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Dignity for Boys and Men of Color: An Exploration with Practitioners in the Field of Human Services

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DIGNITY FOR BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR:
AN EXPLORATION WITH PRACTITIONERS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN SERVICES

by
Monique I. Liston

A Dissertation Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

**DIGNITY FOR BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR:
AN EXPLORATION WITH PRACTITIONERS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN SERVICES**
by

Monique I. Liston

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2018
Under the Supervision of Professor Raji Swaminathan

Through “Shaping a Cooperative Vision for Boys and Men of Color” the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Research Center of Urban Education Leadership Development found that organizations working with boys and men of color need tools to conceptualize and measure their efforts towards creating equity as an outcome and indicator of success. The data collected in this research revealed that organizations attribute aspects of their success to the dignity of the boys and men of color that they serve. However, this “dignity-work” is not accurately measured or evaluated. Successful organizations that attribute upholding the dignity of boys and men of color to their organizational success do not have the tools to provide evidence of their dignity-work. Further, organizations that admit that they need to improve their work with boys and men of color acknowledge the need to understand how their organization can uphold and maintain the dignity of Black males. The purpose of this research project is to understand how human service practitioners understand, conceptualize and develop dignity within their organization to support the Black males that they serve. The findings include how practitioners identified R.A.C.E. through Dignity as a theoretical framework to describe their efforts towards creating equity. Chapter 5 discusses changes to the workshops as informed by the findings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Implementing My Brother’s Keeper: The Need for a Dignity-Based Approach	1
Introduction	1
The Pilot Study	2
Why Milwaukee?	5
The Limitations of MBK Nationally and Locally	8
Uncovering the My Brother’s Keeper Theory of Change	11
Collective impact.	11
The significance of place.	13
Life course approach.	15
Data driven decision making.	16
Discussion: Dignity as a Framework for Advancing My Brother’s Keeper	17
Conclusion	22
Chapter 2: Dignity and Black Male Achievement: A Literature Review.....	23
Introduction	23
Philosophy on Dignity	25
Ontological basis of essential humanness.	28
Multidimensionality.	32
Black Males and Dignity	34
A historical view: creating African-American (Black identity) and dignity	36
A contemporary view: Black male achievement.	45
Dignity in Sociology of Work	51
Dignity in the Caring Sciences	57
Literature Review Summary and Research Questions	59
Chapter 3: Methodological Approach	61
Introduction	61
Transformations	62
Epistemological and Ideological Foundations	62
Influences	64
Projections	65
Analysis of Caring Science Instruments	66
Factors contributing to a sense of dignity.	66
Conceptualization and Instrumentation.	70
Cultural relevance.	73
Discussion and Application to Development of Dignity Tools	75
Research approach and overview of research design	77
Positionality	79
Key Informant Interviews	79
Study Participants	80
Data collection procedures	81
Post focus group interviews.	81
Data analysis procedures	81
Key Informant Interviews	81
Workshop Changes	82

Data Collection procedures	83
Post group interviews.....	83
Analysis	85
Chapter 4: Findings	86
Purpose of the Study	86
Study Demographics	87
Dignity as Theory	88
The discourse of dignity for human service practitioners.....	89
Conceptual foundations of dignity as theory.	91
Potential for applied theory.....	96
Summary.....	97
Dignity Conscious Events (DCEs)	97
Internal Dignity Conscious Events (IDCEs).....	98
External Dignity Recognition Events.	101
Summary.....	104
Fluidity of Time and Positionality	104
Cosmograms	104
Epiphenomenal Time.....	105
Positionality	106
Erica’s Story.....	108
Others	110
Summary.....	111
Summary of Findings	111
Chapter 5: Implications of Dignity For Boys And Men Of Color: An Exploration With Practitioners In The Field Of Human Services	112
Overview	112
Implications for Human Services Practitioners	113
Implications for Evaluating Progress Toward Racial Equity Goals	116
Recommendations	118
Radical Accountability for Creating Equity (R.A.C.E.) through Dignity	121
Anticipated Immediate Outcomes.....	122
Activities.....	122
Preparation Questions	122
The R.A.C.E for Dignity Approach	123
What We Mean By Dignity	125
Let’s Get Specific	125
Foundations of R.A.C.E. through Dignity	127
White Supremacy? This goes there?.....	128
So...are you ready to use this curriculum?	128
The R.A.C.E. through Dignity Process	129
Capacity Building	129
Dignity Coaching.....	130
Community Conferencing.....	130
Who Should Participate From My Organization?	131
Expected Outcomes: Characteristics of R.A.C.E. through Dignity	132
References	158

Curriculum Vitae170

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 My Brother's Keeper Theory of Change	135
Figure 2: A conceptual model of dignity instruments 2000-2015	142
Figure 3: Distribution of Concepts Across Dignity Instruments	143
Figure 4: Dignity Concepts Presented in Workshops (Michael, 2014)	156
Figure 5: Ba-Kongo Cosmogram Presented in Workshops	157

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Aligning MBK Theoretical Frameworks to A Dignity-based Framework	136
Table 2: Dignity Instruments in the Caring Sciences 2000 - 2015	138
Table 3: Concepts Present in Dignity Instruments	140
Table 4: Key Informant Participants	144
Table 5: Focus Group Participants	145
Table 6: Original Focus Group Session Descriptions	146
Table 7: Code Book	148
Table 8 - Revised Codes	153
Table 9: Focus Group Participants	154

Chapter 1: Implementing My Brother's Keeper: The Need for a Dignity-Based Approach

Introduction

The Obama Presidency will generate a wide range of research, opinion and analysis relating to race and the challenges of a 21st century democracy. In 2014, President Barack Obama started My Brother's Keeper (MBK), a two-fold initiative to (a) address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and (b) ensure that all young people can reach their full potential. My Brother's Keeper is a unique initiative that specifically targets intersectional inequity. Racial inequity, a social and political reality in the United States, occurs when people experience ideological, institutional, interpersonal or internalized oppression because of their racial identity (Bracey, 2005; Milner IV et al., 2013). The 'persistent opportunity gaps' faced by boys and men of color, specifically Black males, are an example of the impact of racial inequity in society. Despite the passing of the 14th amendment over a century and a half ago, equal protection under the law for all citizens regardless of racial identity remains elusive. The My Brother's Keeper initiative is national policy that recognizes that many boys and men of color, particularly Black males are unable to access the privileges and immunities afforded to all citizens and thus are routinely deprived of life, liberty and property without due process of law.

Milwaukee is one of several Midwestern cities signed on to this initiative. Milwaukee has a unique story to tell because the city pioneered gender-based racial equity programs for Black male youth through the creation of African-American immersion schools in the early 1990s (Span, 2002). Milwaukee is an active participant in the My Brother's Keeper initiative. It is important to study My Brother's Keeper implementation in Milwaukee because of its relationship to the

national conversation, particularly in regards to Black males. Milwaukee is home to 90% of Wisconsin's African American population ("African Americans in Wisconsin - Overview", 2017). Black males in Wisconsin have been highlighted in the global conversation on inequality (Butler, 2013; Garibaldi, 1992). From incarceration to employment, black males fare far worse here than many other places in the world.

The Pilot Study

Milwaukee is one of over 250 local entities that signed on to the MBK-CC. The final requirement of accepting the MBK-CC was the development of a local action plan to address boys and men of color. The Research Center for Urban Education and Leadership Development (RCUELD) partnered with Community Advocates to conduct a research project to serve as the basis of Milwaukee's local action plan. This research project was the pilot study for my dissertation research. The study was called "Shaping a Cooperative Vision for Boys and Men of Color in the Greater Milwaukee Region". The research study was not limited to education but addressed key areas of social, economic, and educational development that provided additional support to African American males. The purpose of this study was to find how organizations in the area envisioned their work in relation to the success of boys and men of color in the area. For example, educational organizations discussed their work in terms of improving educational outcomes for boys and men of color.

We created a survey asking local organizations working with boys and men of color to report on their current scope of work, staff demographics, services, programs and institutional capacity. Organizations had the option of participating in a site visit after completing the survey. Fifty-three organizations participated in the survey and 21 organizations continued through the site visit phase. The site visit included an interview with organizational leadership that could speak to

the organization's mission, vision, and program activities. Our results were published in a report entitled, "Dignity Based BMOC Work: What it Is and Why It Matters." The findings concluded: "The primary "needs" that we found organizations required in order to more accurately assess their programs' impacts and to advance their visions for working with boys and men of color included:

- a. Guiding concepts, precise language, and alternate discourses that accurately reflected practitioners' visions for Black males and BMOC and their organizations' roles in carrying out their vision; new and compelling theories of change that reflected everyday practices that organizations engaged and believed were "proven" to qualitatively and subjectively improve BMOC's lives; and precise indicators, evaluative tools, and data collection approaches that reflected practitioners' most important intended outcomes, but which they regarded as "difficult to describe/hard to measure (Irby, 2016)." We proposed that one concept best addressed the needs of organizations working with Black males: dignity.

Milwaukee's local action plan is distinct from many other local action plans. The plan centers on the dignity of boys and men of color. Dignity is used as more than an ideological notion, but a research-based framework with the goal of creating a more racially equitable city. The plan gained national attention and remains at the forefront of policy and programming discussions within city government, school districts, non-profits and other human service agencies. While the plan provides specific language for organizations and policymakers to respect, protect, and fulfill a sense of dignity for boys and men of color in the city, there is still a need for tools to evaluate and assess progress and process towards the goal of creating sustainable racial equity within the city. In the following sections, I identify the gaps in implementation of the My Brother's Keeper initiative. Specifically, I describe how the implementation of this federal initiative misses the mark on not considering dignity a concept deemed important through the pilot study.

Milwaukee is also home to one of the most radical proposals in education, black male immersion schools (Dupper, 1992; Leake & Leake, 1992; Span, 2002). However, to set this initiative apart from many other federal programs proposed to improve the lives of a racialized minority group, Milwaukee, and the national initiative, need tools to evaluate and assess how MBK focused programs and initiatives create sustainable racial equity.

The purpose of the MBK initiative is to “build ladders of opportunity for boys and young men of color” by determining how public and private efforts work together, how Federal government policies and programs can support these efforts and how to better involve state and local governments, the corporate sector and the philanthropic community (Obama, 2014).“ Through this executive order, several members of President Obama’s Cabinet, including the Attorney General, the Secretary of Education, and Director of the National Economic Council were named as members of the My Brother’s Keepers Task Force. The Task Force was charged with “assessing the impact of Federal policies, regulations, and programs of general applicability on boys and young men of color”; “recommend, where appropriate, incentives for the broad adoption by national, State, and local public and private decision makers of effective and innovative strategies and practices for providing opportunities to and improving outcomes for boys and young men of color”; “provide relevant Federal data assets and expertise to public and private efforts to increase opportunities and improve life outcomes for boys and young men of color” and “explore ways to coordinate with State and local governments and non-governmental actors with useful data and expertise (My Brother’s Keeper Task Force, 2014).” Within 90 days of the Presidential Memorandum, the MBK Task Force outlined six milestones for boys and men of color to serve as the focus of MBK work: 1) getting a healthy start

and entering school ready to learn 2) reading at grade level by third grade 3) graduating from high school ready for college and career, 4) completing postsecondary education or training 5) successfully entering the workforce and 6) keeping kids on track and giving them second chances.

To deepen the stretch of My Brother's Keeper in local communities, the White House, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education, and The National Convening Council, a program of the New Venture Fund, started the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge (MBK-CC) in September 2014 (MBK Community Challenge: How Your Community Can Step Up, 2014). The MBKCC is a national call to action for cities, counties and tribal nations to develop and execute a cradle-to-college and career strategies to improve life outcomes for all youth, consistent with the goals and recommendations of the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Task Force's 90-day report (My Brother's Keeper Task Force, 2014). To participate in the community challenge, entities had to complete four steps: accept, convene, conduct and launch. The outcome of these steps was the creation of a local action plan that describes how the local entity will improve the outcomes of boys and men of color. The MBK-CC is intended to encourage local-level entities to implement a comprehensive strategy for helping all young people to reach their full potential. Communities that signed on to the initiative were eligible for financial support from the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, a nonprofit extension of President Obama's initiative.

Why Milwaukee?

Milwaukee, Wisconsin has a rich history of addressing Black male achievement, the core issue of the My Brother's Keeper initiative. From 1965 to 1989, Milwaukee Public Schools engaged in legal battles to address the effects of segregation on the school district. Educational reports during the 1980s and 1990s showed that African American males students were not achieving on par with their male or female counterparts. This gap is commonly referred to as the

achievement gap. Per the wisdom of Asa Hilliard, this research does not embrace the achievement gap as the problematizing of Black male students marginalization in the educational system (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003). There is an international gap of excellence and this research assumes that excellence is the goal for all children and our current system does not do that, especially for black males. Gloria Ladson-Billings also challenges the achievement gap idea by posing the inequities between Black children and White children as the achievement debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006). During the 1989-1990 school year, the school board identified the following: less than 20% of African American males in the district had grade point averages of 2.0 or higher; African American males were only 27.6% of the entire district population yet during the 1989-1990 school year they were 50% of the students suspended; and, MPS ranked third nationally in suspensions of African American males and 94% of suspensions were African American males (African American Male Task Force, 1990). Milwaukee Public Schools looks much different currently, with African American males being closer to 50% of the entire district population during the last five years (*Milwaukee Public Schools District Report Card*, 2011).

