuss their feelings results in a possible underreporting of depressive symptoms (Ialong, et al., 2004), a fear that participation in mental health services will lead to a negative stigma in their community, (McKay, Nudelman, McCadam & Gonzalez, 1996; Richardson, 2001, as cited in Lindsey, Korr, Broitman, Bone, Green, & Leaf, 2006), and feelings of shame or embarrassment (Lindsey, et al., 2006). Because of these negative consequences, African American adults are more likely to receive mental health services from general medicine or medical doctors than from mental health clinics (Cooper-Patrick, Gallo, Powe, Steinwachs, Eaton, & Ford, 1999). For example, Lindsey, et al. (2006) found that many of the African American male adolescents in their study chose to deal with their problems on their own instead of attending formal mental health counseling because they believed that voicing their feelings would be seen as a sign of weakness. Finally, studies have shown that black males who had lower negative experiences with the mental health profession had fewer negative attitudes towards seeking professional help than their black male counterparts who had experienced a higher number of negative experiences with mental health professionals (Scott & Davis, 2006).

Policy Recommendations

- Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, Maton (1999) suggest that black male involvement in out-of-school time activities may serve as a protector mechanism for mental health illnesses.
- Mental health researchers should consider the influence of environmental stressors on the mental health of black males and the role of peer and family support.
- Researchers should focus on the reasons for the increase in suicidal behavior.
- Efforts should be made to provide and further research effective coping mechanisms.
- There should be more research on creating supportive environments.
Future Research Directions: Mental Health

- Mental health literature should consider the influence of environmental stressors on the mental health of black males.

- Future research should examine the risk and protective factors associated with developing depressive symptoms for African American males. This would be beneficial in developing prevention and intervention strategies for those at-risk for developing these symptoms.

- Researchers should focus on what is missing from the literature: reasons for the increase in suicidal behavior among African American male youth, since they appear to be most at risk for suicide-related deaths (Joe, 2006). This would also be beneficial to developing effective interventions to prevent suicide.

- Future research should determine the role of peers and family members in supporting males during mental health crises, since black males are less likely to depend on mental health workers for support (Lindsey et al., 2006).

5. Economics

Introduction to Economics Literature

Since the mental health of black males has often been related to their lack or loss of employment, and the disconnect from social institutions and opportunities, it becomes critical to examine research on black male employment and these other areas. The past review on the impact of the economy on black males showed that the majority of the research centered on the high unemployment rates of black males, the structure of employment, unequal pay for work comparable to their white counterparts, and the correlation between unemployment and social ills such as poor mental health, anti-social behavior, and marital discord. One issue that was relevant in the E.T. Gordon, E.W. Gordon, & J.G. Nembhard (1994) review was how skill shifts in the job market have negatively affected black male employment, particularly lower educated males (Holzer & Offner, 2001; Simpson, 2000). Lower educated black males were more severely impacted by skills shifts than black males who have received more education. In fact, according to Simpson’s research (2000), skill shifts in the market expanded opportunities for higher educated black males. Higher educated black males may have more opportunities for employment because they have gained social capital through their educational experiences (Lichter & Oliver, 2000). Finally, given the literature’s attention to differences between higher educated and lower educated black males, it is important to highlight the work of Jackson (2006) and Heggins (2004). Investigating the difficulties professional black men face when seeking employment, both authors concluded that the perceptions of employers were not as negative for black men who attain advanced degrees. However, black males, especially those in academia, suffer from the lack of mentorship, a circumstance which affects their ability to network.
a. Spatial Mismatch

One key factor for the lack of employment for black males is that jobs are not located in the areas where black men reside (McLennan, 2003; Stoll, 1997). For example, Stoll’s (1997) article uses the “spatial mismatch hypothesis” to examine how the movement of jobs from the cities to the surrounding suburbs affects job opportunities for African American men compared to their Latino and white counterparts. The authors found that as jobs become more decentralized (that is, as they move from the city and into the surrounding suburban areas), the “incidence and duration” of black and Latino males remaining jobless was more frequent and longer over time than for their white male counterparts. Black males had the highest overall incidence and duration of job loss and were more likely to live in metropolitan areas with higher levels of job decentralization.

Because of the lack of jobs for black males in urban cities, scholars have observed increased rates of southern employment-based migration for black males. Crowder and Tolnay (2001) examined the pattern of migration for African American males for the time period from 1970 to 1990. This investigation sought to show the ways in which African American men migrated as a way to increase access to economic opportunities. The findings of this study indicated that the black males who were mobile tended to do better than those males who were not mobile. This study found that those black males who moved to the South fared better than the other groups, followed by those who moved to metropolitan areas in the West. Other research by McLennan (2003) contradicted these findings, indicating that males who lived in the South participated in jobs that were outdated.

b. Immigration

Simpson’s (2000) research suggests that educated black males were more impacted by immigration than less educated black males. A 1% increase in immigration representation corresponded with a .1% decrease in the ratio of employment for black males. Simpson (2000) did not expand on why immigration impacted educated black males more than their less educated black male counterparts.

c. Discriminatory Practices

African American males not only suffer from deindustrialization, low wages, and lack of employment opportunities, but from employment discrimination (Coleman, 2003). Studies have shown that employers perceive black males as lacking “soft skills.” According to Moss and Tilly (1995), black males were seen as having the lowest levels of people and teamwork skills, motivation, and flexibility. They state that, “soft skills are increasing in importance to employers… black men are perceived by many as coming to the hiring gate with less soft skills (p.15).”

Policy Recommendations

- The Earned Income Tax Credit should be expanded for low-income men or noncustodial fathers who are current in their child support payments (Holzer, 2004).
Classroom instruction should be linked to the job skills needed in the current labor market, i.e., Career Academies (Holzer, 2005).

Access should be increased for males who drop out of high school to effective programs such as the Job Corps and Youth Services Corps (Holzer, 2005).

Employment discrimination enforcement agencies should establish programs to monitor the practices of wage and employment discrimination and conduct random job audits at the national, state, and local levels (Coleman, 2003).

Metropolitan areas should have full employment policies and initiatives, such as empowerment zones, to alter the distribution of jobs in these areas. (Stoll, 1997).

**Helpful Programs**


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**Future Research Directions: Economics**

- Research needs to further examine the impact of males migrating to the South to explore economic opportunities.
- Research should further examine the impact of immigration on black male employment.

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**6. Incarceration and Juvenile Justice**

**Introduction to Incarceration Literature**

The lack of employment and economic opportunities was a strong contributing factor to the incarceration of males. The previous evaluation of the literature on incarceration noted that the delinquency and criminal activities of black males was intensely studied by early twentieth-century scholars (Gordon et al., 1994). Most analyses focused on factors contributing to the mass incarceration of black males, including subcultures of violence, family structure, labor market discrimination, and economic forces compelling males to seek financial gain through alternative routes. Gordon et al.’s review revealed two trends that frame most of the past discussions: (1) Few research studies examined the impact of racism on incarceration, and (2) Less attention has been given to the effect of culture on black male imprisonment sans autobiographical accounts.
More than ten years after the last review of incarceration literature, statistical findings still show alarmingly disproportionate rates of black male imprisonment. Although black males represent only six percent of the U.S. population, 49% of males in the criminal justice system are black (Haney & Zimbardo, 1998). At the end of 2005, for example, 3,145 per 100,000 black males in the U.S. were sentenced prison inmates. This is a stark contrast to other racial groups who were incarcerated at significantly lower rates. Per 100,000 Latinos, 1,244 were sentenced inmates, while only 471 per 100,000 white males were incarcerated (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). In light of the flagrantly disparate incarceration rates, a central theme in this literature is the impact of racial bias and past criminal history on black male imprisonment (Mauer, 1999; Stewart, 2000). Black males received longer sentences than white males, were more likely to be sent to adult court as juveniles, and were more likely to receive the death penalty for crimes against whites than crimes against blacks (Coker, 2001; Hagan & Peterson, 1995; Mauer, 1999).

Many scholars believe that discriminatory perceptions of black males as threatening or violent also plays a pivotal role in their overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. Carmichael substantiated this claim in a 2005 study detailing how racial and ethnic threat was an indicator in municipalities’ increased use of their city jails. Cities used their jails more when: (1) they were situated in neighborhoods with large percentages of minority populations; and (2) there were greater disparities in SES between whites and blacks/Latinos. However, when cities were well integrated along racial and economic lines, cities used their jails less frequently. Using “contact theory” to explain his findings, Carmichael notes that “this account suggests that interracial and interethnic contact exposes people to the similarities in attitude and behavior of groups once seen as “different,” thus promoting communication and challenging traditional stereotypes (p.547).” In short, when cities are more highly integrated along racial and economic lines, metropolitan areas tend to use their jails less because the main source of fear (minority size) no longer appears threatening.

a. “Get Tough” Policies/War on Drugs

Scholars almost always link the increased confinement of males to the expansion of punitive policies in the United States (Mauer, 2005; Stewart, 2000). Introduced in the 1970s, and intensifying gradually during the subsequent two decades, heightened punitive measures have been used by politicians to increase their support base in a growing conservative political climate (Mauer, 2005). “Get tough” policies, which punish offenders more severely and for longer periods of time, were said to reduce crime by being tougher on repeat offenders and adolescents. The courts not only take this approach with ex-offenders, but first-time offenders as well. If a person is perceived as being a possible repeat offender, that person has a greater chance of going to prison and receiving a longer sentence (Robinson, 2001). Mass incarceration, therefore, is due largely to the court’s “ability to punish the uncommitted crime” (p. 1446). However, Haney and Zimbardo (1998) argued that black and Latino males face long stints in prison, possibly for a lifetime, for untreated addiction and drug offenses.

b. Education and Prison Programs

The dearth of educational attainment is a strong predictor for black male involvement in the criminal justice system. The lower the educational level for black males, the more likely their
involvement in the criminal justice system. Incarcerated individuals who are released from prison with higher levels of educational attainment prior to prison entry are more likely to be reintegrated back into society and avoid prison re-entry (Case & Fasenfest, 2004). Despite evidence that higher educational attainment was correlative with more successful reintegration, rehabilitation in the prison system was anomalous. Black males had the greatest risk for recidivism across racial subgroups.

Exploring the motivations of black male participation in correctional education programs, Schlesinger (2005) found that inmates were more likely to join programs in order to congregate with friends and avoid personal stagnation or the wrong crowd, in addition to educational gain. Schlesinger (2005) also determined that the black males in his study were more likely to focus on high school level education or a particular trade, whereas white males attempted to attain associate or bachelor degrees.