In response to the statistics in 1990, the Milwaukee Board of School Directors (MBSD) recommended that the Superintendent establish an African American Male Task Force (AAMTF). The purpose of this taskforce was to review current educational policy and recommend specific strategies to improve the educational outcomes of African American males. The task force concluded that integration in public schools can be considered an absolute failure and that “long bus rides to hostile communities” did not contribute to student success (African American Male Task Force, 1990). The AAMTF delivered a full report to the MBSD on May 5, 1990. Curricular recommendations focused on curriculum, staff and district structure. The recommendations included adoption of a multidisciplinary African-centered curriculum, offering college algebra in

8th grade, scheduling an extended school day throughout the district, providing Saturday schools, developing a year-round calendar, issuing an accountable parent homework policy, student loan forgiveness to recruit Black males and cooperative learning groups for African-American males. The AAMTF recommended that the MBSD open what they termed “African American Male Immersion Academies”. These schools were modeled after Pine Villa Elementary School in Miami, Florida and Eastoner Elementary School in Charlotte, South Carolina which were open to all students in the district regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity. The stated emphasis of Milwaukee’s schools would be on educating the African American male “with an Afro-Centered Immersion Specialty Program where enrolled students will become knowledgeable about the cultures and languages of their ethnicity and receive instruction that reflects and respects cultural differences (African American Male Task Force, 1990).” Two schools, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary and Malcolm X Academy were started to fulfill this recommendation.

Milwaukee Public Schools pioneered this structural response to Black male achievement. With inspiration from Miami, Charlotte and eventually Detroit, the focus on improving the educational outcomes of African American male students obtained district wide support. While the district established these two schools, with Malcolm X Academy no longer running and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary still functioning as an African-American Immersion school during the 2016-2017 school year, there were opponents to this intentionality and strategic investment. Frank Zeidler, socialist mayor of Milwaukee, decried these institutions as representing racial separatism and reinforcing segregation. Gradually, over the last decade, interest in supporting and investing in these schools for the purposes of addressing Black male achievement has waned. This history is important to understand as Milwaukee prepared its response to President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper initiative.

This example of Milwaukee Public Schools institutionalizing a strategy to improve Black male achievement was unprecedented during its time, but also catapulted other local structures to address Black males similarly. The Milwaukee Fatherhood Collaborative was started in 1994 as a “network of support and social services dedicated to promoting and strengthening fatherhood among at-risk men, such as teen dads, and incarcerated and divorced fathers (Riverwest Currents, 2004)”. In 2005, the City of Milwaukee started the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative. This initiative was created to address father-absenteeism particularly in black families. In 2010 alone, four major programs that focused on Black males emerged: City of Milwaukee African-American Male Unemployment Task Force (workforce development), BE the CHANGE (teens), Milwaukee Succeeds (education), and Milwaukee Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (fathers supporting pregnancy and birth). Milwaukee has a history of sectors working together to support Black males.

The Limitations of MBK Nationally and Locally

This project focuses on implementation of My Brother’s Keeper in Milwaukee, but an understanding of the initiative nationally will help frame the conversation on the ground. The MBK Task Force developed six milestones for improving the social, economic and political outcomes of boys and men of color with two factors in mind: opportunity and success. However, what does opportunity and success look like for boys and men of color? Opportunity, as defined by the MBK Task Force, relates to men of color as workers who can help improve the US economy. In the 90-day report the MBK Task Force demonstrates this political moment as an opportunity to increase the labor force and build the nation’s long-term economic security. There is a strong emphasis on the nation-state as defining the set of circumstances which qualify for new and

enriching possibilities. The Task Force sites research on African American children making a 16:1 return on investment after being provided high-quality pre-school by age 40. The discourse on opportunity reflects economic interests. The Milwaukee Local Action Plan centers the dignity of boys and men of color by emphasizing their autonomy and inherent value as shapers of the local economy. This is a level of social inclusion that looks at boys and men of color beyond variables in a labor equation. Using a dignity lens, boys and men of color in Milwaukee determine their vision and role within their social, political, and economic futures.

First, opportunities through this initiative should reflect the values and interests of boys and men of color. Without their voices or intentional input, the federal government is recreating an interventionist imposition that denies the culturally and experientially self-defined opportunities that boys and men of color desire to achieve. Historically, racially marginalized groups have been denied their personal and collective sense of dignity in finding solutions for social, economic and political issues. Secondly, these opportunities are presented without any critique of federal or local governments being part of the problem faced by boys and men of color. Historically, unemployment and underemployment in communities of color were not merely an issue of skill or education but of denial of access based upon culture, race and gender. Wisconsin tops the nation in Black male joblessness, with Black males having unemployment rates over 50% for consecutive years (Levine, 2007). Public sector and skilled trade jobs initially used unions to prohibit people of color from entering the workforce. Several policies and legislative initiatives have been enacted to address these racist practices, however, access to jobs remains an issue for many communities of color. While *dejure* racist employment practices are no longer the norm, people of color are still passively marginalized from obtaining equal opportunities to employment. For example, in Wisconsin, the governor rejected federal money intended to improve the system of transportation

in an area of the state with the largest concentration of people of color (Sandler, 2011). In this instance, access to jobs reflected the policies of the state, not the intentions nor will of the communities of color looking for work. Lastly, education is not a zero-sum economic game. There are non-market benefits of education that should be explored. Further, the outcomes do not account for the lived experiences of boys and men of color. If educational attainment solely depended on your own intellect, many of us with degrees would not have them and many who do not would have many. Income, parents' educational attainment, race, culture, gender, urban, rural all are contributing factors to one's lived experience and educational opportunities.

The MBK Task Force outlined success briefly before discussing its recommendations for the initiative. Using aspects of life course theory, the Task Force focused on identifying points on the path to adulthood to guide the work of the initiative. The identified markers reflect where current research suggests that interventions are most useful along on the lifespan. Mirroring the interests of opportunity, the success path is closely linked to the individual as a worker. While the Task Force states that the intention is to remove barriers, this is another missed opportunity to address what role the government has had in creating barriers. With a dignity lens, this is consciously limiting the perspectives and experiences of boys and men of color in determining how to remove their barriers to success. In addition, the life span concern does not consider individuals past working age. Based upon the identified markers, once an individual has entered the workforce success has been achieved. The only concern beyond the period of the lifespan where an individual enters the workforce is addressing violence. The federal initiative lacks specific frameworks, goals, and measures of accountability for ensuring that the programs do not just change numbers but also ensure and protect the dignity of boys and men of color. Although there is a longer history and broader scope of work in Milwaukee, there is still a need to find tools

to support on-the-ground implementers, such as local nonprofits and community based organizations, as they work collectively to create sustainable racial equity through intentional support on Black males.

Uncovering the My Brother's Keeper Theory of Change

Based on my analysis of the My Brother's Keeper initiative, the recommendations proposed by the MBK Task Force utilize theories of collective impact, place identity, life course and data driven decision making to frame recommendations for partners, funders and policy-makers. I argue that these four theories are the foundation of The MBK Task Force Theory of Change. Theories of Change describe the types of interventions and programs needed to create an identified long-term outcome (Reisman & Gienapp, 2004). The MBK Task Force has not identified an explicit Theory of Change, but based on the issued reports, the following theories outline the assumptions the Task Force used to create ladders of opportunity for boys and men of color. In the following sections, I discuss each of these theories and their relevance to the MBK initiative.

Collective impact. The MBK Task Force recommendations promote collective impact as a best practice. The 90-day and one year recommendations include suggestions for collective impact practice. The MBK task force reported, "The emerging "collective impact" movement is demonstrating that with public and private support and technical assistance, schools, communities, cities and regions can take more comprehensive, outcome-focused approaches to improving the lives of young people (MBK Task Force, 2014)." My Brother's Keeper is an attempt to address a wicked problem of poor social, economic and educational outcomes for boys and men of color. A comprehensive approach is a cross-cutting recommendation of the Taskforce. In the one year report, the task force highlighted several MBK communities that mentioned collective impact

practices such as Lansing, Michigan and New York City. In addition, the Task Force restated the initial focus on using collective impact practices to strengthen efforts on the federal level and in local communities.

Collective impact is the long-term commitment of a group of actors from different sectors that commit to a common agenda for solving a specific problem (Hanleybrown, Kania, & Kramer, 2012; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Preskill, Parkhurst, & Splansky Juster, 2014). Many organizations have participated in collaborative groups. Organizations that do human services work such as addressing racial inequity in education, health and social services practice collaboration in the city of Milwaukee regularly. Collective impact is different from collaboration because there is centralized infrastructure a dedicated staff and a structured process. Traditionally, organizations work using “isolated impact”, a single organization focusing on a goal. Operation Ceasefire, a homicide reduction program created by Professor David Kennedy used principles of collective impact. Kennedy writes about his experiences creating and implementing his program in his memoir *Don't Shoot*. By working with police officers, community leaders, gang members, and social workers, Kennedy constructed a program that drastically decreased homicide rates in several communities in the United States. His work predates the theorization of collective impact. However, Operation Ceasefire could retroactively fit within the conditions of success for collective impact.

Collective impact includes five conditions for success (Kania & Kramer, 2011). These conditions target “wicked problems”. Wicked problems are complex social problems that are difficult to solve because of incomplete or contradictory knowledge, the number of people and opinions involved, the large economic burden and the interconnected nature of these problems with other problems (Buchanan, 1992). Organizations must have a common understanding of the

problem and a shared vision for change to guide their actions to solve the problem. Collective impact groups must have the will to invest the time needed to develop a shared understanding of the problem and vision for change.

Collective impact groups develop and use shared measurement practices. These practices help organizations track progress to a shared goal. Collective impact group participants should mutually reinforce a shared vision for change. Through a shared vision for change, members within collective impact groups reinforce instead of contradicting one another's efforts towards effecting change. Strong communication among group members support fostering the trust needed for collective impact groups to thrive. Lastly, collective impact groups select an organization to serve as a backbone. Backbone organizations are dedicated staff who plan, manage and support the work of the collective impact groups. This is what sets collective impact groups a part from collaborations (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

The significance of place. The MBK Task Force recommendations highlight place as important to understanding how and why interventions should be successful in meeting the goals of MBK. In the May 2014, cross-cutting recommendations for comprehensive cradle-to-college-and-career community solutions, the Task Force stated that place based programs should be studied and highlighted for adoption in other areas (MBK Task Force, 2014). Further, the Task Force mentions The Promise Zones initiative as providing an opportunity to develop specific tools and measurement for place-based data analysis. Since 2013, The Promise Zones initiative has been a community based partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that focuses on improving economic, educational, health and safety outcomes in 22 zones across the United States. Milwaukee is included within The Promise Zones (Dyson, 2014). Since the initial

emphasis on place, the MBK Task Force reported the MBK Community Challenge as supporting locally driven place-based strategies such as The Promise Zones initiative. The one year report cited the individual successes of MBK communities to reflect the usefulness of place-based strategies. MBK uses place in three ways to substantiate place-based efforts to improve the quality of life and provide ladders of success for boys and men of color: place-identity, place based education and sense of place.

The interplay of place and identity has been a part of scholarly conversations within environmental psychology, geography and architecture for decades. Place-identity theory is the holistic and reciprocal interaction between people and their physical environment (Proshansky et al, 1983). This theory gives place the same recognition as gender and social class in impacting one's identity. Place-identity theory incorporates place into a broad understanding of self. MBK recommendations provide the opportunity for programs to advocate for place having a specific role in understanding how the lives of boys and men of color within an area can be improved. Place-based education (PBE) utilizes the local culture as a foundation for teaching across the curriculum (Gruenewald & Smith, 2003). Projects within place-based curricular activities focus on providing service to the community. The goals of place-based education are to improve student achievement build community social and economic vitality and to improve ecological integrity. The MBK Task Force recommendations suggest that place-based education is useful and applicable beyond the classroom. Sense of place is a transdisciplinary concept used in many social sciences. A sense of place describes a person's subjective perceptions of their environments and their feelings and emotions about those environments (Lim & Barton, 2010). In addition, a sense of place can reflect cultural beliefs and experiences that link a person or group of people to a space. A sense of place is fluid and changing yet allows a person's subjective

experiences to reflect the importance and significance of place. MBK Task Force recommendations promote the input of boys and men of color in creating programs and initiatives that support their development. The MBK Community Challenge required that each MBK Community host a local action summit where local stakeholders contributed to a vision for boys and men of color in their communities (MBK Task Force, 2014). The local action summits created a sense of place as a catalyst for improving communities.

Life course approach. Life Course Approach, or life course theory, is a multidisciplinary examination of an individual's life history (Elder, Jr., 1998). Through the study of people's lives, social structures and sociopolitical change researchers analyze how early events in an individual's life impacts future decision making. Life course approaches value a deep understanding of time and context as it shapes human development and family life. There are five principles of life course theory (Elder, Jr., 1998). Life course theory postulates that an individual's life is embedded in and shaped by historical events that occur throughout the lifespan. Historical events may impact an individual differently depending on the timing in their life in which the event occurs. In addition, lives are experienced interdependently. These shared relationships have an impact on life events are understood and experienced by an individual. However, individuals create their own lives through choices and decisions made within the constraints of history and social circumstances. Life course approaches use sense of place and place identity theories to understand what, if any, effect place has on human development. Life course approaches are used in public health, sociology, and education.

The MBK Task Force utilized a life course approach to develop markers for success for MBK programs. The Task Force presented six milestones in young people's lives that are critical to ensuring future success: 1) entering school ready to learn, 2) reading at grade level by third

grade, 3) graduating from high school ready for college or career, 4) completing post-secondary education or training 5) successfully entering the workforce and 6) reducing violence and providing second chances. The milestones connect significant life events to measures of success for the initiative. To properly assess progress towards these goals, participating MBK communities in organization need to have a shared understanding of life expectancy, life outcomes and life success.

Data driven decision making. The 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation propelled the idea of data driven and data informed decision making (DDDM/DIDM) within education. The key assumption behind this effort is that more data will enhance and improve decision making. DDDM/DIDM uses a variety of streamlined data collection and data analysis processes to help administrators and leaders make decisions within their schools. Through DDDM/DIDM organizations base decision on the analysis of data instead of intuition and individuals' logic assumptions (Mandinach, 2012). DDDM/DIDM developed a negative connotation among many educators over the last decade because of the reliance on data gained through standardized testing (Davis, 2014). As a federal initiative, MBK advocates for DDDM/DIDM practices through cross cutting recommendation #2, learning from and doing what works, promotes the use of evidence based practice in MBK communities and programs. However, as demonstrated through the findings of the pilot study in Milwaukee, the weakness of this request is that many successful programs have not had dedicated resources available to collect sufficient data to substantiate their programs values, approaches, or outcomes. Data collection and analysis are time consuming and expensive. Considering the resources needed to collect and analyze data, thresholds are created and supported by the organizations who can afford the luxury of investing in data. Small organizations are left to be responsive to the data collection and analysis conducted

by the government and larger institutions. This creates a significant gap in innovative approaches to data that could change decision making across sectors that serve boys and men of color.

The MBK Task Force uses these theories to loosely define a theory of change for improving the lives of boys and men of color in the United States. The theory of change outlines what The MBK Task Force determined as critical for the success of the initiative. Through the pilot study conducted in Milwaukee, I believe these theories could be enhanced to meet the needs of more boys and men of color beyond economic outcomes. I suggest that a dignity framework would support the overall goal of the MBK initiative while deepening the ways in which the needs of boys and men of color are met through the initiative.

Discussion: Dignity as a Framework for Advancing My Brother's Keeper

In previous sections, I described the impetus for this research through the My Brother's Keeper initiative. This section describes dignity as a framework that is useful in enhancing the embodied theory of change I outlined in the previous section. Again, demonstrating the need identified by participants in the pilot study to have tools that guide their critical work in addressing the outcomes of boys and men of color as identified by the My Brother's Keeper Initiative.

Dignity is a practical guiding principle for boys and men of color (BMOC) work through a complex network of ideas that reflect a person's inherent human value and a person's acquired sense of worth in relation to others. Most scholarly literature reflects these two broad categories as full inherent human dignity (FIHD) and non-inherent human dignity (NID) (Kateb, 2011; Nordenfelt, 2004; Rao, 2009). While FIHD is inviolable, never to be infringed or dishonored, NID is understood as a relational phenomenon which is constantly negotiated through interaction and

experience. NID is undermined by humiliation and defended through resistance. NID reflects how a person is treated in addition to how the person views themselves. Different from popular measures in racial equity work, such as grit and resistance, self-efficacy and self-worth (Saunders, Davis, Williams, & Williams, 2004; Scherbaum, Cohen-Charash, & Kern, 2006), racial identity development (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; Wright, 2009) and well-being (Seaton & Yip, 2008), dignity recognizes the burden of responsibility to extend beyond the individuals impacted by social inequity. There are many individuals who thrive despite stifling matrices of oppression denying their human self-worth. However, an over-representation of their individual success ignores the realities of systemic and institutional oppression. The overt focus on those who ‘thrive-despite’ disproportionately places the burden of responsibility and corresponding measures of success on developing more individuals who “thrive-despite” instead of critiquing, burdening or measuring the dismantling of matrices of oppression.

Specifically, dignity can be used to recognize the role of power in relational experiences that affirm or deny one’s human worth. For example, using a racial justice lens specific to Black male achievement (BMA) work, one may argue that a foundational concern is that Black males are constantly humiliated in educational experiences. In this constant humiliation, Blackness is understood in relation to Whiteness. White supremacy maintains that whiteness is more valuable than non-whiteness, specifically Blackness. Without the dignity frame, racial justice may address the maltreatment of Black males in terms of observable criteria such as quantitative measures of success or the qualitative characteristics. However, dignity acknowledges the maltreatment and addresses that justice also encompasses the rights owed to communities who experienced the maltreatment in terms of undermining FIHD and creating criteria that measures NID. Within a dignity framework, those who “thrive-despite” are no longer decentered in measuring success of

racial justice work and matrices of oppression, inclusive of people, policies, and procedures are re-centered and proportionately share the burden of responsibility and defining success.

Dignity-based tools are needed to assess and evaluate local efforts in Milwaukee that align with the MBK initiative. As a member of a research team on a previous project, we found that dignity was an important concept for organizations that work with boys and men of color (Irby, 2016). However, dignity was not tracked or measured because resources are used to collect and analyze data per grant and program requirements. In a previous paper, Irby and Liston make a case for dignity based approaches to be used for boys and men of color work. In summary, dignity is a network of concepts that includes (but is not limited to) autonomy, humanity, identity and inflorescence (Kateb, 2011). I maintain that dignity-based approaches challenge institutions and organizations to reevaluate practice, policy and evaluation in terms of the dignity of boys and men of color that they serve. In short, the dignity framework is a set of practices that organizations can do to respect, protect and fulfill the dignity of boys and men of color. The framework was developed through this research and is discussed in detail in chapters four and five.

Currently, the most comprehensive tools that measure dignity are found within nursing and palliative care. Over the last decade at least nine different tools have been developed to measure patient dignity. Through these measures, health care organizations are using dignity tools to assess their organizational priorities and effectiveness. Dignity tools do not judge or categorize patients. They are used to improve patient care and support during hospital and nursing home stays. I argue that a dignity framework aligned with the MBK initiative will address the values of the MBK theory of change. In this section, I will discuss the ways dignity responds to the suppositions outlined by lifecourse, place, collective impact and data informed decision making theories.

Life course approaches value the influence of social context in understanding the life outcomes of an individual. In health care literature, dignity research focused on older adults discusses how a person's sense of dignity can change of the life span. Nursing literature focuses on dignity in the moment. However, this does not negate the role that a person's life history may have on understanding dignity. To account for this, the dignity tools are situation specific. The population of interest helps to create the tool by providing input through focus groups, cognitive appraisal and pilot testing. Through these procedures, dignity measurement considers how a group of people now understand their dignity as it relates to their life experiences. I explore these tools in the literature review. A dignity framework can uphold a life course approach to improve the lives of boys and men of color.

Place theories value the subjective experiences of boys and men of color. The MBK Task Force encourages program development to focus on the local level and to be community specific. Through local action summits, the MBK-CC provides cities and towns an opportunity to bring stakeholders to the table from all levels of program and policy development, including boys and men of color that are served by these organizations (MBK Task Force, 2014). Place theories value the ways in which boys and men of color come to understand their local environments. For example, boys and men of color in Wisconsin might have drastically different concerns from boys and men of color in California because the environment provides different challenges and opportunities. Since the dignity framework is relational, an individual's sense of place can be addressed through the development of dignity scales. For the participants within the nursing literature, a sense of place impacted which questions were included in the specific dignity scale. There were differences between scales that were used in hospitals, nursing homes and senior centers because sense of place shifted within each of those contexts. Further, dignity measurement

in nursing care includes differences in national context. Dignity measurement testing is being researched in Germany, Canada, South Africa and the United States (Chochinov, 2002; Loubser & Herbst, 2010; Sautier, Vehling, & Mehnert, 2014). Dignity measurement supports the value of place presented in MBK Task Force recommendations. Place matters when considering a person's dignity. If place did not have an impact, the tests utilized in the nursing field would be universal and not adapted according to care setting, national origin, or life history.

Collective impact values shared measurement of goals that align with a shared vision. The dignity-based approach was developed through a research project focused on defining a shared cooperative vision for boys and men of color. Through data collection and analysis, the researchers found out that dignity was a shared concept among agencies that were successfully working with boys and men of color (Irby, 2016). However, because dignity was not something that was shared by funders or policy makers, agencies did not use resources to assess or evaluate the dignity of boys and men of color that they served. MBK presents an opportunity for organizations to work together using collective impact principles to build ladders of opportunity for boys and men of color. Shared measurement that is unique to the experiences of boys and men of color and reflects the intentionality of successful agencies to improve the life outcomes of boys and men of color can create new modes of data analysis for data informed decision making.

Data informed decision making and evidence based practice is predicated upon prior data collected on boys and men of color. Historical consciousness of racism in social science data collection processes contribute to. There has been a call within evaluation professional circles for innovative culturally responsive practices within data collection and analysis. Evaluation of the program needs to support alternative measures that may enhance the lives of boys and men of color and support the priorities of MBK legislation. Dignity-based measurement is an opportunity to

create culturally relevant measurement tools that are specific to the organization yet that can be shared across sectors to meet the goals of collective impact.

Conclusion

My Brother's Keeper should have evaluation measures that mirror the theories that frame the initiative's goals and priorities. Underlying My Brother's Keeper are four strategies that implicitly shape The MBK Task Force's Theory of Change. By combining the strengths of collective impact, place, life course, and data driven decision making, MBK calls for innovative measurement, data collection and evaluation practices. I suggest that there is a gap between the underlying theory of change of the My Brother's Keeper initiative and the goals of racial equity proposed by the My Brother's Keeper initiative. I provide dignity as a framework for respecting, protecting, and fulfilling boys and men of color beyond their ability to achieve economic outcomes as outlined by others. Figure 1 demonstrates how the theories described inform The MBK Theory of Change. Table 1 describes how dignity upholds the values outlined through the MBK Theory of Change while also protecting the dignity of the boys and men of color that are the focus of the initiative.

Chapter 2: Dignity and Black Male Achievement: A Literature Review

Introduction

Dignity means different things to different people in different places. The word itself has shifting meaning across time and cultural context. For example, the discourse of dignity has evolved through the history of the Catholic church. Michael Rosen discussed this in his text *Dignity: Its History and Meaning* (Rosen, 2012). Per Rosen, Catholic thought on dignity is best captured by St. Thomas Aquinas 13th century text, *Commentary on the Sentences*, as a sense of goodness because being a part of God's creation. However, papal discourse on dignity has shifted with the political context. Pope John Paul II spoke of dignity in relationship to women's reproductive health, particularly abortion and contraception in the 1990s (Schroeder, 2010). Yet in the 2010s, Pope Francis spoke of dignity in relation to ending slave labor and human trafficking. Further, DignityUSA, a national movement, continues to fight for LGBTQ inclusion within the Roman Catholic Church. In each case, the meaning and significance of dignity shifted within Catholic rhetoric over time through different political and cultural contexts

After the pilot study, my burning question was how could organizations use dignity as a guiding concept within their racial equity work. Specifically, as it related to Milwaukee's collective cross-sector effort to improve the lives of boys and men of color in response to President Obama's My Brother's Keeper Initiative. This question led me to review scholarly literature that addresses dignity. I was unsure how the concept would be used within scholarship because the term is used so often with and without intention in many different fields of scholarship. The largest and most useful body of literature related to my questions after the pilot study came from the caring sciences. The caring sciences has established dignity as a value and has created methods of

evaluating the sense of dignity of those served by caring science organizations. These organizations include but are not limited to hospitals, hospice care and home visit healthcare organizations. What the caring science field has done successfully is identify dignity as a value and then develop tools to help organizations understand how they are upholding dignity as a value. Similarly, Milwaukee's Local Action Plan to improve the lives of boys and men of color has identified dignity as something to be respected, protected and fulfilled for boys and men of color. Milwaukee's committed network inclusive of human service providers can learn from the caring sciences is how to operationalize the value into observable indicators that organizations and institutions can hold themselves accountable to.

Secondly, there is a body of research that looks at dignity within the process of conducting labor, or work. Dignity and work literature includes a strong focus on blue-collar work, manual labor outside of the realm of agriculture, within the system of capitalism. This literature brings depth to the negotiation of contract between an individual and employer which includes providing labor for money for a business to make a profit. This literature explores the relationship between dignity and engagement within the labor process. Although this literature is informative for Milwaukee's Local Action Plan, specifically as it relates to workforce development in the city, there is a broader scope of work under consideration in this research. Human service organizations such as local government programs, nonprofits, educational institutions, and health organizations play a significant role in engaging boys and men of color in Milwaukee. The lessons learned from the literature can help identify what cross-cutting or broad considerations for dignity should be noted for all types of work that serve boys and men of color.