Case and Fasenfest (2004) researched focus groups of white and black male ex-offenders to determine how post-secondary education programs in prison had benefited inmates post-release. Inmates received college courses provided by 14 local colleges and universities. Focus groups were conducted to determine if the education received in prison eased reintegration into their communities. White male prisoners viewed prison education as more helpful to them post-release than their black male counterparts. Black males reported greater value in vocational training that provided them with work-skill experiences, believing that work-skill experiences were more transferable to the job market.

### 7. Juvenile Justice

#### a. Early Criminalization

The intersections of race, gender, and age impacting discrimination in sentencing have clear implications for juvenile justice. African American males were disproportionately represented at every stage of the juvenile justice process, including court referrals, drug offenses, and adjudication and were transferred from juvenile to adult court more frequently than their white male counterparts. The involvement of black males in the juvenile justice system occurs early in their childhood (Bishop & Frazier, 1996; Rios, 2006; Tatum, 1996). Many youths of color enter the criminal justice system as early as eight years old (Rios, 2006). In California, 95% of all juveniles sent to court were racial minorities (Rios, 2006). Since the majority of the crime statistics point to black males as the offenders, Tatum (1996) suggests that young black males, like their adult counterparts, receive tougher penalties. Critical of these alarming incarceration rates for youths of color, some studies argue that juvenile detention centers are no longer rehabilitative, but instead, nothing more than warehousing (Morrison & Epps, 2002; Rozie-Battle, 2002; Wordes & Jones, 1998).

#### b. Status Offenses, Schools, and Juvenile Justice

A central contributing factor to the troubling conditions of black male youth incarceration is the juridical response to status offenses. Status offenses are crimes committed by minors such as underage drinking, smoking, and truancy that ordinarily would not be considered crimes when
youth reach adulthood. This is a key route through which black male youth enter the juvenile justice system (Steinhart, 1996). The expansion of punitive policies has led to an increase of status offenders entering the court system who ordinarily would not be in court but are now detained, a condition leading to saturation in the juvenile justice system and acceleration of the existing problems of minor offenders (Gavazzi, 2005; Wordes & Jones, 1998). Programs that sought alternatives to detention for status offenders found that black males who successfully completed the program displayed significantly lower levels of interpersonal conflicts and mental health conditions than peers who did not complete the program (Gavazzi, 2005).

c. The Impact of Age, Race, Gender, and Employment on Incarceration

The incarceration literature on African American males revealed an inverse relationship between employment and imprisonment. In a 2000 study, Spohn and Holleran found that “unemployed males are significantly more likely than employed males to be sentenced to prison, but unemployment has no effect on incarceration among females. Similarly, unemployed blacks and Latinos are substantially more likely to be sent to prison than unemployed whites (p. 296).” For example, a study by Tatum (1996) demonstrated that there is an inverse relationship for both black males and white males between economic opportunities, i.e., employment, and juvenile offenses. As juvenile offenses increase, economic opportunities decrease for both black and white males. The strongest predictor for both delinquent white males and black males participating in juvenile offenses is geographic location. The more rural the location in which white males reside the greater the likelihood of delinquency; the more urban the location in which black males reside, the greater the likelihood of black male delinquency.

Steffensmeier, Ulmer, and Kramer (1998) hypothesized that offenders who were young, black, and male would be more likely to be incarcerated than any other subgroup of offenders. Not only did their research support the hypothesis that young black males receive the most severe sentencing, but the study illumined the nuances of race, gender, and age on incarceration rates for black males. The authors argued that “both black and white males aged 30–49 are less likely to be incarcerated than males aged 18–29 and receive shorter terms, though whites aged 30–39 still fare somewhat better than their black counterparts” (Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998, p. 779). In short, the younger a black male offender, the greater the likelihood he will receive a harsher sentence than his white counterpart, yet, as black male offenders grow older, differences between sentencing decrease.

d. Family Structure and Substance Abuse

Another critical factor contributing to black males’ harsher treatment than white males is the court’s perception of black families. Because juvenile courts view single-female-headed households as less stable, black males are given harsher sentences (Bishop & Frazier, 1996; DeJong & Jackson, 1998). The perception of two-parent families as more stable, however, also positively affects whites: while white juvenile offenders from two-parent households are given less jail time, black males from two-parent families are not.

While black male youth receive more severe punitive discipline generally, research has demonstrated specific discrimination in the area of drug infractions. In a 1998 study, DeJong and
Jackson examined differential sentencing patterns among black, Latino, and white juveniles. Surveying 18.1% females, 60.6% whites, 32.3% blacks, and 6.1% Latinos and 1.0% individuals identifying as other, the authors found that black and Latino youth were referred for sentencing at slightly younger ages than white juveniles, more likely to be referred for drug charges, and more likely to live in single-mother-headed households. Black youth charged with drug crimes were more likely to be incarcerated than black youth charged with other crimes. White youth were no more likely to be incarcerated for drug crimes than for other offenses.

**Policy Recommendations**

- “In order to fully account for the impact of the penal system on labor market inequality, research should include the effects of noncustodial supervision and the employment experience of convicts after release (Western & Pettit, 2000, pg.11).”
- Mandatory sentencing laws should be repealed (Mauer, 1999).
- “Status offenses” should be de-criminalized.
- “Efforts to reduce crime should not just target the offenders’ criminal behavior but should also include targeting the offenders’ family and community. These efforts should also include improving the offender’s self-concept and self-esteem (Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004, pg.95).”
- Funding for community-based interventions should be increased (Spencer & Jones-Walker, 2004).
- Policies should rely on research rather than rhetoric. Lawmakers must weigh the potential intended and unintended consequences of proposed changes in crime and drug control policy.
- An approach to criminal justice that balances the needs of society, victims, and inmates should be adopted.
- Truth-in-Sentencing and Three Strikes laws that have proven ineffective in the fight against crime and drugs should be repealed.
- The 100-to-1 powder cocaine/crack cocaine ratio and other drug sentencing laws that have incarcerated nonviolent offenders while failing to capture “drug kingpins” should be reexamined.
- Nonviolent, non-dangerous drug addicts and offenders from the prison system should be diverted and provided improved treatment services.
- Nonviolent and non-dangerous juveniles should be diverted from confinement and job opportunities should be increased.
De-bias intervention for the criminal justice worker should be studied and implemented where effective.

**Future Research Directions: Incarceration and Juvenile Justice**

- Strategies to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline should be research-based.
- The ways black men have been constructed as targets of public policy should be examined.
- Rehabilitation options in community-based programs for youth offenders should be explored.
- An audit should be conducted of private correctional institutions to determine the physical conditions of the inmate population and the effectiveness of inmate rehabilitation programs in these institutions.
- The positive impact of drug courts should be studied.

**8. Homelessness**

**Introduction to the Literature on Homelessness**

Homeless black men were not given much attention in the past review (Gordon, Gordon, & Nembhard, 1994). Homelessness is a gendered phenomenon, with an estimated 80–90% of the indigent population being male (Baker, 1994). An estimated 49% of the homeless population in the U.S. is African American; therefore, the concerns of homeless black men must not be overlooked because there is a strong association between employment and homelessness for African American men. Scholars attribute the rise in homelessness to a number of structural economic and geographical shifts. The movement of skilled “blue collar” labor from central cities to suburbs and other nations represents a shift to a service-oriented economy in the United States, caused largely by deindustrialization, and has impelled a rise in poverty levels (Molina, 2000). The reclamation and gentrification of low-cost housing by businesses and people has led to a decline of 2.5 million low-income housing units between 1980 and 1988 (National Academy of Sciences, 1988 as cited in Baker, 1994) and the displacement of residents from their neighborhoods. The long-term effects of Reagan-era cuts to public housing and domestic welfare programs are unfolding yielding low levels of supply in affordable housing (National Housing Institute, 1992, as cited in Molina, 2000). The decline in affordable low-cost housing during the 1980s was particularly devastating to African Americans, who represented close to half of those living in such units (Baker, 1994).
a. Risk Factors Among Homeless African American Men

The social isolation experienced by homeless men has a number of damaging effects on their health and well-being. Several studies identified an increased risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS among the homeless. Minorities, who constitute a large percentage of the homeless, are the fastest growing population of HIV-positive cases, a phenomenon researchers ascribe to lack of cultural sensitivity among safe sex campaigns and a disproportionate lack of healthcare (Stephens, Braithwaite, Lubin, Carn, & Colbert, 2000).

High levels of HIV/AIDS vulnerability among the homeless are attributable to unsafe sexual practices, often caused by the conditions of poverty. Homeless commercial sex workers reported that they were more likely to engage in higher risk sexual activity when homeless and/or hungry. African American homeless men reported willingness to trade sex for money or drugs at the rate of 44% (Song, 1997), a number the researchers felt may have been underestimated due to the self-reported nature of the study.

Other studies on risk factors for homeless black men have focused on depression and substance abuse (Beck, 1999, 2001 & Bolger et al., as cited in Littrell and Beck, 2001; Dixon, 1997).

**Policy Recommendations**

- Molina (2000) suggests a national policy dealing with the problem of homelessness, first and foremost creating new low cost housing and providing subsidies for low-income single men and women to provide short term assistance while readying impoverished individuals to find new jobs.

- Littrell and Beck (2001) suggest treating depressive symptoms in the homeless, identifying and addressing causes of depression and encouraging problem-focused coping to encourage faster transitioning from homelessness.

- As previously mentioned, the attitudes and beliefs of the homeless populations may not translate to safe sexual practices (Song, et al. 1997). Kalichman and colleagues (1998) suggest that HIV risk reduction techniques should be integrated into substance abuse treatment programs.

- Community services and assisted living should be made available for black homeless men.

9. Music

**Introduction to Music Literature**

Although the impact of music on male development is not discussed in Gordon et al.’s seminal literature review (1994), the influence of music on the attitudes and behaviors of black males has emerged as a significant research theme. The emergence of music as a key theme is especially salient because the past literature review illumined that some scholars linked the violent behavior of black males to their high exposure to television (Gordon et al., 1994). In light of this research,
it is particularly important to consider the impact of males’ exposure to rap music videos on black male behavior (Johnson, Jackson, & Gatto, 1995; Ogbar, 1999; Tyson, 2006). In a 1995 study, Johnson, Jackson, and Gatto examined the effects of exposure to rap music video on 46 adolescent black males. They found that black male middle and high school students exposed to violent rap videos (i.e., videos containing images of shootings, explosions or assaults) used more violence to solve problems, held more misogynistic views, and engaged in more violent acts than those black male students who did not view violent rap videos.

In a 2006 study, Jamison expanded the research of earlier scholars to examine the impact of types of rap music on levels of black male college students’ racial identity, cultural misorientation (i.e., rejection of black cultural norms), and hypermasculinity. The author classified types of rap music as: (1) recreational music containing boasting and romantic/sexual themes; (2) reality “gangster rap” music containing violent and misogynistic lyrics; and (3) conscious music containing social conscious lyrical content. College-aged black males who reported higher levels of black racial identity listened more to conscious rap music than college-aged black males who identified less with being black and listened more to reality or recreational rap music. Moreover, black males who showed more appreciation for conscious rap music had healthier male self-concepts or senses of manhood.

The few studies on the impact of music on black male behavior suggest a potential relationship between racial identity and prosocial behavior. Black males who have a strong sense of racial identity are more likely to listen to socially-conscious rap music and are less likely to engage in violent behavior. Undoubtedly, more research is needed to substantiate these early findings.

### Future Research Directions: Music

- Future research on the impact of music should not be limited to the effects rap music has on black male behavior. It should also examine the possibilities of using music as a culturally relevant tool inside and outside of the classroom.

### Conclusion

Over the past decade, new scholarship has emerged in the areas of identity, music, and the impact of homelessness on black males. Identity studies show great promise in offering a better understanding of how black males conceptualize their reality and how this may impact their economic, education, mental and public health outcomes. Many of the studies reviewed were still rooted in the deficit approach and offered few policy recommendations and interventions to improve the well-being of black males. The review of the literature also revealed the need for program evaluations that include black males specifically and the identification of program components that have shown success for males. Finally, the comprehensive review of the literature showed that studies that account for favorable outcomes for black males are sorely needed and illuminated the dearth of research initiatives that advance both cultural and structural solutions for males. Future studies on black males should focus on longitudinal outcomes and include the voices of black males and how they understand and shape their world. In sum, quantitative research designs, combined with qualitative studies that accurately capture the way
in which African American males navigate the world they live in is required to effectively reduce the disparities faced by males. Ideally, strong studies will ultimately provide solutions that are sustainable and transformative for black males.

There has been inadequate attention to how black male outcomes within particular social domains shape their outcomes across domains. While it is acknowledged that where one lives can impact one’s educational performance, the likelihood of incarceration, and mental health problems, there are still very few programs that take this interactive and cumulative approach to its logical conclusion. Mapping work at the Kirwan Institute suggests that the structure of opportunity across a number of domains is critical to consider both in terms of research and policy related to African American males. There have been studies of the impact of opportunity on the general population but none specifically focused on black males. This approach, implemented in the mapping section, looks at a number of factors together and thus avoids the fragmented approach that often results in a narrow focus that fails to address the interactive nature of institutions. While more research is needed, there should be efforts to put in place research-based pilot programs and clarify unanswered questions. Black males should not have to wait another decade while research continues to refine questions and design. While the condition of black males is extreme and distinct, many of the insights in this report are not unique to African American males. It is the accumulation of disadvantages and the broad lack of prescriptive responses to them that makes the group’s circumstances perhaps uniquely grim.

For example, the finding that blacks do not do as well in predominantly white institutions (PWIs), where there is little institutional support, would surely be true for any group that found itself unsupported by host institutions. The research literature is replete with examples of the importance of teacher expectations on the performance and self-esteem of students. It is therefore not surprising that this holds true for African American males as well. While there is a need to recognize the interaction of individual behaviors and institutional policies and practices, the condition of African American males might be better explained by how they are treated by society and its social and culture institutions than something in African American males alone.
Advisory Board Interviews
B. Advisory Board Interviews

Introduction

A critical aspect of the African American male project was to assemble a national advisory board to guide the social science literature review on black males. The board includes representatives and scholars from various disciplines whose research interests and project agendas focus on African American males. During our review of the literature on black males, several issues emerged that made apparent the need to consult with our experts to broaden our understanding of the research findings on black males.

The research team found that several issues concerning poor outcomes for black males were discussed without the identification of policies or practices that would improve those outcomes. For example, much of the research on the disproportionate number of black males incarcerated for drug offenses offered limited analysis or initiatives to address the problem. The interviews and discussions with the advisory board were critical in deepening our understanding of the issues faced by black males, providing valuable insight into the policies and initiatives that enhance the quality of life for black males, and helping us further illuminate how we define success for them. The interviews provided by scholars afforded insights into the research on broad concepts that were illuminated in journal articles. Over the course of the grant period, the researchers conducted face-to-face and telephone interviews with the advisory board members and OSU partners. We presented several questions to each of the board members and OSU partners with additional questions to each advisory member specific to their area of research interest. Collected below are the interview questions, and their responses. The list of the advisory board follows.

Question 1: What are some gaps in the research literature on African American males and what types of studies do you think would be helpful to the research base if conducted?

a. Abandoning pathology as a myopic lens for research on African American males for a structural approach

According to the majority of respondents, research literature on African American males tends to be based on the pathological model that frames the experiences of black males only from a deficit perspective and does not account for the successful outcomes of males. Antoine Garibaldi suggests that by using the pathological model to discuss outcomes for black males, the positive outcomes of the community stay unrecognized. According to Stephen Gavazzi, research that continues to use the pathological model as a starting point is problematic because it continues to "marginalize minority youth" and does not allow for a greater understanding of the strengths of the community in which they reside. Miles Anthony Irving indicates as well that studying the strengths of black males, their families and communities would generate techniques to further empower communities as well as mitigate the problems they face. He indicates that the current research literature fails to connect with the community, and suggests that the research does not provide "practical application" to the individuals working directly with the African
male community. James Moore and Garibaldi, like Irving, believe that research tends to be “basic” and consistently leaves out best practices that prove to be successful and can be used by practitioners or social workers to improve their interventions. Additionally, A. J. Franklin suggests that there have been programs within the community that have proven to be helpful to African American males but the majority of these community programs remain unreported. Moore also suggests that there is a strong need for “experimental designs” in research on African American males, and that most of the past and current research has been based on census data.

Further research needed on structural barriers

Both Cynthia Hudley and Vivian Gadsden highlight a pressing need to look at those black males who succeed in spite of the barriers faced by most. Hudley suggests looking at the family processes of low achieving, low income African American males and comparing these processes to high achieving, low income African American males. Putting these processes in a larger structural context, she argues, would allow us to see the larger structural barrier these black males are working against. Gadsden argues similarly, saying that the literature does not look critically at the life course of African American males, and that white and black males are often compared, which may be an erroneous comparison. She states that we know a lot about when black males fail in school, but very little about how they experience school in a positive light.

b. A Progressive Research Agenda

Irving indicated that in order to address these gaps within the research literature, research needs to be more “progressive” and have a “productive research agenda.” According to Moore, the majority of research has currently been limited to census data and therefore does not include experimental designs with control groups. Gavazzi suggests that the current research has an over-reliance on one perspective and does not include multiple perspectives. Finally, Victor Rios suggests that research design should go far beyond the quantitative/qualitative binary and become more triangulated.

c. The need for gender and race specific studies

Many of the respondents stressed the significance of the need to disaggregate the research studies not only by gender or race but also rather by the combination of gender and race. Gavazzi indicates that there are distinct needs for black males and black females. Garibaldi states that there continues to be a growing gender gap between African American males and African American females. The current research has a tendency to “categorize all groups of children as being the same….Research studies place ‘at risk’ children in the same group with students who are not at risk when it is convenient to the study,” according to Gwendolyn Cartledge. She suggests that this method simplifies the study and we cannot see what works or does not work by this homogenization of groups. Franklin states that research on race tends to group African Americans together and does not recognize important variation within the community. Moore
recommends that analysis of African Americans needs to also consider economics to determine what behaviors are the same or different in African American families based on their incomes.

Cartledge argues that, “[e]ven if there are studies that are prevention [based]… rarely do we researchers disaggregate the data in terms of African American males. As a matter of fact, very often they don’t even indicate who their subjects are, be it by race, sometimes they will just give race and not gender. It’s really hard to look at this data and see how effective those interventions are for these populations.”

According to Gavazzi, “there has unfortunately been a tendency in the research literature to unintentionally marginalize minority youth by creating special sub-samples of minority youth and placing them into samples that are predominantly Caucasian, and then running statistical procedures that make it appear as if the minority youth ‘look like’ the Caucasian youth.” This has also been done with gender. The real disparity tends to exist when you don’t pay attention to race, gender and ethnicity and how they interact.

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<th>Further research needed on gender construction</th>
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<td>Another theme within the interviews was the lack of studies on the way in which gender is constructed. There was some consensus with the respondents that further studies need to address how “structures are lived within individuals” (Rios) and “how gender is constructed within a socio-cultural, historical, and structural context” (Tony Whitehead). Franklin asserts that theoretical, clinical, and empirical literature excludes the role of black fathers.</td>
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<th>d. Other gaps in the research literature on African American males</th>
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<th>Racial Dynamics of Policy Development</th>
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<td>According to Marc Mauer, we need more research on the racial dynamics of policy development, particularly in the criminal justice system. This research would examine how certain policies are adopted and applied to the group under consideration and what the alternatives to this process might be.</td>
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<th>Empirical Findings in Addition to Census Data</th>
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<td>Moore argues that much of the research has been limited to census data. More empirical findings are needed</td>
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Question 2: What are some initiatives and policies that you are aware of that you think are particularly helpful to African American males specifically, and why are these initiatives helpful?

a. Essential Elements of Successful Programs

The advisory board members identified several elements of key policies and components of programs that they found to be helpful to African American males.

Proper Implementation and Adequate Funding

Gardner indicated that many initiatives and policies, like No Child Left Behind, are good policies but the problem arises when the policies are implemented. He suggests that negative outcomes associated with the policies exist due to many different translations of the policies and lack of funding to carry out programs. Ronald Ferguson, like Gardner, allows that the inadequacy of funding is significant to the implementation of programs as well. He argues that “pretty much any program model can work pretty well if you implement it well. It’s not about the model so much as it is about implementation.”

Gardner also suggested that it is often difficult to find funding for programs because of skepticism about whether these programs would produce the desired outcomes.