I also interrogated the contemporary philosophical discussions on dignity. I acknowledge philosophical debates on dignity centuries old but for the sake of utility my exploration focuses on

contemporary discussions over the last decade with a nod to Kant and culturally relevant foundations of dignity as a guiding principle. This will acknowledge the discourse within the academy, but my focus is on how dignity is used in practice. Lastly, I would be remiss to engage dignity for boys and men of color work without talking about race and racialization. In this section, I mention key pieces of literature that make connections between race, identity and dignity.

Philosophy on Dignity

The philosophical, or theoretical, discourses of dignity describe the relationship between human existence, human experience and senses of value and worth. In many texts, the roots of these conceptions are tied to ancient Greek and ancient Roman philosophers. Cicero is often cited as providing the foundations for understanding dignity philosophically. Cicero considered the capacity for self-reflection and thoughtfulness separated human beings from other species thus giving humans a sense of dignity. However, the concept of *ma'at* from Ancient Egypt predates Cicero and may be the oldest conception of human dignity in written history. *Ma'at* reflects the “rightness of things within divine, natural and social order (Karenga, 1994)”. Spiritual, political and social ethics of Ancient Egypt were centered around this concept. *Ma'at* is understood to contain seven laws, or virtues: truth, balance, harmony, justice, love, order and righteousness. *Ma'at* represents “the Good”, that which is inherent and inviolable within humanity. The oldest statement I could find is a translation of the the autobiography of Seshem-Nefer. Sheshem-Nefer was the father of Ptah-Hotep, the author of *The Instructions of Ptah-Hotep* which is known as the oldest book in the world (Ptahhotep., Kagemna., & Gunn, n.d.). The autobiography states, “I spoke *Ma'at* which what God loves, every day. It is the Good.” *Ma'at* contains a rich description of its

conceptualization and relationship to social ethics and responsible governance that is not reflected in western philosophy until the 13th century by St. Thomas Aquinas.

Philosophical dignity remains as a subject within scholarly debate. Immanuel Kant wrote extensively on dignity during the 18th century. Discussing his discourse is beyond the limitations of this paper but three things should be noted about his contributions. First, Kantian conceptions of dignity are complex and may be seen as divergent or contradictory (Rosen, 2012). Secondly, Kant did not associate his view of dignity with God. In his view, submission to religion or religious practice was incompatible to human dignity (Sensen, 2009). Lastly, Kant inspired many others to look closely at ethics and human dignity as it relates to theorizing human rights (Kateb, 2009). Modern philosophical ideas about human dignity are connected global human rights discourses. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights identifies the recognition of human dignity as fundamental to achieving peace, freedom and justice in the world (Assembly, U.G., 1948). Dignity is the arbiter between war and peace, freedom and captivity, justice and corruption. Rao (2009) suggested that the word dignity appears in the Universal Declaration because its' authoring delegates could not reconcile their disagreements about terms that regard human rights as natural or God-given. Its authors, who represented a broad range of cultural, theological, and political perspectives, decided to use dignity as a guiding principle of human rights because people of disparate beliefs and backgrounds could agree about it, even if they failed to agree on its precise meaning. Dignity, for all the confusion it has caused as a legal and human rights concept was deemed powerful because it universally "meant something good, yet was plastic enough to satisfy a wide range of delegates (Rao, p.194, 2009)."

For the philosophers, dignity represents an ideal state of human worth and value based upon human existence and experience. The concept is not modern, but evolved among different

cultural, religious and political contexts over centuries. Philosophers agree that dignity is about worth and value but the boundaries of that sense of worth vary based on theoretical and ontological perspectives. There's room for others to contribute alternative philosophies of dignity because the conversations is no where near coming to a close.

Immanuel Kant is pivotal in understanding contemporary discourses on dignity within the academy. Kant states in *Moral Law: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, "Man, and in general every rational being, exists as an end in himself, not merely as a means for arbitrary use by this or that will: he must in all his actions, whether they are directed to himself or to other rational beings, always be viewed at the same time as an end." Kant's idea is referred to as *The Formula of Humanity*. Rosen problematizes Kant's philosophical offering as two distinct elements: treating human beings as a means and treating human beings as an ends. Rosen asserts that in some cases it makes sense to treat human beings as objects (as a means) by using an example of standing behind a person as a windbreak. However, I feel that his example is short-sighted because it is not just about a person acting as an object which is keeping you from wind, but the active affirmation or denial of humanity which makes the consideration about dignity. Meilaender problematizes Kant's assertion that each person should have the freedom to choose a way of life for themselves also explained in *Moral Law: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Meilaender presents Kantian dignity as a pivotal point in the democratization of personal dignity (2009, p.89). Kateb problematizes Kant by highlighting the thin line between Kantian dignity and morality. He states, "...we accord persons the respect they deserve as ends, when we treat them in a way that shows our respect for the moral law, not when we mimic morality of out of one or another emotion or interest, much less when we immorally or disrespectfully use them as mere

means (Meilaender, 2009, p. 13). *The Formula of Humanity* remains central to the scholarly discourse on dignity.

Despite that common foundation, dignity remains without concrete definitions shared across academic disciplines and cultural discourses. The word itself is not controversial. It conveys a favorable idea; an appreciation for the core value of humanity but is commonly influenced by cultural factors (Cite). The word is not a problem but the concept lacks the capacity to demonstrate or identify anything specific. This lack of conceptual understanding means that the word can be used without any true accountability as its connected to cultural ideas that are socially accepted or understood. Dignity is considered “squishy and subjective (Pinker, 2008)”, “elusive & meaningless (Bagaric, & Allan, 2006)” or “ubiquitous (Parse, 2010).” Weinnib (cite) states, “the concept is uncontroversial; its vice is that it is uninformative: it offers no account of what it requires, prohibits or permits”. I argue that the literature demonstrates that dignity has more power than many scholars assume. I begin this literature review by discussing two conceptual foundations across discourses: ontological basis of essential humanness and multidimensionality.

Ontological basis of essential humanness. Theory is developed as the result of intense reflection on ontology and epistemology. Theory represents the organized presentation of ontological and epistemological ideas. Ontology provides answers to the essential questions of existence. Epistemology provides answers to the essential question of knowledge. The process of ontological determination, defining the unique nature and meaning of a concept (Edlund, Lindwall, Post, & Lindstrom, 2013). Some scholars wrestle with this idea as a species-specific sense of dignity that requires recognition of animals and other beings as having a sense of dignity as well (Breeze Harper, 2010)). For this research, I focus on on the essential human qualities described in many sources. Michael argues that the fundamental premise of inherent dignity is that it is innate

to all human beings and demonstrated by human beings' unique ability to be self-aware, question existential issues and have a capacity for morality (2014). Parse extends the idea of human uniqueness by connecting dignity to humanbecoming, a theory created to root health care service within the quality of life a person wants verses a quantitative summation of diagnoses and numerical health indicators (2010). Dignity is what it means to have the capacity to be human and treated as such by other beings. Parse argues that our dignity is acknowledged by the capacity to express reverence, awe, betrayal and shame. This idea is also found in literature outside of the Western scholarly context. Vuyani Vellem, representing the South African Council of Churches, wrote a reflection on human dignity in the South African context (2013). Vellem acknowledges race and racialization as a part of South African history. South Africa is significant to the literature on dignity because of the nation's efforts to understand dignity as a value in their post-apartheid constitution. Vellem demonstrates how dignity should represent the interconnectedness of humanity. The analysis presented engages the complexity of language, culture, and colonization in defining South African democracy and the constitutional unification of Black and White within the country. Considering dignity as a global concept, I was compelled to spend time engaging the inclusion of the word dignity in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

With the power to define what it means to be human, comes the responsibility of understanding how we respect, protect and fulfill that sense of dignity in society. The concept of dignity emerged as particularly in global discourse important after the United Nations' adopted it as a central concept in its 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which began with the Article 1 stating "All human beings are born free and equal in *dignity* and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." This statement, it's tethering of dignity and human rights, represents the core principle on which

contemporary global relations, processes for social and human development, and human excellence is conceived and measured.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights identifies the recognition of human dignity as fundamental to achieving peace, freedom and justice in the world (cite). Rao (2009) suggested that the word dignity appears in the Universal Declaration because its' authoring delegates could not reconcile their disagreements about terms that regard human rights as natural or God-given. Its authors, who represented a broad range of cultural, theological, and political perspectives, decided to use dignity as a guiding principle of human rights because people of disparate beliefs and backgrounds could agree about it, even if they failed to agree on its precise meaning. Indeed, the scholarly research on the dignity demonstrates the concept can be and has been put to use to achieve different, often contradictory ends (Michael, 2014; Rao, 2009). Dignity, for all the confusion it has caused and will cause as a legal and human rights concept was deemed powerful because it universally "meant something good, yet was plastic enough to satisfy a wide range of delegates (Rao, p.194, 2009)." Conceptually, dignity was palatable to the UN conveners, but its integration for practical application remained outside of the on-the-ground work of the UN for almost 40 years. Mokhiber argues that this significant transition was the result of consensus building done during the 1990s on contentious issues such as children's welfare, environment and social development. In 1997, this discussion became an institutionalized practice when the Kofi Annan of Ghana became the Secretary-General of the UN. At the beginning of his tenure, he published a report entitled *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform*. In this document, Annan proclaimed a system-wide UN reform package that "expressly called for the integration of human rights into the development work of the UN (Mokhiber, p. 157, 2001). In

effect, Annan restructured departments so that the UN could improve its ability to integrate, monitor, and utilize human rights effectively.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights represents a pivotal point in broad societal conversations about dignity. Prior to the UDHR, dignity was explicitly mentioned in only five national constitutions: Mexico, Cuba, Germany, Finland and Ireland (cite). Over 150 countries have formed or added dignity to their constitutions since 1948. The United States is not one of them. State recognition of dignity aside, dignity is a foundational concept in many professional fields including but not limited to law, medicine, nursing and international development (cite code of ethics). Dignity is an elusive construct that is regularly mentioned in conversations of ethics and moral philosophy but rarely given the qualifying treatment of institutional accountability. Constitutional law, international development, and the caring sciences have developed thorough definitions of human dignity that shift that concept away from intangible elusive ethical ideals to observable, measurable constructs and indicators. Through understanding dignity, we can work towards building the society we want to see. The value of dignity in society is rarely substantiated with thorough explanations or tangible ways to maintain it. It is important that we increase our ability to qualify this concept into measurable terms. The United Nations is an international organization made up of 193 countries. The UN is a mechanism for countries to address and solve problems together. The concept of dignity emerged as particularly important after the United Nations' adopted it as a central concept in its 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which began with the Article 1 stating "All human beings are born free and equal in *dignity* and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." This statement, it's tethering of dignity and human rights, represents the core principle on which contemporary global relations, processes for social and human development,

and human excellence is conceived and measured. Essential humanness attempts to define what our responsibilities to one another are and to what extent we are able to fulfill them.

Multidimensionality. A person's sense of dignity is understood through a network of experiences. It is a symbiotic relationship between a personal interpretation of self in conjunction with interpretations of how others perceive you. This symbiotic relationship is most commonly represented in the literature as two domains: internal and external. The internal domain represents a sense of dignity that is inviolable (Michael,2014) or absolute (Rosen, 2012). It is impregnable and unassailable by external forces. Michael (2014) conceptualizes this as full inherent human dignity. Most researchers conceptualize dignity as one concept with two domains: intrinsic worth and extrinsic value. Intrinsic dignity may be referred to as inherent, basic or philosophical dignity. This component of dignity is a sense of worth one has through human existence. It is inherent and inviolable. No one can take this sense of dignity away from another person. Michael (2014) determined this domain to include concepts of autonomy, humanity and rank. External dignity, also called non-inherent (Nordenfelt, 2004), extrinsic (Parse, 2010) or attributed (Jacelon, 2009) dignity, refers to the sense of dignity acquired through social interactions. Maclaren (1978) argued in the late 1970s that inherent dignity was fiction but maintained that a sense of dignity relied on understanding relationships. In the early 1990s, Mains (1994) argued that there are antecedents of dignity necessary for the concept to be fully understood. The antecedents included the argument that dignity is obtained through life experiences. Life experiences are gained as one proceeds through life's developmental stages. Dignity is not solely self-worth but a sense of self-worth amongst the worthiness of others. Michael (2014) operationalizes this to include dignity through identity, recognition, inflorescence, relationships, and attribution. Considering these two domains,

a sense of dignity is fully realized by understanding one's relationships to others and interactions with others. In this manner, the process of understanding dignity is strongly aligned with a social constructivist point of view. Further, Hailer and Ritschl (1996) argued that dignity is a dialogical concept. In other words, it is an ethical consideration with an anthropological basis. Multidimensionality is a property of dignity that represents its complexity and depth in describing human relations and experience. Schachter (1983) describes dignity as having an intuitive understanding with conditional cultural factors. The internal dimension representing intuitive understanding and the conditional cultural factors representing how one can feel dignified in society.