Community Partnerships

Mauer and Tony Whitehead highlighted the importance of programs composed of community partnerships with churches and community personnel. Whitehead called community collaboration a “community based participatory approach.” Moore and Gardner suggested that community partnerships could lead to supplemental educational programs and provide internship opportunities to African American males allowing for the practice of newly obtained skills. Cartledge agreed that some programs, such as after school programs, are critical, but cautions that these programs should not supplement African American males’ education. After-school programs should not end up taking on the responsibilities of the schools and being the primary source of education, according to Cartledge.

Mauer provides an example from Boston in the early 1990s, during a very disturbing rise in youth violence involving young black males. A police-community partnership was developed that emphasized outreach of law enforcement personnel to the church community and community service organizations. They attempted to give youth something to do other than loiter in the streets. At least for a period of time in the 1990s, the homicide rate declined significantly.

Parental Involvement

Another component the advisory board members recommended be included in initiatives and programs is parental advocacy groups. Cartledge indicates that parents are sometimes unable to advocate for their children because they are unaware of how to navigate through the educational
system. Moore indicated that parents play a significant role in their children’s lives and direct their children on how to survive in their different environments. Parental support and involvement coupled with effective programs would benefit African American males, the interviewees concluded.

**Cultural Awareness**

The advisory board also identified cultural awareness as an important component of an effective program. Irving suggested that including cultural pedagogy in programs and initiatives gives youth a better understanding of their cultural history and allows them to further develop their cultural identity. According to Hudley, these programs would also allow African American males to interact with individuals that they can connect with. Gavazzi agreed that more culturally specific programs are needed to address the many problems within the community but he also indicated that better measures related to evaluations are needed within programs in order to accurately measure program effectiveness on a number of outcomes.

**b. Helpful Policies and Initiatives for African American Males**

Many advisors reported specific types of policies and initiatives that have proven helpful to African American males.

**Education**

According to Moore, the Meyerhoff Program at University at Maryland Baltimore County takes children who come from places and environments that render them educationally vulnerable and susceptible to failure to produce high quality students. Moore notes that, “when we think about African American males, we don’t always think about them in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields and many of these students [in the Meyerhoff Program] go on to pursue advanced degrees. We haven’t done [enough] in public policy because we are still losing too many African American males throughout the educational pipeline.”

Cartledge highlighted the Abecedarian project out of North Carolina and Alabama, which conducts long-term programs, working with poor children, most of them African American, from infancy right up to formal school. The project just completed nearly 20 years of follow-up research and found that the youngsters who participated in this program, compared to their control-group peers, had much greater success in K-12, were more likely to pursue post-secondary education, and had lower levels of criminality. It is clear that high quality pre-school programs truly give children a head start.

**Criminal Justice**

Mauer suggested that the drug court initiative was helpful because it allows the individual to obtain treatment in lieu of incarceration. He stated:
The idea is to get people with substance abuse problems into treatment rather than incarceration…it is likely that this has had some beneficial effects in reducing incarceration, although it doesn’t mean that there aren’t racial dynamics to go along with that as well…it’s possible that African Americans are less likely to get in the treatment programs than whites might be.

Gardner pointed to multi-systemic therapy programs that work with kids who have been in a lot of trouble in the criminal justice system. These programs work with the child’s whole ecological niche. Such programs have a fairly good reputation from evaluation research for making a difference.

**Employment**

According to Franklin, programs like Upward Bound have clearly been beneficial for African American male participants. The Job Corps continues to make a contribution to segments of the African American male population that do not go on to higher education. In terms of policies, some of the loan programs have been helpful for young people to be able to pursue higher education. The labor department and manpower programs, work programs, youth development programs, are also very helpful in their funding structure. Gadsden notes that the federal initiatives around work have been helpful when engaged by fatherhood organizations and groups, not simply for the men to talk about fatherhood, but also about other stressors.

**Question 3: What do successful outcomes for African American males look like?**

When asked what successful outcomes for African American males “look” like, the responses were mainly centered on the respondent’s area of interest. Within education, Irving defined academic success as the completion of each grade level before being promoted to the next. For the younger black male student, Cartledge described success as the ability to read and be well adapted behaviorally to the academic environment.

Garibaldi defined success as graduating from high school and attending college and ultimately pursuing an advanced degree. He noted simply attending college is not enough since many black students do not persist beyond their first or second year of college. Sometimes this is due to academic reasons, but more often than not it owes to a lack of basic skills such as time management.

Mauer indicated that within criminal justice, success for black males would involve having less contact with the criminal justice system. If contact with the criminal justice system has already been made, Whitehead suggested that success would mean that many more black men are able to make constructive transitions back into the community.

Regarding identity, health, and mental health, success was defined as having a good sense of cultural identity (Gavazzi), self-identity (Rios), resiliency (Franklin), and political consciousness (Rios). Irving suggested that overall good health is a combination of being successful
psychologically, physically, economically, and within families and relationships. Both Hudley and Irving defined success overall as being able to provide for oneself, the people one cares for, and advancing the greater community. They also both noted that this type of success is ultimately defined at the individual level. As Gadsen described success:

They [African American males] become residential rather than non-residential fathers. They have the job skills to be able to take care of their families...they have a reduction or non-existence of criminal records, a reduction in their criminal activity or they don’t engage in criminal activity in the first place. The big one is that they are fully engaged with their kids...[and are] involved in the children’s schooling and they take responsibility for their families and for themselves.

In general, Hudley suggests that success for black males looks no different than success for any other group.

**Concluding Thoughts**

A major theme throughout these interviews was the idea that the majority of research on African American males tends to focus on disparate outcomes, with little research focusing on the resiliency and success of some males. As Mauer stated, "We know one in three African American men has some experience with the criminal justice systems before age 30, but we don't know about the other two out of three." The interviewees agreed that there was not enough research about those males who successfully navigated structural barriers. They also agreed that research should focus on the intersectionality of race and gender for black males. It is our hope that the interviews contained herein serve as a clarion call to the scholarship and interventions on black males by advancing the following key areas: both cultural and structural solutions for males; scholarship on how success is defined for black males; research on black males who succeed in spite of barriers; and help to develop programs for those black males in and outside of the juvenile justice system to transform the dialogue and scholarship on black males. The interviews in their entirety may be found at the institute's website located at [www.kirwaninstitute.org](http://www.kirwaninstitute.org).

**The African American Male Project Advisory Board:**

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Dr. Ralph Gardner III, Associate Professor in the College of Education, The Ohio State University

Dr. Stephen Gavazzi, Professor in Human Development and Family Science, Co-Director of the Center for Family Research, The Ohio State University

Dr. James Moore III, Associate Professor in the College of Education, The Ohio State University

Additional Partners:

Marc Mauer, Executive Director, The Sentencing Project
African American Male
Mapping Project
C. African American Male Mapping Project

Introduction

Much of the social science literature on black males has identified a number of different social, political, and economic disparities between black males and other racial and gender subgroups (i.e., white males and black females). Despite the excess of studies on black male disparities, there is little research situating African American males within a larger social context. There are only a handful of studies which examine successful black male outcomes and even fewer across multiple contexts. What would educational outcomes for black males show if the lens used linked teacher preparation, neighborhood health, and employment viability? Due to the consistent lack of contextualization—a process necessary to understand the contemporary conditions of black men—the project research team used a GIS mapping strategy to visually represent the environmental factors affecting African American males. To generate an opportunity-focused map using GIS methods, researchers identify a number of indicators contributing to opportunity. For the present study, 15 indicators were selected. The indicators are then organized into a composite image. Once mapped, these images reveal where groups are located in relation to opportunity structures. By generating maps showing the relationship between African American males and opportunity, we can begin to frame black male opportunity structures in geographical perspective and create more targeted and transformative initiatives.

Not merely a simple indicator of well being, “opportunity” is defined here as the structures and environmental conditions that contribute to community stability and individual advancement. Spanning a range of economic and social factors such as sustainable employment, high-quality educational institutions and experiences, healthy and safe communities, stable and safe housing, and access to healthcare, “opportunity” is an entire environmental context consisting of structure, or the macro-level, and culture, or the micro-level. Access to structures of opportunity is critical to an individual’s success. Structures may mediate personal choice in implicit and explicit ways. An individual who has more structural barriers, and consequently less opportunity, may have a more limited way of exhibiting agency than those in areas of higher opportunity.

Geographical Isolation v. Connection to Opportunity

Considering a range of indicators, the mapping project illuminates a discernable pattern of African American male isolation in opportunity-deprived neighborhoods. Expanding and maintaining connections to the resources that create opportunity is a key strategy for systematically improving the lives of African American males. Central to this endeavor is the promotion of mobility for racially marginalized populations, engendering access to the benefits of opportunity-rich neighborhoods. As the research reviewed illustrates, connecting people to opportunity-rich communities promotes economic and educational access, and consequently success, especially for youth.
1. Data and Methodology Summary

Research on opportunity indicators was collected from seven large, racially and ethnically diverse metropolitan regions: New York, NY; Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI; Houston, TX; Atlanta, GA; Los Angeles, CA; and Washington D.C. In these seven regions, researchers track the behavior and outcomes of a total population of 1,169,796 African American males.3

To analyze the geographical distribution of opportunity, the mapping team prepared a multivariate index using 15 indicators of opportunity. From this “opportunity index,” the team developed quintiles to rank neighborhoods based on their opportunity index score (very low, low, moderate, high, very high). The opportunity mapping methodology has been utilized at the Kirwan Institute for similar assessments in more than dozen other areas, and has been integrated into both policy advocacy and research.

The study measured opportunity through three primary indicators: education, economy/employment, and neighborhood health. In the education category, five indicators were used:

1. **Census data on childhood poverty detailing the number of persons below the age of 18 who were at or below the 1999 poverty level**

   Greater rates of childhood poverty were related to lower opportunity.

2. **Census tract data on high school dropout rates showing the proportions of those people who are 25 and older and have not received a high school diploma or equivalency**

   Greater numbers of high school dropouts were connected to lower opportunity.

3. **Census tract data measuring the relationship between not having received a diploma and unemployment for those between the ages of 16 and 19**

   Geographical areas with high populations of this group were associated with lower opportunity.

4. **Census tract data measuring high school completion rates for people 25 and older**

   Increased rates of high school completion were associated with higher opportunity.

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3The analysis focused on young males due to the prevalence of research characterizing childhood as a significant time period for understanding the impacts of environmental factors on life outcomes and targeting interventions to improve opportunities for children. The analysis used a year 2000 Geolytics CensusCD to retrieve this data.
5. School district statistics cataloging reading scores, math scores, and the percent of economically disadvantaged students

Increased reading and math scores were associated with higher opportunity, while higher numbers of economically disadvantaged students were associated with lower opportunity.

The following indicators are used for the category of economy/employment:

1. Census tract data detailing households receiving public assistance

   Increased numbers of households receiving public assistance were associated with lower opportunity.

2. Census tract data measuring median household income

   Increased median household income was attributed with higher opportunity.

3. Census tract data calculating gendered rates of unemployment

   This measure examines the number of people over the age of 16 who are classified as unemployed. This indicator excludes those in the Armed Forces as well as those not seeking employment. Increased unemployment rates were associated with lower opportunity.

4. Job change data recording the net change in number of employees in a zip code and the proportion of job change between a certain time period

   Increased rates in job changing were correlated with areas of higher opportunity. This variable is a time-series measurement between the years 2000 to 2004.

The following indicators were used for the category of neighborhood health:

1. Census tract data detailing the proportion of vacant residential property to housing units

   Increased rates of vacant properties were indicative of lower opportunity.

2. Census tract data measuring property values

   Increased median home value was indicative of higher opportunity.

3. Census tract data showing homeownership rates

   All owner-occupied households were used as a measure of high opportunity. The more owner-occupied households that were present, the higher the opportunity in an area.
4. Census data measuring non-childhood poverty rates

Increased rates of poverty status (in proportion to the total population) were attributed a relationship to lower opportunity.

5. Percentage of population change using a time-series measurement

This demarcation captures the net change in the number of people within a specific census tract from the year 1990 to 2000. Census tracts were normalized to their respective year 2000 boundaries. Increased population rates were characterized as having a relationship to higher opportunity.

6. Census tract data reporting local criminal activity

Increased crime rates were associated with lower opportunity.

Each measure of opportunity was combined into a visual representation on the maps of each metropolitan area. Lighter colors represent areas of less opportunity, and darker colors represent those of greater opportunity. Each block of an area shown by the lightly colored borders is one census tract. The green dots in the maps represent the African American males, ages 14 and under. Contingent upon the map being used, the green dots represent a different number of African American males present in a given area. (Larger versions of the maps are made available in the concluding pages of this section.)

2. Maps with Findings

Figure 1: Atlanta, GA Metropolitan Area
Figure 1 illustrates the metropolitan area of Atlanta. In this area, the total population was 4,112,646. African American males age 14 and under totaled 160,745. Of this cohort, 55% were concentrated in areas of very low or low opportunity, while only 19% were located in areas of high or very high opportunity. African American females shared a similar geographical profile with black males, with 56% living in areas of low to very low opportunity. The number of black males and females who lived in these areas was almost equal for Atlanta. In contrast, 73% of white males lived in areas of high or very high opportunity, which was the highest proportion of the seven regions. Finally, only 12% of white males in Atlanta resided in areas of low or very low opportunity.

Figure 2: Chicago, IL Metropolitan Area

Figure 2 illustrates the metropolitan area of Chicago, IL. In this area, the total population was 8,272,768, and the number of African American males age 14 and under was 215,500. Of this sample, three out of four African American males (75%) lived in an area of low or very low opportunity, while only 10% lived in areas of high or very high opportunity. Black females were almost equally represented in areas of low to very low opportunity, with 76% residing in these areas and only 10% present in places of high to very high opportunity. In contrast, 14% of white males lived in areas of low to very low opportunity, while 69% of white males lived in areas of high to very high opportunity.
Figure 3: Detroit, MI Metropolitan Area

Figure 3 shows the metropolitan area of Detroit, MI. In this area, the total population was 4,441,551, and the number of African American males age 14 and under was 140,652. Of this sample, more than nine out of ten (92%) African American boys resided in an area of low or very low opportunity. This was the highest proportion of African American males out of any of the regions in areas of low opportunity. In contrast, only 3% of males were in areas of high or very high opportunity. Black females were equally represented in areas of low to very low opportunity, with 92% of females present in these areas and only 3% present in places of high to very high opportunity. In contrast, only 18% of white males lived in areas of low to very low opportunity, while 59% lived in contexts of high to very high opportunity.

Figure 4: Houston, TX Metropolitan Area
Figure 4 shows the metropolitan area of Houston, TX. In this area, the total population was 4,177,646, and the number of African American males age 14 and under was 98,760. Of this sample, more than half (56%) of African American boys lived in areas of low or very low opportunity; 24% lived in areas of high or very high opportunity. Again, black females were equally represented in areas of low to very low opportunity, with 56% residing in these areas and only 24% residing in places of high to very high opportunity. In contrast, 25% of white males were present in areas of low to very low opportunity, while 57% were present in contexts of high to very high opportunity. This number barely exceeds half of white males, a stark contrast to other regions where the proportion of white males in high opportunity areas was far higher.

Figure 5: Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA Metropolitan Area

Figure 5 illustrates the metropolitan area of Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA. In this area, the total population was 9,514,009, and the number of African American males age 14 and under was 118,771. Of this sample, 62% of African American boys were concentrated in an area of low or very low opportunity, while only 19% of males were found in areas of high or very high opportunity. Black females were equally represented in both areas and high opportunity. In contrast, 32% of white males were present in areas of low to very low opportunity, while 48% of lived high or very high opportunity areas. This number is the lowest number for white males in any of the regions examined.
Figure 6: New York, NY Metropolitan Area

Figure 6 illustrates the New York, NY metropolitan area. In this area, the total population was 9,314,235, and the number of African American males age 14 and under was 278,439. Of this sample, 68% of African American boys resided in areas of low or very low opportunity, while 18% of males were found in contexts of high or very high opportunity. Again, black females were equally represented in both sets of areas. In contrast, 25% of white males were present in areas of low to very low opportunity, while 56% were in areas of high to very high opportunity.

Figure 7: Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area

Finally, Figure 7 illustrates the Washington DC metropolitan area. In this area, the total population was 4,923,153, and the number of African American males age 14 and under was
156,929. Of this sample, 65% of African American boys resided in an area of low or very low opportunity, while only 19% lived in contexts of high or very high opportunity. The corresponding numbers for black females were slightly worse: 68% were present in the low opportunity areas, 18% present in the high opportunity ones. For white males, those numbers were 14% and 66%, respectively.

**Conclusion**

As the data indicate, most African American males in each metropolitan area were spatially isolated from areas of high opportunity, as were African American females. In contrast, white males in each examined area lived in areas of higher opportunity more consistently than black males or females. In part, these already troubling conditions have been exacerbated by deindustrialization. Scholars suggest that black males have suffered the brunt of outsourcing effects in unskilled and semi-skilled employment as jobs migrate to outside accessible areas and increases in educational and skill requirements serve as further barriers to employment (Ferguson, 2005, Holzer, 2001, & Simpson, 2000). Michael A. Stoll (1998) advances that the drastic increase in unemployment for blacks (as well as Latinos) are due to “spatial mismatch” and job decentralization. He notes that these two groups have relatively limited access to growing employment areas and jobs closely matching their current cadre of skills. Stoll opines that spatial mismatch occurs with black males who moved to the suburbs because they are living in areas that border the inner city and job growth takes place in areas where blacks are not living, such as high opportunity exurbs. The preceding maps offer some support for the claims of these researchers.

These maps demonstrate the spatial isolation of African American males within opportunity deprived and distressed neighborhoods, communities that are devoid of the resources most Americans take for granted. Significantly, this data shows very similar opportunity representation ratios for black males and females, which should be a guide for further research.

The richness of these data provides a compelling new dimension for studying the relationship between African American males and opportunity in geographic, social, and economic terms in both the high and low opportunity areas. By understanding the mix of structural components in “very high opportunity” areas (i.e., housing stability, childcare, criminal activity) for black males, critical solutions or policies for males may be implemented. Likewise, by understanding how black males in “very low opportunity” areas still persist and become successful, policies and solutions to assist their development may also be made. Through understanding the social milieu in which black males develop and strategies they use to forge their lives, scholars can conceptualize promising interventions and solutions. For example, in Montgomery County, MD (an area of relatively high opportunity for African American males in Figure 7), more than a thousand black students passed Advanced Placement Tests in the Montgomery County High Schools (see: “Montgomery Hits a Testing Milestone for Black Students at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2007/12/03/AR2007120301878.html?sub =AR). This was the first school system to pass the one thousand test threshold in AP testing for African American students. However, since the research normally focuses on those black students who do not succeed (academically, in this example), achievements like this are often overlooked. It is also important to remember that Montgomery County has one of the longest-
running inclusive housing policies in the United States. This may explain why this area is so racially diverse, as well as why the maps (i.e., DC MSA) show a significant number of African American males in areas of high opportunity. Identifying these factors encourages the creation of more intentional and transformative interventions for African American students through cultivating the factors that lead to positive outcomes for youth.

Conducting research on areas that are better connected to opportunity illuminates how sustainable opportunity structures benefit all people, not just those in low opportunity areas. The Gautreaux Program in Chicago, a program which moved people from areas of concentrated poverty to areas of high opportunity, demonstrated that people who moved to low poverty, high opportunity suburbs were more likely to be in a college track program, more likely to attend a four-year college, more likely to be employed if not in college, less likely to drop out of school, and more likely to make more than $6.50 an hour and have employee benefits, compared to those who stayed in the poverty-stricken city areas. The Gautreaux Program research was the catalyst for research conducted on HUD’s “Moving to Opportunity Program,” which found that beneficial changes resulted in families within two to four years and had differential effects for boys and girls. The HUD research was cut off about halfway through the program, however, which left the longitudinal effects on people’s lives unexplored.