Black Males and Dignity

Social science literature has a history of associating African American males with an unfavorable metanarrative of being unable to adapt to the structures, institutions and practices of American life (Brown, 2011). This negative portrayal of Black male identity is consistent and pervasive in public policy and educational reform. The metanarrative presents Black male identity in constant conflict with society, unable to acquiesce to the social norms and corresponding expectations accepted by the prevailing majority. This (re)presentation is problematic because it places rigid and overly idealized expectations on Black males. By neglecting to address the social context of raced and gendered identities, focusing on theories of deficit culture and behavior and problematizing the effects instead of the causes, previous literature has failed to fully humanize Black males. Current literature critiques the shortcomings of past research on Black male identity by addressing the need to be conscious of institutional racism, the criminalization of Black male identities, and ethnography that fails to engage the multifarious voices and experiences of Black males I explore this literature in this section.

This project focuses on a specific institutional response to challenges faced by Black men: Black male achievement. *But what exactly is this concept?* Extremely diverse in its application, Black male achievement can mean different things for different types of institutions. For colleges and universities, it means matriculation, retention and graduation rates. For employers, it means job readiness and skill acquisition. For K-12 schools it is about suspension, expulsions and putting plug in the school-to-prison pipeline. However, for this project, Black male achievement will be examined through the lens of non-profits, grassroots organizations, local government bodies and other community based programs. Considering the elusive yet ubiquitous nature of Black male achievement, this exploration will contextualize Black male achievement for this specific sector

while maintaining an active consciousness of intersecting, overlapping, cross-sector institutional work and practice. While an explicit definition of Black male achievement is a goal of this project, what can be stated a priori is that Black male achievement efforts are explicitly intended to target African American males in various life stages across multiple arenas to help improve their social outcomes.

Abstractly, Black male achievement is an organizing concept for program delivery that seeks to improve the social outcomes of Black males. It is closely related to boys and men of color work, initiated through President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative. The social outcomes of concern vary greatly and may range from job readiness to parenting skills or HIV prevalence rates to post-secondary degree attainment. The problem of concern for this project is the ways in which race, gender, and achievement are packed and commodified in educational reform, policy, and its subsequent initiatives and programs. I will address this problem in this paper by reviewing the extant literature, problematizing race, gender and achievement as social constructs within the field of education and presenting opportunities for new research that may broaden the academic conceptualizations of Black male achievement in education.

In this chapter, I explore Black male identity and its relationship to dignity as described in Chapter 1. First, I discuss the history of Black male identity in the United States. I specifically discuss the tensions between the assertion of Black male dignity and the humiliation of Black male identity. Next, I review literature from the caring sciences about developing specific tools that assess the dignity of patients. I analyze these tools based upon the needs of practitioners in Milwaukee identified through the pilot study. I also present literature on present literature on Black male achievement and its relationship to the MBK initiative. Lastly, I review literature on dignity and work as it relates to the MBK initiative. I reviewed this literature to understand how

organizations that are carrying out the work of respecting, protecting and fulfilling the dignity of boys and men of color may consider dignity as a part of their working culture.

A historical view: creating African-American (Black identity) and dignity. Historian John Henrik Clarke persistently reminded us that history is a time clock that helps us to remember our political time of day (Bourne, 1996). Understanding the role of black male achievement discourses in our contemporary social and political milieu requires an historical overview of black male identity as a commodity in American history. The historical overview will show that the concern about Black male achievement is not about new issues, but enduring issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade involved the acquisition, transport, torture, and sale of African bodies in Europe and developing European colonies. For almost four centuries, European Americans subjugated Africans in America to chattel status. Traded no differently than cows and pigs, enslaved Africans had to begin a journey of creating new identities. Language acquisition, social mores and customs, and religious traditions representative of European American culture became deeply entwined with remnants of traditional African practices that managed to remain close to the memories of the enslaved Africans. The enslaved Africans did not passively accept their condition; there are thousands of recorded narratives of revolts and resistance. Any notion of legal freedom did not come until the legislated end of state sanctioned slavery, however that did not ensure full rights of citizenship for formerly enslaved Africans. (Ani, 2007; Aptheker, 1987; Robinson, 2013).

Contemporary research on slavery spends significant time on talking about the different experiences of chattel slavery based on sex and gender (Block, 2006; Dorsey, 2006; Morgan,

2004). Prior to the slave trade, there were a variety of male and female socialized roles found on the Western coast of Africa (Oyewumi, 2010). No matter the African origin of the enslaved African on American soil, rest assured that all traditional gender roles were reconstituted for their new position in a foreign society. At the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade, men were disproportionately imported (Goldstone, 2009). European patriarchal norms revered men as more valuable workers, thus they were the most sought after. In the mid-seventeenth century, when the Dutch first began to import African women, it was for the company of enslaved African men and not for their direct contributions for the workforce (DuBois, 2014; Clancy-Smith and Gouda, 1998).

Labor segregation by sex soon evolved in the western slave-supported countries. While men and women both held responsibilities toward the production of the products grown and sold from their region, women also held sexual and reproductive responsibilities. These responsibilities were not solely for the benefit of other enslaved Africans, but also the result of imposition from masters and other males. Some authors focus on the ways in which these responsibilities destroyed the relationships between Black men and women (Frazier, 1948; Elkins 1968; Bernard, 1966). In response to this trope, Black feminist scholars responded by outlining the ways in which women could survive and resist despite the attempts to destroy the Black family through enslavement (King, 1988; Hill Collins, 2006). Black men, unable to protect or defend Black women, may have felt emasculated or dehumanized by the rape and pillage of their women. Further, enslaved Black men were also unable to escape the sexual abuse of their own bodies from their masters (Foster, 2011).

The social climate of the American plantocracy managed the fear of Black males by the White male population through master-slave social system. Black males were less than human,

subject to the will and desire of their masters. Research on this time on Black male identity highlights the systemic emasculation of Black males (Harris 1984; Walvin, 2002). Through this process, the Black male was no longer able to operate within his own self-concept. He was not able to rely on his own virility. He could not be self-sufficient. He could not protect his own because he had nothing. He could not defend his own because he had no valid allegiances. The Black male identity, because of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, could not be a man.

Despite the efforts put forth through systemic emasculation, Black males were not wholly docile and complicit to slavery. On a micro level, enslaved Africans completed every day acts of resistance such as poisoning the food, stealing from master, arson to plantation buildings, or running away. On a larger scale, North American slave revolts were recorded as early as 1526 in Sapelo Island, Georgia and continued through the Emancipation Era. The most famous revolts are remembered by the men who led them such as Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner. (Aptheker, 1993; Robinson, 1997)

Following the end of slavery in the United States, The Reconstruction Era gave the newly knighted African Americans a social, economic and political boost. However, that was quickly rescinded by the Compromise of 1877 that removed federal troops from the South (Goldstone, 2006). This action led to the restoration of white rule and legally sanctioned lower citizenship for African Americans. During Reconstruction, African Americans were allotted a small and seemingly insignificant space in the US political landscape. In this manner, it has been argued that Black communities mirrored the gendered identities of the West (Dorsey, 2006). Men were responsible for the politics while the women were responsible for domestic duties. Patriarchy defined the newly formed African American households. Men were seen as heads of the house while women served as their subordinates. Therefore, men were the liaison between the household

and any public or state affairs. The passing of The Fourteenth Amendment supported this socially constructed imposition of gender roles in African American homes. The Fourteenth Amendment, granting citizenship to African Americans, continued to maintain a gendered differential between Black men and women. Section 2 of the amendment added the word “male” into the constitution for the first time (Amar, 2012). The full rights of citizenship, including land ownership, the ruling hand of marriage, and voting were only granted to African American men.

Jim Crow laws disproportionately focused on Black men. These laws were concerned with segregating Black men from white women, creating what Ross (2004) terms as a sexual fault line. White fear of black males was managed through Jim Crow laws like the slave-master system a century earlier. Jim Crow laws maintained “spatialized exclusionary citizenship” (Lipman, 2011). Following the Black Codes of the early nineteenth century, these laws restricted the civil liberties of African Americans. This era also includes the historic *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision. This decision maintained that while political equality was granted to African Americans through The Fourteenth Amendment, social inequality was not abolished. Through this decision, “separate, but equal” doctrine, which later became the basis of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), dictated the relationship between Black communities and White-owned institutions.

Some scholars characterize what is known about resistance and struggle for full citizenship during the mid-twentieth century as “the long movement” (Cha-Jua and Lang, 2007). Representative of localized and regional battles against white supremacy and white cultural domination, these struggles were political, social and economic. Scholarship of this era over the last generation focuses on the ways in which gender struggles were intertwined with race struggles. Narratives of the civil rights and black power movements give us a glimpse of the raced and gendered struggle faced by African Americans. At the end of this era, pieces of federal legislation

such as The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Brown v. Board decision, the Fair Housing Act, and the Voting Rights Act demarcated a climate change of race relations across the country. Despite these gallant efforts and corresponding legislative victories, the struggle of full rights of citizenship remains an issue for descendants, of blood and social inheritance, of enslaved Africans. African Americans continue to struggle with white supremacy's social inheritance.

In 2010, civil rights lawyer and activist, Michelle Alexander published a book entitled, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Through this treatise, Alexander eloquently explores the chronology of apartheid in the United States. Beginning with slavery, Alexander sequentially outlines race based de jure and de facto policies with a focus on how the criminal justice system has targeted African-Americans. Essentially, Alexander argues that Jim Crow, the separate but equal political doctrine of the post-reconstruction south, has never actually disappeared from the American socio-political landscape but has merely reinvented itself as a less bigoted and more systematic network of institutionalized race based policies.

In its original form, Jim Crow laws were meant to maintain an American caste system where whites not only had to be separate from blacks, they had to degrade and devalue the black experience in America that was governed by the "separate but equal" doctrine of the 1896 decision in Plessy v. Ferguson. Alexander reaffirms how the Jim Crow laws were natural and necessary to the organization of American life. Many white politicians felt that the sentiments expressed through these policies were valid and warranted. The Brown v. Board (1954) decision is often seen as the end of the Jim Crow era. Though met with heavy opposition from Southern legislators, through Brown v. Board the United States Supreme Court de jure segregation was deemed unconstitutional. The institution of education that was the great equalizer and the machine for

which racial integration and unity would pervade American society eventually became the fundamental thoroughfare for the new and improved system of Jim Crow.

The new Jim Crow, as Alexander points out, is the system of mass incarceration. Because of a variety of policies introduced and supported by politicians to appear "tough on crime" and maintain civil peace and order, there became an ample increase in arrests, convictions, and prison sentences. Alexander details how these policies came into existence, but this research focuses on one facet of the issue: the school-to-prison pipeline. The school-to-prison pipeline is a series of consequences that funnel students from academic or work pathways towards prison or other functions of the criminal justice system. The new Jim Crow is supported by the school-to-prison pipeline.

There is a clear link between the War on Drugs and zero-tolerance policies as they contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline, but we cannot deny that there is an inherent racial factor to be considered. "The drug war from the outset had little to do with public concern about drugs and much to do with public concern about race. By waging a war on drug users and dealers, Reagan made good on his promise to crack down on the racial defined "others" – the undeserving." (Alexander, 2010, p. 49). While black adult drug use rates are slightly higher than their white peers, their imprisonment rates for the same offenses are significantly higher. The undeserving that Reagan was targeting are poor people of color and the school-to-prison pipeline works as an implement to aid and abet students as casualties of the War on Drugs. Human Rights Watch's analysis of prison admission data for 2003 revealed that relative to population, blacks are 10.1 times more likely than whites to be sent to prison for drug offenses. Alexander quotes, MAURA.R. Haldeman, an adviser to Nixon, "[President Nixon] emphasized that you have to face the fact that the whole problem really is the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not

appearing to (p. 43).” Racism in the school-to-prison pipeline and more broadly the Jim Crow system of mass incarceration is no accident. Additionally, Darenbourg et. al. suggest that African American males have a specifically hard time regaining agency after exclusionary discipline, such as that mandated by zero-tolerance policies. As a result, students’ perception of the education system is seen as unsupportive and alienating. In other words, education

Dignity is a core conceptual thread that linked the Civil Rights Movement to the Black Power movement where the focus became one of addressing violations of non-inherent dignity. Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. regarded much of his life’s work as restoring among Black Americans “somebodiness” or a sense of basic God-given human dignity. Tactically, King believed that Black people were best able to regain this sense of dignity by asserting their rights through political engagement, direct protest against racism, and economic exploitation (Burrow Jr., 2002). Burrow Jr. (2002) also noted that this full inherent human dignity is the exact type of dignity to which Martin Luther King Jr. appealed. King and his contemporaries’ political philosophies and tactics reflect a sophisticated understanding of the ways that experiences, conditions, and treatment related to a sense of full inherent human dignity.