Future research should examine factors that contribute to African American male success across the opportunity spectrum, rather than focusing merely on males in the “very low opportunity” areas, because of the explicit links of their outcomes to the whole region. Further, research should also consider the similar proportionality between African American males and females, while remaining sensitive to gender-specific needs. Opportunity mapping may be the first step in conceptualizing future steps that contribute to the healthy development of black males.
Figure 8: Atlanta, GA Metropolitan Area

Atlanta MSA Neighborhood Opportunity Map

Legend
- Major Cities
- County Areas
- Water Features

Opportunity Index Ranking
- Very Low Opportunity
- Low Opportunity
- Moderate Opportunity
- High Opportunity
- Very High Opportunity

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, School Matters.org, Tetrad, Opportunity Analysis by Kirwan Institute
Figure 9: Atlanta, GA Metropolitan Area with African American Males
Figure 10: Chicago, IL Metropolitan Area

Chicago PMSA Neighborhood Opportunity Map

Legend
- Major Cities
- County Areas
- Water Features

Opportunity Index Ranking
- Very Low Opportunity
- Low Opportunity
- Moderate Opportunity
- High Opportunity
- Very High Opportunity

Prepared by: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity, January 26, 2007
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, School Matters.org, Tetrad, Opportunity Analysis by Kirwan Institute
Figure 11: Chicago, IL Metropolitan Area with African American Males

Chicago PMSA Neighborhood Opportunity Map and Distribution of African American Males

Legend
- County Areas
- Water Features
- African American Males
- 1 Dot = 1,200 Persons

Opportunity Index Ranking
- Very Low Opportunity
- Low Opportunity
- Moderate Opportunity
- High Opportunity
- Very High Opportunity

Prepared by: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity, January 26, 2007
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, School Matters.org, Tetrad, Opportunity Analysis by Kirwan Institute
Figure 12: Detroit, MI Metropolitan Area

Detroit PMSA Neighborhood Opportunity Map

Legend
- Major Cities
- County Areas
- Water Features

Opportunity Index Ranking
- Very Low Opportunity
- Low Opportunity
- Moderate Opportunity
- High Opportunity
- Very High Opportunity

Prepared by: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity, January 26, 2007
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, School Matters.org, Tetrad, Opportunity Analysis by Kirwan Institute
Figure 13: Detroit, MI Metropolitan Area with African American Males
Figure 14: Houston, TX Metropolitan Area

Legend
- Major Cities
- County Areas
- Water Features

Opportunity Index Ranking
- Very Low Opportunity
- Low Opportunity
- Moderate Opportunity
- High Opportunity
- Very High Opportunity

Houston PMSA Neighborhood Opportunity Map

Prepared by: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity, January 26, 2007
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, School Matters.org, Tetrad, Opportunity Analysis by Kirwan Institute
Figure 15: Houston, TX Metropolitan Area with African American Males

Legend
- County Areas
- Water Features
- African American Males
- 1 Dot = 350 Persons

Opportunity Index Ranking
- Very Low Opportunity
- Low Opportunity
- Moderate Opportunity
- High Opportunity
- Very High Opportunity

Houston PMSA Neighborhood Opportunity Map and Distribution of African American Males

 Prepared by: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity, January 26, 2007
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, School Matters.org, Tetrad, Opportunity Analysis by Kirwan Institute
Figure 16: Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA Metropolitan Area

Los Angeles PMSA Neighborhood Opportunity Map

Legend
- Major Cities
- County Areas
- Water Features

Opportunity Index Ranking
- Very Low Opportunity
- Low Opportunity
- Moderate Opportunity
- High Opportunity
- Very High Opportunity

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, School Matters.org, Tetrad, Opportunity Analysis by Kirwan Institute
Figure 17: Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA Metropolitan Area with African American Males

Los Angeles PMSA Neighborhood Opportunity Map and Distribution of African American Males

Legend
- County Areas
- Water Features
- African American Males
- 1 Dot = 200 Persons

Opportunity Index Ranking
- Very Low Opportunity
- Low Opportunity
- Moderate Opportunity
- High Opportunity
- Very High Opportunity

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, School Matters.org, Tetrad, Opportunity Analysis by Kirwan Institute
Figure 18: New York, NY Metropolitan Area

New York, NY PMSA Neighborhood Opportunity Map

Legend
- Major Cities
- County Areas
- Water Features

Opportunity Index Ranking
- Very Low Opportunity
- Low Opportunity
- Moderate Opportunity
- High Opportunity
- Very High Opportunity

Prepared by: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity, January 26, 2007
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, School Matters.org, Tetrad, Opportunity Analysis by Kirwan Institute
Figure 19: New York, NY Metropolitan Area with African American Males

New York, NY PMSA Neighborhood Opportunity Map and Distribution of African American Males

Legend
- County Areas
- Water Features
- African American Males
  - 1 Dot = 500 Persons

Opportunity Index Ranking
- Very Low Opportunity
- Low Opportunity
- Moderate Opportunity
- High Opportunity
- Very High Opportunity

Prepared by: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity, January 26, 2007
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, School Matters.org, Tetrad, Opportunity Analysis by Kirwan Institute
Figure 21: Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area with African American Males

Washington D.C. PMSA Neighborhood Opportunity Map and Distribution of African American Males

Legend
- County Areas
- Water Features
- African American Males
- 1 Dot = 400 Persons

Opportunity Index Ranking
- Very Low Opportunity
- Low Opportunity
- Moderate Opportunity
- High Opportunity
- Very High Opportunity

Prepared by: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity, January 26, 2007
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, School Matters.org, Tetrad, Opportunity Analysis by Kirwan Institute
D. Conference and Anthology

1. Conference

The Kirwan Institute hosted a conference on African American males entitled “African American Males: Beyond the School to Prison Pipeline and Moving towards Opportunity,” hosted at the Moritz College of Law, The Ohio State University. The conference focused on the different and sometimes subtle ways in which the education and prison systems interact to create poor outcomes for African American males. Conference panelists also identified other systems that can work together to hinder the life chances of African American males, but noted as well specific instances in which these same institutions and systems worked together to successfully disrupt that pipeline. Thus, the conference effectively not only deepened our understanding of the pressing issues black males face, but also highlighted factors that support economic, political, and social opportunity for males. To connect to the conference audiovisual files, please go to: http://kirwan.gripserver3.com/research/the-african-american-male-initiative/conference-info.php

The introduction: Ohio Senator Ray Miller

The first panel: African American Males and the Education System

Panelists explored how policies in the educational and juvenile justice system can sometimes create unfair and detrimental outcomes for black males (for example, the disproportionately high suspension rates of black males and their “hypercriminalization”). Panelists also examined the role of African American male identity development, classroom management techniques, teacher perception and how it influences the schooling of black males. The panelists included: Tyrone Howard, Ph.D., Graduate School for Education and Information Studies, University of California Los Angeles; Carla Monroe, Ph.D., Institute for Behavioral Research and Social Foundation of Education, University of Georgia; Victor Rios, Ph.D., Department of Sociology, University of California Santa Barbara; Miles Anthony Irving, Ph.D., Educational Psychology and Special Education, Georgia State University.

The second panel: The Impact of Health and Economy on African American Males

This panel explored how other systems (for example, public health and the economy) can and too often do negatively impact the pipeline and life chances for males and how these same systems may come together to promote their advancement. Panelists also attempted to answer the following questions: How do we link African American males to economic opportunity? How do both mental and public health issues impact social and economic opportunity for black males? Panelists included: William Oliver, Ph.D., Department of Criminal Justice, Indiana University; Jessica Gordon Nembhard, Ph.D., African American Studies Department and the Democracy Collaborative, University of Maryland; Kenneth Steinman, Ph.D., MPH, College of Public Health, The Ohio State University; and James Moore, Ph.D., College of Education, The Ohio State University.
The third panel: *African American Males and Incarceration*

Panelists examined the conditioning effects of structural factors, such as neighborhood conditions and socio-political realities, on the dynamics that lead to the incarceration of so many African Americans males. Discussions that ensued focused on the harmful effects, and the interactions between, policies such as “zero tolerance” and the three strikes law. The members of the panel included: Christopher Robbins, Ph.D., Department of Teacher Education, Eastern Michigan University; Daniel Losen, J.D., The Civil Rights Project, University of California Los Angeles; Adolphus Belk, Ph.D., Department of Political Science and the African American Studies Program, Winthrop University.

The final panel: *The Dynamics of African American Male Opportunity*

Panelists delved into the association between the geographic context of black males and opportunity. Seven maps from cities across the U.S. were used to show the spatial relationship between black males and economic, social, and educational opportunity. Panelists also discussed excellence and high achievement of black males in college and how programs can support academic success. Panelists included: Shaun Harper, Ph.D., Center for the Study of Higher Education, The Pennsylvania State University; Keith Harmon, The Meyerhoff Scholarship Program, University of Maryland, Baltimore County; Keith Bell, Principal, Westerville South High School; Jason Reece, Senior GIS Demographic Department, The Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University; and Denis Rhoden, GIS Demographic Department, The Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University.

Closing remarks: *Judge Yvette McGee Brown*

2. Anthology

We have gathered the following papers that emerged from the conference, which we are preparing for publication:

- *Predicting Educational Risks in a Sample of Court-Involved African American Males: The Significant Influence of Family Processes, Delinquent Peer Associations, and Mental Health Issues* by Steven M. Gavazzi and Christiana M. Russell;

- *Schools and Prisons: How Far Have We Come Since Brown V. Board of Education?* by Marc Mauer and Ryan S. King;

- *Student Discipline and the School-to-Prison Pipeline in the U.S. South: Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice* by Carla R. Monroe and Jerome E. Morris;

- *Structural Racism and Street Socialization: Contextualizing the School-to-Prison Pipeline* by William Oliver; and

Recomendations
E. Recommendations

Strategies to Support Best Practices and Next Steps for African American Male Advocacy and Scholarship

Efforts to advance racial and ethnic justice, in general, and the welfare of African American males, in particular, have been too fragmented, disjointed and sometimes counter-productive. If we, as change agents, are to negotiate that complexity more effectively, we must pool the considerable talents, but limited resources we bring to bear, on the tasks at hand, and those yet to come. There are a number of best practices drawn from our comprehensive review of the literature on black males, our interviews with advisory board members, and convening with policymakers and advocacy groups that we include below.

We suggest organizing these strategies around the creation of a vibrant national African American Male Network, which would facilitate more purposeful knowledge production, consensus building, and strategic collaboration within the universe of individuals and organizations already engaged in this work. Such a network would also create a welcoming community for those who would contribute to this work and facilitate substantive interactions between researchers, policymakers, and advocacy groups, as well as a broader audience of potential allies, including the general public.

To realize these vital objectives and create such a Network, we see a critical need for at least five components: 1) Models of, and support for, collaboration within the African American Male field of research and advocacy; 2) a research-advocacy database; 3) support for racial justice research and advocacy centers devoted to this work; 4) attention to transformative structural approaches; and 5) more widespread and rigorous program evaluation of African American male initiatives. We close with one final recommendation for the development of more research-based pilot programs aimed at improving the life outcomes of African American males.