In 1966, Kwame Ture spoke at UC-Berkeley and delivered his historic “Black Power” speech. At this point in his political journey Ture presented himself as a representative of The Black Panther Party (BPP) and the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He spoke without reservation about the role and responsibility of Black Power. Using Camus, Sartre and Fanon as references, Ture appealed to the logical and academic sense rather than the spiritual and moral conscience of his audience. While he acknowledged improved circumstances of Black people at that time, he notably substantiates the limitations of the political mode of progress. He stated:

“I maintain that every civil rights bill in this country was passed for white people, not for black people. For example, I am black. I know that. I also know that while I am black I am a human being, and therefore I have the right to go into any public place. White people didn’t know that. Every time I tried to go into a place they stopped me. So some boys had to write a bill to tell that white man, “He’s a human being; don’t stop him.” That bill was for that white man, not for me. I knew it all the time.”

This sentiment is an illustration of Ture's conceptualization of dignity. In similar way as King did within his concept of "somebodyness" (FIHD) and its relation to non-inherent dignities, Ture charged the purveyors of the American dream with denying basic human rights to fellow citizens. He realized the need for change was within the hearts and minds of White Americans, not Black Americans. This distinction is critical in that it points to the central role of Whiteness as a resource that diminishes Black dignity. The founding fathers of the United States by failing to acknowledge Blacks as human beings codified whiteness as an essential prerequisite for full inherent human dignity and by extension the non-inherent dignities associated with maintaining a sense of inherent worth. The founders framed non-inherent claims of dignity such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as accessible only through the status of U.S. citizenship.

Regardless of constitutional documents or policy that dictated to Whites what they should value and believe, Blacks, as Ture noted, are humans and know it without a need to have it codified in policies. But most Black leaders also recognized the very real potential that under oppressive conditions, humiliating and dehumanizing events, circumstances and experiences stand to diminish the recognition of one’s self-worth. Bromell (2013) argues that dignity, although

intrinsic, needs social confirmation. In large part, the substantiation of dignity relies on the structure of society. As such oppressive conditions require an intentional vigilance to restore and maintain Black dignity. Social confirmation in the U.S. context relates to accessibility of resources and power to eliminate the conditions and circumstances that lead to humiliation and degradation. These resources are substantive and relational ones. They are also resources of identity, recognition, and attribution. Black leaders have long recognized the importance of resources as relate to social confirmation and dignity.

The discourses that Black freedom fighters from across the ideological spectrum adopted reflect a keen awareness of the humiliation and dehumanization that Black Americans experience in everyday life in the U.S. The historical record demonstrates that Black Americans drew from concepts of inherent dignity and non-inherent dignity to maintain a sense of humanity in the face of terroristic endemic violence at the hands of white Americans. Perhaps the most important aspect of the Reconstruction Era, the Red Summer of 1914, the Civil Rights Era, and the Black Power Movements was that Black leaders unapologetically asserted their humanity as Blacks and they possessed worth just for that fact alone. The moments reminded Blacks that they should demand to be treated as such by the government and by other human beings regardless of racial identity.

Finally, these freedom movements were also opportunities for white Americans to see their own humanity as they were forced to reckon with Blacks as full humans. If even for a moment, White Americans were made to entertain the idea of human equality with Black Americans. These were moments where many White Americans engaged in the kind of honest confession that holds the potential to lead to a different way of recognizing and relating to Black Americans in terms of non-inherent human dignity. The leaders whose words we quoted in this section, from our perspective, exemplify inflorescent dignity. Of course, what constitutes human excellence is quite

subjective, related to cultural and historical understandings because dignity is and must be culturally rooted. History often demonstrates the excellence of humans who, in their own lifetimes, were viewed with disdain, treated inhumanely, and whose ideas and actions consistent with their own dignity were vehemently challenged, opposed, and discredited by others who looked at them as lacking basic deportment. Scores of Black leaders who we now consider great people were not considered so by the standards of their time. Many would not be considered so today. The alternate can also prove true. Either case speaks to the critical importance of dignity and its importance for developing an orientation for compelling societal change.

A contemporary view: Black male achievement. Black male achievement is an arrangement of concepts and ideas used in research, policy-making, program development, and community organizing to address significant detrimental differences in social outcomes between Black males and the rest of society. The concepts that belie this arrangement are grounded in the social constructions of race, gender, and markers of success. These concepts have been systematically arranged to describe Black males as not being able to adapt to the structures, institutions, and cultural practices of American society. Simply put, this arrangement indicates that the color line is gendered and maintains it as a problem yet to be addressed. Further, situated in this manner, Black males are positioned as having a collective cultural deficit. The purpose of this paper is to critique the usage of Black male achievement as a burgeoning institutional arrangement in the field of education. The intent is not to ignore or deny the very real oppressive circumstances that Black males face, the intention is to critique the discourse of Black male achievement in its current social context.

In 2013, Paul Butler of the Georgetown University Law Center published an article entitled *Black Male Exceptionalism? The Problems and Potential of Black Male Focused Interventions*. In this article, Black male exceptionalism is the articulation of specialized disadvantage for Black males coupled with a need for gender and race-based interventions and solutions. Through his research, the author finds that Black males have garnered special attention due to the propagation of the 'endangered species' metaphor. This metaphor became popularized through Patrick Moynihan's infamous report: *The Negro Family, The Case for National Action*. Butler goes on to articulate the ways in which this exceptionalism has become a metanarrative of Black male identity. In summary, Butler asserts that Black male exceptionalism is not justified. He states that the promotion of the idea positions Black males as “racial standard bearers, obscuring the problems of Black women, and advancing patriarchal values (p. 487).” Butler champions what he calls an intersectional approach to understanding the issues that face Black males. He takes a cue from Kimberle Crenshaw's intersectional theory. While he acknowledges that intersectionality is a theory about the difference that difference makes, he highlights a racial reality in which gender should be considered within. Therefore, in Butler's view, the racial imperative should supersede any notion of oppression comparison between the genders. This is not to say that Butler advocates gender-blind racial justice. Butler is merely highlighting the need for gender equity when looking at issues within the Black community.

There are several authors who ideologically follow suit with Butler's assertions. Ayanna Brown (2010) conducted a study to see how Black girls are coping with the so-called Black male crisis. Brown uses Critical Race Feminism, as described by Adrien Wing (2003), to highlight the ways in which race and gender can play unique roles in an individual's ability to interpret the world and their own experiences. Cokely et. al. (2012) uses a combination of scales to describe the ways

in which African-American students relate the development of their own identities with academic achievement and academic disidentification. While the authors of this study acknowledge some difference between African-American males and females, the authors do not privilege African-American male identity but rather are inclusive of both gendered experiences. Donna Ford and James Moore III (2013) study achievement among African-American males in urban schools. Black males are the focus of discussion; however, the authors conclude that equity-based social justice approaches are needed to improve academic achievement. Lastly, Harper et. al. (2009) managed to outline an intersectional methodological approach of race, class, gender, and age, yet conclude that Black male exceptionalism is necessary. This study relates counseling strategies to possible policy implications. Instead of looking for ways to utilize gender equity the authors use gender to privilege Black male identity. Following suit, most additional research reinforces Black male exceptionalism.

Academic researchers have been reinforcing Black male exceptionalism. Allen (2013) is concerned with Black males because they lag their female counterparts in academic achievement and graduation rates. Swanson et. al. (2003) looks at developmental stages and concludes that they are special for Black males. McGee and Pearman (2014) introduces Black male identity as being caricatured through negative educational statistics. The authors outline that the challenge for researchers is to combat deficit-based conclusions relating to Black males by highlighting the "protective factors" that support academic achievement and the barriers that impede academic achievement. Similar to Harper et. al. (2009), McGee and Pearman use intersectionality to highlight Black males without any mention of Black female identities. White-Hood (1991) presents a practitioner's view of African-American male achievement. As a principal, she describes African-American males as facing insurmountable problems. In her coeducational middle school,

the teachers and administrators focused exclusively on how to empower African-American males through a series of climate changes, coaching, and program development. There is no mention of the young females in the school. In a similar fashion, Johnson (2014) explores pedagogy within a coeducational urban middle school that privileges interventions for Black males without comparable interventions for Black female students.

While supporting the arguments put forward by Butler, I would argue that black male Exceptionalism is a reiteration of black pathology. Black pathology has garnered attention from many through the journalism of Ta-Nehisi Coates at *The Atlantic*. His articles over the last few months have challenged how white liberals and/or white progressives have neglected to fully analyze the social realities of race relations. Black pathologies are stereotypes invoked to specifically justify social inequalities. The intellectual genealogy of such pathologies are linked back to the origins of racist intellectual practice. For example, justification for the Transatlantic slave trade was tied to the genetic deficits of African peoples. Mental capacities, sexual appetites, and cultural practices were interpreted as genetically inferior habits that served as justification of the dehumanization of an entire race of people.

Black pathologies have evolved since the Transatlantic slave trade ended. Genetic deficit theories soon evolved into cultural deprivation and cultural deficit theories. In the 1970s and 1980s, the shift from genetic deficit to cultural deficit was supported by the analysis of the IQ test. By controlling for the socioeconomic status of individuals, racial and cultural differences were less drastic. In turn, this opened the door for cultural deprivation and deficit to become the Black pathology that explained away inequity in educational outcomes for African American children. Cultural deficit views place the responsibility of change onto those who carry the label of deficit. In education, the blame of poverty, single motherhood, fatherless homes, cultural depravity

became themes in the social science literature that spoke to what was missing for African American children as products of African American households and communities. Cultural deficit models deny the opportunity of assets-based approaches and ignore structural inequalities such as what bell hooks notably termed, white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks,1994).

Cultural deficit intellectual work produced educational policies that focused on helping African American children overcome instead of addressing the social realities of their everyday lives. For example, the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program of the early 1980s focused on teaching kids about the dangers of drug use. While focusing on what the program identified as the “demand-side” of the illicit drug use in African American neighborhoods, the crack epidemic of the 80s and 90s went systematically unchecked. Another example is the spread of HIV/AIDS and teen pregnancy in the 1990s being addressed by educational policy focused on sex education and not any of the social structures that contributed to shaping the dangers of these “epidemics” in Black communities. One could argue that the more recent educational policy on healthy eating continues the same practice by focusing on what African American families and children are choosing to eat instead of the food options presented to them via advertising and institutional access. These examples show that educational policy that has targeted African Americans in the past has been ill-concieved, focusing on the “deficits” and ignoring the existence of any assets.

Academic achievement can be measured in a variety of ways. Black male achievement does not have a defined measure. It seems as if many researchers in the field of urban education see it as a shared construction and that does not require operationalizing. However, the most popular use of achievement is related to the achievement gap. This gap is described as the numerical differences between students of color, particularly African-American, and their white

counterparts in GPAs, test scores, and graduation rates. A large part of the educational discourse in the 1990s and early 2000's focused on how the achievement gap could be bridged.

Asa Hilliard, III presented an alternative view on the achievement gap in *Young, Gifted, And Black* (Perry, 2004). In this text, he presents what he terms as 'false gaps' in educational literature. The achievement gap is a false gap for two reasons. First, it equates all notions of achievement, including measures of success in education, with whiteness. This racialized notion of achievement demonizes black identity, praises white identity and acceptance, and leaves little room to critique achievement through a non-racialized discourse. While many researchers do this unconsciously, the political implications include a false acceptance of white students being successful in school. This leads into the second reason the achievement gap is false; American students are not leading the world in academic achievement. The majority of American schools students are white, when comparisons are made internationally the majority of students in the United States pale in comparison to many other countries. For these two reasons, Hilliard argues that the education field should focus on the excellence gap. Unlike the achievement gap, the excellence gap raises the bar for all students. Bridging the excellence gap leaves ample room for educators and researchers to be cognizant of the ways in which race and gender have historically been impeding factors to academic achievement and to instead consider them as empowerment factors.

In the Black male achievement academic literature, the achievement gap is often accepted as reality. Ford and Moore, III (2013) accepts this as an academic reality for African-American male students. The authors acknowledge that the achievement gap does not focus on potential or the academic capabilities of students. However, they choose to use the achievement gap as a marker of achievement for African-American students. Through this view the authors do not look

for empowerment factors but they look for detrimental factors such as social, school, cultural, and individual occurrences that may have a causal relationship with underachievement. Butler et. al. (2011) also except the achievement gap as a reality for African-American students. The authors critique the notion that gender-based and race-based concentration on academic achievement met is not the best way to close the achievement gap. However, the authors write explicitly on how the achievement can be addressed on a social and cultural level. Conversely, McGee and Pearman (2014) align more closely to Hilliard by recommending that practitioners and researchers should look at how academic achievement is supported and achieved. The authors provide recommendations that focus on using culture as an empowerment factor for African-American male students.

Understanding dignity for Black males through the field of Black male achievement allows the review to revisit the implementation aspect of Milwaukee's local implementation plan. Dignity for Black males connects a historical understanding of their identity in the United States and burgeoning area of scholarly literature. This work needs to connect to another frame of dignity, the organizational lens of those who are providing programs and services to improve the outcomes of boys and men of color. In the next section, I look at dignity as a component of work where the focus has mostly been on blue collar jobs and not on the human service providers such as those who are critical in advancing Milwaukee's local action plan for boys and men of color.

Dignity in Sociology of Work

Sociologists have interrogated the impact of the work experience on the human spirit since the beginning of the industrial age. Theorists such as Kant (Bowie, 1998; Rosen, 2012), Marx (Marx, 1994), and DuBois (DuBois, 1932; 2013) argued that the socialization of industrialized

work may negatively impact on one's sense of dignity, an essential component of the human spirit. Researchers examined these theories by conducting ethnographic, phenomenological, and case studies that examined the role of dignity at work (Hodson, 2001; Rayman, 2001; Sayer, 2007; Bolton, 2007; Crowley, 2013). This research focused on factory and labor experiences of industrial workers. However, as the work landscape changed in the United States and Europe to post-industrial, information-centered and human services work, the research on dignity at work remained static. Without new research, our shared understandings of dignity at work based upon empirical evidence will be limited and misaligned to the nature of contemporary work. Researchers need to examine how dignity is understood at work outside of the blue-collar sector. The purpose of this study was to understand how employees within the human service sector understood dignity in relation to their work experience. I define dignity as a network of concepts defining the intrinsic and extrinsic worth that explains the subjective experiences of individuals at work. Through this study, I sought to understand how employees of human service agencies interpret dignity concepts after being given the language to understand dignity empirically.

Work, in a capitalist system, can easily be connected to denials of dignity. Marx argued, in his critique of capitalism's impact on society, that the exploitation protected by the capitalist system consistently denies people dignity and freedom (Bolton, 2007; Hodson, 2001). The wage-labor process creates a profit, which means that at some point during the transaction someone is not getting what they are worth. Dignity, in its complexity, is about understanding one's worth among the worthiness of others. If that worth can be negotiated between parties to the benefit of one and the detriment of another that means that dignity is denied. The absence of dignity or the acts leveraged against one's dignity are best conceptualized through humiliation. Humiliation is an unwelcome assault on human dignity (Palshikar, 2005). Palshikar states in a thorough

explication of humiliation that it has three forms: loss, redefinition and conquest. These forms are not mutually exclusive and can happen concurrently with one another. Loss, is the recognition of one's changed position after an attack on one's dignity. At work, loss can be considered through firing, insubordination or promotion denial. Redefinition is when an assault on your dignity results in a change in perceived identity. For example, popular recording artist Kanye West articulated this assault in his song "All Falls Down". He states, "even if you in a Benz, you still a n*gga in a coupe" (West & Hill, 2004). Here, West succinctly captures humiliation through redefinition. While acquiring a Mercedes Benz car might be a status symbol that should afford an individual all the rights and privileges associated with the high-class lifestyle of a luxury vehicle his social reality can easily redefine him what someone would consider to be the lowest form of human driving an undignified vehicle. Lastly, humiliation also occurs as a matter of conquest. In retrospect, a person or group of people can understand and interpret an act of communication as a matter of conquest. The culture clashes that occur because of war depicting this form of humiliation. From, the Beijing Conference of 1848 to the genocide of indigenous people in North America, world history includes several global power shifts based on humiliation through genocide.

A seminal work in understanding dignity and humiliation and work is Rodney Hodson's 2001 book, *Dignity at Work*. This text is based on data collected through an analysis of organizational ethnographies. The ethnographies used for Hodson's analysis are from the late 1950s to the early 1990s. Books were selected according to three core criteria: had to be based on direct ethnographic methods for a period of at least six months, the observations had to be a single organization and the book had to focus on at least one specific group of workers. Hodson suggests that the best way to understand the pursuit of dignity across diverse workplaces is by systematically analyzing organizational ethnographies. The impetus of the text rests on the presentation of four

core challenges to one's dignity at work: overwork; mismanagement and abuse; challenges to autonomy; and contradictions of employee involvement. Hodson juxtaposes these challenges to four modes of safeguarding dignity: resistance, organizational citizenship, independent meaning making and group relation. To reconcile the challenges of dignity in order to create dignity-safe work environments, Hodson proposes a theory of workplace dignity that is achieved through resistance, citizenship and the creation of autonomous meaning systems. Resistance to systems that do not give workers a sense of dignity is created through safeguarding one's dignity, worker agency, or a worker's power-in-operation.

Hodson includes the two-dimensional frame of inherent and non-inherent dignity. He explains that inherent dignity is obtained through human existence but non-inherent dignity is obtained through earned merit of one's actions. *Dignity at Work* focuses on non-inherent dignity. Through the process of work, a person comes to understand their personal dignity or value in the workplace. This includes being recognized for one's work and being accepted among co-workers. Hodson developed a conceptual model of worker dignity that depicts a network of challenges and safeguards a person's dignity at work. Hodson gives richer meaning and context to the employee as a human being instead of a cog in a machine or an input needed to produce a certain outcome. It's important to understand Hodson's contributions as his extensive research on the topic served as impetus for many others to study dignity in the workplace over the last decade.

Dignity and work theorists all work toward defining factors of the dignified at work experience. These factors include: recognition, connectedness, respect and autonomy. However, what stands out is the fact that every theorist connected dignity and work through language. Language is concurrently a political instrument, means and proof of power (Baldwin, 1979). This demonstrates how power, mediated through language, becomes the fulcrum for understanding the

differences between dignity and humiliation in the workplace. As stated before, this imbalance creates potentially precarious relationships between and individual and work. Sayer argues that it is not merely a matter of words but the context in which language is instrumentalized within the work environment (Sayer, 2007). Pugh provides examples of the instrumentalization through analyzing what people talk about and how people talk about their relationships to work (Pugh, 2009). Through a series of interviews of blue-collar workers about job security and personal commitment, Pugh identifies the language systems as important for “acting as a sieve for culturally appropriate feelings, the emotional component of claims to dignity”. The emotional components of one’s claims to dignity are another way of interpreting one’s responses to humiliation or denials of dignity.

Theories of dignity and the workplace present an opportunity to understand the role and function of work within shared socioeconomic realities. Pugh presents the idea through understanding ourselves within an economy of dignity (Pugh, 2009). Through this view, dignity is a resource that is managed, leveraged, and negotiated. The process of work includes the establishment of a contract, where people negotiate the terms of their social world and what it takes to be recognized and participate. In effect, through the work contract, people negotiate their ability to be considered as their own penultimate concern. Kantian ethics explains this negotiation by defining human dignity as being recognized and treated as an end in oneself. The negotiation of work within the capitalist system shifts that concern from the individual to the product or outcome produced through employment. Sayer concurs by stating, “employees are hired to their employer’s ends, not out of a sense of benevolence or respect (Sayer, 2007)”. Consequently, Pugh argues, economies of dignity are created within the work environment to create a sense of citizenship and belonging (Pugh, 2009). Bolton adds a spiritual dimension to dignity and work within capitalism

by interrogating what humanizes or dehumanizes work experiences through workplace spirituality (Bolton, 2010). Bolton argues that work has been dehumanized to outputs and outcomes and that humanization at work is needed for one to regain a sense of dignity in and at work. Dignity and work must include a synthesis of the socioeconomic reality that defines the need and function of work in society.

Humiliation and dignity are mediated through power. As a mediator of humiliation and dignity, power represents one's ability to act within one's desired autonomy. When that power protects the humanity of others it respects one's dignity. However, when that power is used to deny the opportunity for one to act within their desired autonomy, humiliation occurs. Work as a power relationship provides opportunities for dignity or humiliation to occur. Power relationships define the reality of global systemic oppressions. The social constructions of the experiential and empirical occurrences of dignity are products of a world marred with global systemic oppressions such as gender, race, class, and sexuality. Thus, socialized identities such as Black, woman, queer, and poor create potentially precarious relationships between individuals and work. This research enters this discourse of dignity and work to address the potential precariousness of one's understanding of dignity and their work.

The discourse of dignity requires an intersectional analysis that includes what defines an opportunity to even engage in the negotiation of work. People construct their lives through work and relationships with others (Byars-Winston, 2012). An intersectional approach looks at the ways marginalization from the broader society impacts an individual's relationship to work. Byars-Winston (2012) demonstrates the utility of an intersectional approach to understanding dignity and work by interrogating the discourse of gender equity at the turn of the 20th century. The gender-based division of labor that defines first-wave feminism did not include the work experiences of

people of color, particularly African-American and indigenous communities. Identity plays an important role in understanding dignity. If dignity is defined solely by one's relationship to work, the relationships one prioritizes over work in creating a sense of dignity are ignored. Market-based interpretations of dignity do not include "race work", or one's labor beyond the public market intended to support the dignity of a race. Despite the focus on capitalism, dignity and work literature does not include significant empirical studies that prioritize intersectional approaches to dignity and work. Hodson's study severely neglects the analysis on marginalization and work. The study determined that there weren't significant gender differences on worker agency, a key determinant of dignity at work for Hodson. However, the analysis doesn't delve deeply on intersectional identities inclusive of gender.

Dignity at work literature outlines how dignity has been considered in terms of blue collar jobs within capitalism. Dignity for boys and men of color in Milwaukee connects largely to white collar jobs performed through the human services field. To better understand the possibilities of dignity beyond what we already know through dignity and work literature, I turn to the caring sciences. The caring sciences field has operationalized dignity as a value and a indicator of accountability to providing care for clients in healthcare settings. This literature adds to the dignity at work literature to build a frame for how human services employees and organizations can engage in applying dignity to their daily work.

Dignity in the Caring Sciences

In the caring sciences, the discourse of dignity over the last thirty years indicates an active scholarly agenda to develop the concept for measurable terms. Caring is a science that encompasses a humanitarian and human science orientation with human caring processes,

phenomena, and experiences (Vance, 2003). Caring science is a relatively new field grounded in nursing science and practice. A core concern for the caring sciences is maintaining a sense of dignity on a relational level. Relational dignity is the recognition of human beings' need to be in relationship with one another (Pleschberger, 2007; Leget, 2013). For health care providers, this sense of dignity is about how a patient is treated within the health care setting. The science of caring includes understanding how relational dignity is cultivated and maintained for patients. The caring sciences are usually associated with healthcare professions. However, other disciplines such as Women's Studies (See: Held, 2014; Pérez-Bustos, 2014; Stoate, 2012), Education (See: Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Noddings, 2013; Valenzuela, 2010) and Humanities (See: Bransen, 2015; Engster, 2005; Hodges, 2015) also focus on the science of caring.

Through the 1990s, caring science scholars began to interrogate dignity beyond a practice of care (Gauthier, 2009; Mains, 1994; Shotton & Seedhouse, 1998). National associations in the caring sciences field (See, for example, American Nursing Association Code of Ethics) upheld the discourse of dignity but had not developed the capacity or the tools to be accountable to respecting, protecting and fulfilling the concept of dignity (Mains, 1994). These researchers focus on connecting the concept of dignity to professional practice (Gauthier, 2009; Shotton & Seedhouse, 1998). Students, practitioners and experts were consulted in determining what dignity meant for their field as an ethic in daily practice (Martin, Yarbrough, & Alfred, 2003). The articles used for this review focus on the next phase of scholarly interrogations of dignity within the caring sciences. Starting in 2002, caring science researchers published instruments that could assist caring science practitioners in better understanding patient dignity as an outcome of their quality care (Chochinov, Hack, McClement, Kristjanson, & Harlos, 2002). These measures have focused on overall patient dignity with no explicit emphasis on the significance of race and gender.

Current literature on Black males relies on two different types of measures: participation, access, and utility (PAU) measures and thrive-despite measures (T-D). PAU measures are based on how many Black males participate, access or utilize and intervention or program. Traditionally, these measures reflect attendance totals, participation rates, and total number of program users. These numbers are useful but they do not provide information about the experiences of Black males or their treatment as a participant within the program. Thrive-despite measures provide more information than PAU measures but they rely on the behavior of Black males that may or may not be attributed to program interventions. For example, thrive-despite measures include grit (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009), resilience (Brown, 2008), and self-efficacy (Okech & Harrington, 2002). Several programs and initiatives have been proposed to improve the conditions of Black males in given social institutions such as marriage, fatherhood, work, and education (Brown, 2011). The epistemological foundations of programs and initiatives targeting Black males see Black male identity as problematic, a condition to be dealt with, monitored, and changed to achieve success in this world. This traditional approach does not respect or acknowledge the dignity of Black males.

Literature Review Summary and Research Questions

This exploration of the literature allowed me to understand dignity in four unique contexts: philosophy, Black history, sociology of work and the caring sciences. Each field provided unique perspectives on interpreting dignity and analyzing lived experiences through a dignity lens. Philosophically, I came to understand core foundations of dignity as essential humanness and multidimensionality. Black history connects the formation of Black male identity in the United States to a consistent historically rooted call for recognition and livelihood. Dignity and work

literature provides an opportunity to understand the role of work in society, the factors of one's relationship to work and the workplace and the ways in which dignity can be supported or denied through work within a given socio-economic context. Lastly, the caring sciences are an example of operationalizing dignity as value into a measurable outcome. In summary, empirical research on dignity provides important insights on translating dignity from an elusive construct to observable and measurable indicators. As a result of the literature review, my guiding research questions are:

1. How do frontline employees in human service agencies understand and interpret dignity concepts in relation to their work?
2. What components of dignity are most salient to frontline work in human service agencies?