1. Models of, and Support for, Stronger Collaborations Within the Field of African American Male Research/Advocacy

It is imperative that we create more formalized and systemic sharing of information, ideas, resources, and activities between organizations doing work in this field. The objectives in doing so would be to reduce duplicative efforts, strengthen areas of expertise within each organization, ensure that all critical issues are covered comprehensively, and, where appropriate, to join forces to more effectively meet the long-term needs of the field. Additional objectives might include:

a. Developing a shared, long-term vision for what an equitable multiracial society in the United States could and should look like;
b. Creating an inventory of major issues addressed by participating organizations, and inventory methods for addressing these issues;
c. Identifying major gaps that continue to exist in advocacy along with emergent opportunities for policy reform;
d. Recognizing and working toward critical, actionable points of consensus on overarching goals by analyzing ways in which groups could more effectively harness and align their talents, resources, and areas of strength to advance the larger racial justice movement, and produce more equitable policies and practices;

e. Building a robust and coherent body of information and knowledge to transform the structures that marginalize African American males and mark needs for additional data and research;

f. Convening at least one and possibly two meetings where representatives from each organization can gather to discuss past, present, and future projects and goals;

g. Developing new models of joint fundraising that can reduce the resources each organization devotes to this task, and that can minimize competition for the same dollars from the same sources; and,

h. Developing effective new models for collaboration/partnerships/dissemination with civil rights and other advocacy groups at the regional, community, state, and national levels that are working to influence and inform public policy debates and legislation.

2. Research-Advocacy Database

One promising idea to advance social justice work embraced by leaders at the NAACP, MALDEF, and the National Urban League, among others, is to create and actively manage an interactive, well-indexed, searchable web-based database that would allow policymakers, advocacy organizations, and journalists to:

a. Connect with other advocates quickly and efficiently, facilitated by the descriptions of their missions, priority issues, and products of advocacy that impact the African American male and by the identification of those organizations with demonstrable short, medium, and/or long-term needs;

b. Efficiently access an extensive range of relevant empirical data and research, including annotated bibliographies of and critical essays on work applicable to particular fields of inquiry (e.g., black males, prisoner reentry, the school-prison pipeline);

c. Map the field of researchers working in, or interested in, actively supporting the work of advocates and policy-makers, along with the interests, skills, and expertise that researchers bring to their work;

d. Share policy-related materials; and

e. Post a calendar listing events of importance to them.

3. Support for Racial Justice Research/Advocacy Centers

Our nation’s colleges and universities contain many talented people working on racial justice issues (e.g., in racial and ethnic studies departments; at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, tribal colleges, and at Hispanic Serving Institutions). Few of them are organized to make the kinds of policy-relevant contributions their skills, expertise, and geography otherwise well position them to make. Well-established centers such as the Kirwan Institute, the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute at Harvard University, and the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Race, Ethnicity and Diversity could draw on our substantial experience, and those of other university-based research and advocacy organizations, to help reduce these and other
transactions costs, and thereby help strengthen and enlarge the network of people and organizations doing consequential African American male and racial justice work.

4. **Attention to Transformative Structural Approaches**

In order to foster effective responses it is essential to:

a. Sharpen and share our insights about the structures, practices and conditions that encourage disproportionately poor outcomes for African American men;

b. Conduct future research and mapping that examine factors that contribute to African American male success across the opportunity spectrum, rather than focusing merely on males in the “very low opportunity” areas, because of the explicit links of their outcomes to the whole region.

c. Consider strategies that create communities of opportunity; and

d. Make the structures that maintain or promote racial and ethnic hierarchy visible and intelligible to the broader public, and thereby create a public more supportive of racially progressive policy and practice.

5. **Program Evaluation of African American Male Initiatives**

Despite the development of new initiatives to improve the quality of life outcomes for males, very few of these initiatives have received any sort of program evaluation. We propose that all such initiatives be evaluated on their effectiveness for improving outcomes for males. Attention should be given to whether initiatives address the structural context – the cumulative effect of the interaction of systems and institutions – that African American males experience.

**Conclusion**

While much research is being conducted around African American males, the field is still emerging, particularly in the context of the psycho-social development of black males. We have to keep in mind the growing diversity within the group we think of as “African-Americans” as we develop research questions and recommendations. Are we talking about men and boys in northern urban centers or about those living in the rural south? Are we looking at those in the slowly shrinking middle-class, at members of the so-called “underclass,” or at the sons of corporate executives and university professors? What are the immigrant experiences of African-American males, particularly those recently arriving from Western and Eastern Africa? From a systemic and developmental perspective, no one influence on black males eclipses the potential influence of others. In the area of family development, for example, we need to explore the various familial experiences black males have throughout childhood and adolescence, in addition to the roles they may assume as biological fathers. There are also important areas of research that have not yet yielded dependable findings, and a number of questions remain unanswered (the implications for black boys of “acting white” in the education context). If we are not careful in the formulation of our research questions, we will produce poor answers and poorly formulated policies.
With this in mind, we make one final recommendation:

We call on foundations to lift up this complex but approachable work around African American males within the next year or two by supporting the development of pilot programs that are well-grounded in the research literature and have been carefully evaluated over time.

We must continue our efforts to effect substantial structural change and improvement in the lives of African American males. The African American community, and indeed all communities, will benefit from this increasing vitality.
References
F. References


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Appendix

Final Narrative Report
APPENDIX:
Final Narrative Report to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

This section responds directly to questions posed by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to enable Foundation staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the grant to The Kirwan Institute. It draws upon the Executive Summary and other findings within the report itself.

A. Project Summary

For nearly two years, the W. K. Kellogg foundation has funded the Kirwan Institute to expand the knowledge base and academic scholarship on African American males. The major goals we have met in this work include: A) updating the social science literature on African American males; B) assembling and learning from a national advisory board of scholars on African American males; C) completing a mapping project on the isolation of African American males from opportunities, a goal not explicitly recorded in our grant proposal; and D) convening a national conference on African American males that will culminate in a published anthology of emergent research and literature on African American males. We hoped through this work to identify gaps in the research literature, as the last such review took place more than a decade ago. We also looked to identify areas of research that needed greater energy, focus on literature and scholarship that was concerned with the successful outcomes of black males, and identify promising responses to the largely structurally induced crises that males face.

A major component of this work was to conduct a comprehensive review of the literature on black males in the areas of education, mental health, employment, juvenile justice, incarceration, etc. The last such review took place more than a decade ago (Gordon, Gordon, and Nembhard, 1994). Scholars in the original review determined that research on black males was situated in four main areas: 1) education; 2) psychological issues; 3) politics and economics; and 4) demographical and statistical data.

Although these issues remain salient more than ten years later, several emergent themes have broadened the research field. The first theme considers the influence of music on the racial identity and academic achievement of black males. Recent research has found that black male college students who listen to rap music that contains socially conscious lyrics had healthier male self concepts and racial identities than black males who listened to rap music that contained violent lyrics (Jamison, 2006). Another emergent theme was investigations into the identity construction of black males as both racial and gendered selves. These studies focused on the negative perceptions of black males by school personnel and other students. The negative perceptions of others were often internalized by black males, which led to problematic behavioral outcomes. Homelessness is another new category in the literature. Research on homeless black males is a relatively new area. However, the literature on homelessness illuminates the strong association between homelessness, job loss, and mental and public health factors.

There is also a growing body of research labeled “community/environment/geography” which links developmental outcomes for black males to neighborhood and community factors. Crowder, Tolnay, and Aldeman (2001), for example, have demonstrated that black males from
low opportunity areas in northern cities who migrated south increased their economic and job opportunities and had better social networks in their new communities of residence. Lastly, the previous review revealed that research on single-female-headed households showed that black males who resided in mother-only households have poor social and academic outcomes. New research in the current review shows that this finding still holds true in current research studies, but there is a growing body of research that examines the broader constellation of family structures. Constellation studies account for the fact that single-female-headed households may include extended family members and non-resident fathers. Therefore, research may begin to compare outcomes for males in mother-only households and mothers raising males with non-resident fathers, which acknowledges the diverse family structures of households with black male children (Zimmerman, Salem, & Maton, 1999).

Research on the family structures that black males reside in has also begun to examine the role of “other fathers” or “social fathers” which are male relatives or family associates who act as a role model by sharing their values and displaying father-like or appropriate behaviors on black male development. The long-neglected influences of divorced fathers and single-parent-father households have also garnered critical attention in the literature.

Our analytic review of the literature has revealed that much of the research and scholarship on black males has been rooted in a “cultural” or “deficit” model. In other words, the lens used to explain black male disparities in education and employment outcomes or their overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system was largely rooted in a framework that construed black males as the source of their own problems, giving little consideration to contextual or structural factors. In light of the overuse of the deficit framework, less research is available that explains how structural factors impact outcomes in the areas of education, employment, and mental/public health for males. Because of this framework, we are under-informed about how some black males manage to avoid the pitfalls and hardships that beset other black males, despite structural constraints (Noguera, 2003). Furthermore, much of the research also concentrates on “young black males,” ignoring inquires regarding older males or the early adolescent growth period for males. This gap in the literature is especially critical in the preadolescent years for male development because the dearth of such research limits the development of interventions that may promote key substantive and transformative changes for this population. In addition, without studies on older males, the research loses the critical voices and experiences of mature males.

Another critical part of the project was to assemble a national advisory board to assist the project team with guiding the social science literature review and to identify new directions for research, initiatives, and policies that would improve male outcomes. The board includes representation by individuals from various social science disciplines who examined research on African American males. While reviewing the literature on Black males, there were several common themes that became apparent in the social science literature.

Based on the findings of the literature review and the conversations with the advisory board members, the project team hosted a conference that examined the school to prison pipeline using a multidisciplinary approach, entitled “African American Males: Beyond the School to Prison Pipeline and Moving Toward Opportunity.” The conference focused on the different and
sometimes subtle ways in which the educational and prison system interact to create disparate situations for African American males. Also, the conference identified other systems that may work together to hinder the life chances of African American males, and more importantly, show how these same systems may come together to interrupt the pipeline for males. This was a highly successful conference that was attended by nearly four-hundred people. Panels from the conference included: 1) African American Males and the Educational System; 2) The Impact of Health and the Economy on African American Males; 3) African American Males and Incarceration; and 4) The Dynamics of African American Male Opportunity.

Papers from the conference are being assembled to constitute a book for future publishing. The following is a list of proposed papers to be published in this book: 1) Predicting Educational Risks in a Sample of Court-Involved African American Males: The Significant Influence of Family Processes, Delinquent Peer Associations, and Mental Health Issues by Steven M. Gavazzi and Christiana M. Russell; (2) Schools and Prisons: How Far Have We Come Since Brown V. Board of Education? by Marc Mauer and Ryan S. King; (3) Student Discipline and the School-to-Prison Pipeline in the U.S. South: Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice by Carla R. Monroe and Jerome E. Morris; (4) Structural Racism and Street Socialization: Contextualizing the School-to-Prison Pipeline by William Oliver; and (5) Assaulting Life Chances: The Criminalization of Youth and the Militarization of Schooling by Christopher G. Robbins.

**B. Progress towards Goals**

1. **What policy targets should be developed at the local level and state level to promote “success” models for African American males at pre-school, elementary, secondary and post secondary?**

The following are our policy recommendations:

**Pre-school**

- Efforts should be made to increase the involvement of fathers in the pre-school activities of their children, at the local level. School activities for fathers should be both formal and informal opportunities and should be structured to develop relationships between black males and school personnel.

- Parents should be engaged in pre-school level activities that offer opportunities to increase their academic skills so they are better prepared to help their children. Studies have shown that low-income black parents tutored in mathematics have improved the academic outcomes of their children.

- The components of highly successful programs should be examined and replicated. For example, the Perry School Program and the Abecedarian project included early-education, evaluation design, family support, home visits, group meetings with parents and activities focused on social, emotional, cognitive and language areas for children.
- Develop alternative ways to select students for placement in AP courses to increase the number of black males.

- Develop greater institutional support for black males in PWIs.

**Elementary School Policies**

- Mandatory cultural competency courses and in-service training for teachers should be put in place that would include information on the learning styles and cultural background of many African American male students. Training should also include assisting teachers in recognizing and understanding their own biases and prejudices against African American males (and other historically marginalized groups).

- Strategic plans should be made to recruit and retain more black male teachers. Currently, black males represent 1% of the teaching force (Lewis, 2006). Some suggestions offered to help with recruiting and retaining male teachers include assigning male teachers a mentor, targeting black male high school students for recruitment into the teaching profession, increasing collaboration with 2-year institutions since most males attend community colleges, and using teacher preparatory programs to increase black male PRAXIS scores.

- Culturally specific programming that pays attention to cultural specificity and learning styles.

- After-school funding should be provided for academic competency and social activities for black males in the non-school hours. Research has shown that in the non-school hours black males spend more time watching television than their white peers.

**Middle School Policies**

- A “safety valve” process should be installed in schools with predominately African American male students to track the number of males being recommended for suspensions. When the suspension rates of black males reach a critical level, school personnel should be alerted and should enact policies to reduce the number of black males being suspended.

- School social workers should take a more active role in questioning recommendations by teachers and administrators in order to reduce the overrepresentation of black males in special education (Mills, 2003).

- Comprehensive reevaluation of the use of zero tolerance policies in middle schools should be undertaken.

- Single sex classes should be established for black males in math and science.
High School Policies

- Schools should place equal focus on improving academic competency and high school graduation rates for black male students.
- A drop-out prevention program that specifically targets African American male students should be established.
- School counselors should make sure that students and their families are aware of the college admissions process, critical aspects of the financial aid process, and how to prepare for successful college outcomes. In addition, viable alternatives should be presented to males who are not college bound.
- Black male students should be strongly encouraged to enroll in gifted and AP classes, with efforts made to ensure the presence of a critical mass of black male students in those classes.
- School personnel should maintain detailed records on how many black male students are enrolled in gifted and AP classes and how many persist in those classes.

College

- College programs and interventions that support males beyond their first year of college should be established. Studies have shown that males disidentify with college as they move through their college years, which may contribute to high attrition rates.
- Measures must be taken to ensure that black males are both academically and socially integrated into college.
- Supportive measures for African American males enrolled in two-year colleges should be developed and implemented.

2. What are the communication and distribution strategies for your findings?

There are several plans to distribute the findings from the literature review and the interviews into newspaper and journal articles. These findings will also continue to be presented to the general public, researchers, juvenile justice workers, and community members at conferences. The findings will also be used in practical ways; the project director has already begun to work with juvenile justice workers and magistrates in Ohio to develop a cultural curriculum for juvenile justice staff working with incarcerated youth. This process to develop a curriculum is based on the research findings and interviews with advisory board members. The papers from the African American male conference are being organized for publication as an edited volume. Currently, proceedings from the conference and the interviews of the project’s advisory board can be found at the Institute’s website located at www.kirwaninstitute.org.
3. **What are the recommendations for the next steps?**

The following are our recommendations for next steps:

a. The State of Ohio will be investing in several initiatives to stimulate the economy to create high-wage jobs. One of these initiatives is to produce skilled employees in the STEM fields. Efforts should be advanced to link black males into these new reforms in a meaningful and substantial way.

b. There are several initiatives for black males in the State of Ohio, with many projects focused on improving educational opportunities for black males. Efforts should emerge that would allow key members from these initiatives to work together to alleviate key disparate educational outcomes for black males, i.e., suspension rates. This would allow Ohio to serve as a national model or test site on how initiatives on black males may interact together.

c. Efforts should be made to move the dialogue on black males. Many of the discussions on black males are centered on mentoring and role models. Mentoring and role models for black males are essential, but other key policies for black males should also be included in the discussion.

4. **Summarize your achievements.**

The following are achievements that have not been discussed previously in the body of this report:

a. The GIS staff at the Kirwan Institute used a GIS mapping strategy to visually represent the environmental factors affecting African American males. Research on opportunity indicators was collected from seven large, culturally historically diverse metropolitan regions: New York, NY; Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI; Houston, TX; Atlanta, GA; Los Angeles, CA; and Washington D.C. The maps and written report have been included with this report.

b. The African American Male Project Team has presented at several conferences including the Indiana Commission on African American Males, Black History Month at OSU-Marion Campus, United Way’s Juvenile Justice Collaborative Meeting and for a meeting with judges and magistrates in the State of Ohio on black males in the juvenile justice system. The research team also interviewed with the Pittsburgh Gazette for their newspaper series on black males.

c. The Project Director has also been invited to participate on several boards for initiatives concerning black males, including those of the United Way, the Urban League, and the Ohio Board of Regents.
5. **Describe activities undertaken and lessons learned during the life of your project.**

a. Literature Review – There are a large number of studies on African American males. To limit the amount of information and not to become cumbersome, studies were limited to journal articles and research methodology sections had to explicitly identify that black males were included in the study. Further, there were several studies in the literature that included sample studies of a handful of males. These studies were included on a case by case basis. Even though there is a large database of studies, many studies are examining the same issue. In several cases, we used representative studies to frame the research on black males.

b. Book – we have had difficulty securing a publisher, but continue to consider ways to enhance the value of the planned volume for publishers (including inviting additional top figures in the field to contribute to the volume). We would also welcome the opportunity to work with the Foundation to pursue publishing possibilities.

c. Mapping project – The mapping research brings to light a new area of untapped research potential and ways to study structural issues facing males.

d. Presentations – The research from the literature review provides a useful and informative discussion for presentations but it also provides very few viable solutions and policies to improve black male outcomes.

6. **If some intended activities were not undertaken, please note them and explain why they were not pursued.**

Instead of convening a gathering of the national advisory board, we conducted individual interviews with members. This was largely due to the difficulty of scheduling a large number of very busy people. Further, we believed that individual interviews would prove to be more valuable to the project, because it would allow us to interact on a more meaningful level with individual scholars on their research concerning black males.

C. **Future Plans**

1. **Has the project become self-sustaining? What activities are being continued?**

The project director will continue attending conferences and symposiums to inform the general public, academics, and community members about the current research on African American males. The project director will also continue to pursue having the African American male book published based on the conference proceedings. Finally, the project director will modify this report for release to the general public.

2. **What structure has been established for the continuation of this project?**

By identifying future areas for research, this project has laid the foundation upon which strong research directions can be explored and developed. The book and future journal articles provide
a sound foundation to continue the work as well. Furthermore, the project leader’s relationships with top scholars and researchers in the field allow for a strong base to continue the project.

3. What indications are there that this project can (or cannot) be adopted elsewhere?

Given that the majority of this project is a comprehensive review of the literature, this project can be easily replicated. The relationships were established through contacting scholars directly. Cooperation from members of the advisory board and other partners shows there is great interest in this topic area, and therefore, future scholarship and research is a viable path to pursue.

D. Project Director’s Opinion

1. What do you think are the most important outcomes and “lessons learned” from this project? What recommendations would you make to other project directors working in this area or to the Foundation?

Relevant outcomes and lessons learned from this project consist of recognizing the importance of examining structural and cultural outcomes to depict the problems black males face as well as to prescribe solutions for those males placed at-risk for educational failure, lower economic opportunities, and mental and public health concerns. Far too often, research solutions and policies to help males are focused only on solutions that are rooted in black male culture. These solutions only blame males and do not account for structural constraints.

The lack of interdisciplinary approaches to examine issues faced by males is also a critical problem. It is clear that crises in one system for black males may create multiple problems for them in others. Thus, for example, homeless black males are not only at-risk for unemployment, but are also at-risk for mental and public health issues, including depression and HIV/AIDS.

There are also too few studies that point to deep structural solutions to the difficulties so many black males face. For example, the substitution of “caring environments and teachers” for destructive ones, as articulated in the school literature, is an unobjectionable goal, but hardly one that implements itself. Why do we not link more studies and policy solutions for black males to NCLB policy?

Another important outcome was the recognition of the need to move the public dialogue on African American males. A lot of the discussion of black males points to the need for more mentors and improvements in high school graduation rates, while focusing solely on negative male outcomes. These are all critical issues. However, public discussions on black males must become more inclusive. We need better analyses of how and why African American males succeed in different arenas as well as how and why they do not.

Future project directors should make concerted efforts to connect with other individuals involved in the scholarship on black males, preferably in the early stages of the project. There is a lot of work being done with African American males and it is essential to know the key players in the field and the scholarship on males. It is also important to make the research meaningful to
community members and practitioners, as many may not see how research is connected to policy and to their everyday work with males. If we are to ensure that the studies conducted over the next generation do not reiterate the kinds of grim statistics recorded within the last generation of research on African American males, we must redouble our efforts to push and pull our collective work in the same transformative direction.