Chapter 3: Methodological Approach

Introduction

To extend the pilot study, the purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the concept of dignity among practitioners in the field of human services as a first step to develop tools to evaluate progress towards creating equity within the communities that they serve. In Chapter 1, I presented an overview of the initiative which included an analysis of My Brother's Keeper, its supposed theory of change and a proposal to enhance the effort through using a dignity framework. In Chapter 2, I looked at literature relating to the topic of dignity and boys and men of color, specifically Black males. At the end of the literature review, I posed two questions concerning dignity that guide my study: (a) How do frontline employees in human service agencies understand and interpret dignity concepts in relation to their work? (b) What components of dignity are most salient to frontline work in human service agencies? In this chapter, I outline the specific methods that I used to conduct my study. I spent a few months understanding how protocols and measurement tools were developed in the caring sciences to develop my methods of study. I looked at the concepts of dignity that were most useful for collecting observable data, understood the evolution of instruments across the field, and analyzed the role of cultural relevance in the creation of the instruments. This process led to the development of a methodology to answer my research questions. My original intent was to develop an instrument like the ones in the caring sciences field. However, resource limitations limit this study to focusing on the foundation of instrument development, conceptualization. My study focuses on how dignity is understood by practitioners so that the concepts can be related to the work practitioners have already identified as relevant to their roles in advancing the outcomes of boys and men of color, particularly Black males.

Transformations

Qualitatively oriented researchers place heavy value on the characteristics and ideals of the research subjects. Through the writing process, researchers take themselves and the data collected through several transformations. While transformations take place throughout the research formation process, one of the largest transformations occurs when researchers take the information they collected and create a written narrative that can be shared with others about their data. Researchers do this by taking the collected data, and by proxy themselves, through a series of phases. Collecting data can be a messy and tenuous process, so researchers need to frequently return to the data to clean it up. After cycles of cleaning, the researcher will sort the data per emerging themes. From those emerging themes, the researcher can begin to create a narrative. Wolcott stresses the fact that qualitative researchers are telling a story (Wolcott, 2009; Gilgun, 2010). This transformation process takes the data that the researcher collected from raw observations into a narrative that responds to the research question at hand.

Epistemological and Ideological Foundations

As I have developed as a student and scholar in my graduate program, I have consciously revisited my ideological positions. I first critically interrogated my epistemic foundations while writing a lecture for Dr. William Roger's class Church in African American Life in the Africology Department. Essentially, I understood (and continue to understand) epistemology as answering the question: *How do we know what we know?* Since beginning my gender-conscious research, I have found strong alignment with Black feminist epistemology as presented by Patricia Hill-Collins. However, while I find care, dialogue, accountability and experience as tantamount to any other

knowledge accumulation and validation process, I believe that these ideas are not limited to only describing Black women's lives. I believe that other marginalized populations can use these standards. I consider power relationships to be very important in discussing knowledge. Through highlighting power relations, social constructions are also contextualized.

Before being conscious of gender, I would consider myself a race woman, explicitly conscious of race as a social construct and how that shapes the world that we live in. My first theoretical position was closely aligned with Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Race has always been central to my research. Of all the power relations, I felt that race consciousness was the most important and most relevant to the work I would do intellectually. I began to study African cosmology and African spiritual systems because I believed that a tie to these culturally relevant ontological systems would be important for me to do productive race conscious work. While I am still deeply connected to race as a component of my intellectual exploration, I am now cognizant of other systems of power and how they are intertwined. I am conscious to not jump into what I believe has become a cliché of *intersectionality* or the triad of race, class and gender. Beyond the triad and the intersections, I am now more readily conscious of the colonization of knowledge and experiences and how that impacts research (Berger, 2010).

Ideologically, I support with communal and cooperative political and economic processes. Perhaps, these ideas come from growing up in a large family with limited financial resources. I have participated in a number of cooperative arrangements, formal and informal to meet my daily needs. While I find that scholars who share similar ideals often cite socialist and Marxist frameworks, I have always found a greater attraction to African-centered democracy that focuses on a firm sense of community, spiritual linkages with the ancestors through ritual and communication, and everyone's voice contributes to the functioning of the whole through

community dialogue. In fact, K. Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau's treatise on the *Mbongi*, a political institution of the Bantu-Kongo explicates these ideas through tangible examples (Fu-Kiau, 2007). When I first entered this doctoral program, I had intended on proposing a way to translate the mbongi into public schooling. Hopefully, I will revisit that idea later in my career.

Influences

When I first began exploring black male achievement, my research questions were linked to addressing the "...but where are the girls?" line of thinking through interrogating the statistics used to substantiate the need for black male achievement programming. My intention was not to dismantle or disregard black male achievement, but to build deeper meanings of race, gender, and achievement. However, as I began to delve deeper into the literature and had the opportunity to work on some pilot research, I began to recognize the opportunity I had to use research on black male achievement to interrogate gender in much more disciplined and less antagonistic way. I believe that my communal and cooperative ideals helped shaped this shift or better yet, transformation, of my initial project.

To be truly reflexive in my work as a qualitative researcher, I must actively self-appraise my own axiological positions and how that could impact the research process (Berger, 2010). Berger mentions three major ways that positions of the researcher, such as those outlined above, impact the research process. In terms of access, it is not surprising that I would look to situate my research through the lens of Black experiences in the United States. A position that I hold grants me access in some ways while it also contextualizes the ways in which I would create a research question or identify a research problem. In terms of the research-researched relationship, I would describe the potential of the relationship to be similar to the "outsider-within" position as described

by Patricia Hill Collins (1986). While I am acknowledging a Black experience or lens that frames the research, from the gendered component, I have a different experience than that of Black males. Further, my constructions of the world while in tandem with Black male experiences (pulling from the work of Fu-Kiau) are not the same as Black males. I grew up with a tenuous relationship with my father, a Black male but I had four brothers, all Black males. This personal experience I know impacts the way I view and construct Black males.

Projections

I am conscious that I have some work to do to better analyze and present my reflexivity in the research process. I am very appreciative of the methods presented by Berger to actively engage in the process through journaling, peer review, or creating an audit trail. I have tried again and again to journal throughout my research career, but I find it extremely difficult. What has been helpful to me is a form of back talk that takes place through my social media networks. I routinely use Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr to engage in active dialogue with consumers of academic research to better understand my positions and further refining the depth and scope of my own arguments. This exercise has been helpful to me. As I begin to understand the ways in which I interrogate myself, I am sure that will add to how I understand myself as a research instrument. How do I describe my own life experiences? What analytic processes do I use to understand the world for my own interpretations? How do I best consume large amounts of information? I believe the answers to these questions will help me develop adequate ways to explain and explore myself as a research instrument in the qualitative research process. I think that engaging in active reflection through this course will help me seek answers to these questions. I am making a conscious effort to journal through this course to keep track of how my thinking is evolving

through the process. Through this process, I am challenging myself to engage deeply in critical self-work so that I can develop my qualitative skills for the dissertation process and beyond.

Analysis of Caring Science Instruments

Through the literature review, I discovered how extensively the caring sciences field had operationalized dignity as a measurable outcome for accountability. I explored this literature further for insight on methodological considerations for my research study. In the following sections, I review the tests for dignity for concepts and methods that I used to inform my research methodology to explore my research questions. I found fifteen tests for human dignity across journals in health, education, and social science that met my criteria for review. Table 2 displays the instruments found, their country of origin and target audience. Fourteen of these tests focus on health and caring sciences, particularly for gerontology or palliative care. All tests that were found were developed between 2000 and 2015. I broadened my search as far back as 1900 but did not find any measurement instruments for human dignity presented in the academic literature prior to the year 2000. I analyzed each instrument and the articles written about each test to find answers for my research questions. Each instrument was examined for underlying concepts, development processes, delivery and psychometric properties. I created a matrix to indicate answers for relevant questions and to capture my developing notes and questions on each test.

Factors contributing to a sense of dignity. The Patient Dignity Inventory (PDI) is one of the most influential measures of human dignity (Chochinov, et al., 2008). The PDI was created to evaluate the impact of Dignity Therapy on palliative care patients. This test identified domains of experience that shape one's dignity. In creating this instrument, Chochinov intended to support

clinicians who worked directly with patients as they prepared for the end of their lives. With a greater understanding of how a person's dignity is impacted within care settings, care professionals can do a better job at supporting their patients. Seven other tests were developed because of or inspired by The PDI including versions translated into Spanish, German, Italian, and Persian. Figure 1 displays how this instrument inspired instruments across the caring sciences field.

The concepts selected by researchers to measure a sense of dignity in patients varied between each test. Dignity, a relatively elusive construct, cannot be measured on its own. Researchers must identify the manifest variables that contribute to defining the latent construct of dignity. Chochinov's work inspired Persian (Borhani, Abbaszadeh, & Rabori, 2015), German (Sautier, Vehling, & Mehnert, 2014), Spanish (Rullán, et al., 2015), and Italian (Ripamonti, et al., 2011) versions of the PDI. The original Patient Dignity Inventory identified five factors that contribute to dignity distress in palliative care patients: symptom distress, existential distress, dependency, peace of mind and social support. The translated versions were not able to recreate the five-factor structure identified by Chochinov et al. (2012). To develop the translated tests, researchers translated the original PDI into their respective languages using a rigorous process. All tests maintained the 25-item structure proposed by the original PDI developed by Chochinov. However, these tests found different factor structures than the original PDI. For this reason, each translated version of the test was independently analyzed. The development of a test did not directly indicate whether a test would identify factors as contributing to a sense of patient dignity. Test development methods did not limit the factors identified as contributing to patient dignity. For example, new versions of the Patient Dignity Inventory did not emulate the same factors as the original test. I used an open-coding method to understand the nearly 100 identified factors

contributing to human dignity identified by caring science researchers. I wanted to see how the contributing factors were related across instruments. Through this process, I identified five themes that described all contributing factors identified within the sixteen tests: self, relationships, environment/context, behaviors, and bodily/physical. Table 3 displays the distribution of these factors across instruments measuring dignity in the caring sciences.

Self. All tests, except one, included factors that related directly to a person's internalized perception of themselves or the world around them. However, the proportion of 'self' factors to total factors varied across tests. A test intended to measure a sense of dignity among Palestinian refugees had four factors that were all about the self: autonomy, worthiness, self-esteem and self-respect (Khatib & Armenian, 2010). The Measurement Instrument for Dignity – Amsterdam (MIDAM), however, also found four factor and none of those factors were in the 'self' category (Oosterveld-Vlug, Pasman, van Gennip, de Vet, & Onwuteaka-Philipsen, 2014). Approximately half of all concepts across all tests related to "self". Within this code, I also included feelings relating to spiritual and existential beliefs. Example factors for this code include but are not limited to: *autonomy, self-respect, attitude, peace of mind and letting go.*

Relationships. The least recurring code within the factors contributing to dignity was relationships. This code included any all suggestion to how the person of concern related to others. Six of the sixteen tests included factors contributing to 'relationships'. The Patient Dignity Inventory (PDI) was the only test that contained more than one factor to 'relationships'. I identified two of five factors in the PDI relating to relationships: social support and dependency (Chochinov, et al., 2008). 'Relationships' included factors such as *social support, connectedness, dependency, and family harmony*

Environment/Context. Institutional accountability was captured in four of the identified tests. Ballie (2008) developed a model for dignity that had three factors: staff behavior, patient factors and hospital environment. This model is included in the factor overall identified factors contributing to dignity but Ballie did not create a specific tool for measurement so it is not included in the methodological analysis. However, her model is included in the analysis of dignity concepts. While other models identified environment and context as a factor, Ballie was the only person to develop a model where environment and context was a domain. Concepts included in this code are: *lack of privacy, quality of care, care tenor, and conducive physical environment.*

Behaviors/Actions. Behaviors/Actions are the things that people can do to impact or influence a person's dignity. This code included factors that could be done by a person or done to a person. For example, Jacelon and Choi (2014) included behavioral respect for others as a factor of attributed dignity for older adults. These are actions that older adults do to show respect for others. However, respect was a factor of Periyakoil et al's Dignity Card-Sort Tool (2009) and Perception of Dignity Card-Sort Tool (2010) that represented the respect shown to the adults taking the tool for others. These factors include: *breaching privacy, curtness, respect, comfort and abiding by social norms.*

Bodily/Physical. This was the last code I developed. Initially I coded bodily and physical impairments within environmental and contextual factors. Considering the circumstances of which these tests were developed, I attributed factors relating to a person's physicality as matter of context that defined their need for dignity to be respected. The PDI explicitly identifies "symptom distress" as a contributing factor to patient dignity (Chochinov, et al., 2008). Other factors were not as explicit but were found in other instruments such as the MIDAM (Vlug, de Vet, Pasman, Rurp, & Onwuteaka-Philipsen, 2011) and the Dignity Card-Sort Tool (Periyakoil, Kraemer, &

Noda, 2009). Contributing factors include: *symptom distress, impaired health, mental state, and basic care.*

Figure 2 displays the proportion of coded factors contributing to human dignity within sixteen dignity instruments in the caring sciences. The distribution substantiates understanding dignity as a multidimensional concept. Another way to look at this data is to think about the domains as perceived by an individual. This may be considered as things I can change (self/behaviors), things others can change (relationships/behaviors/environment/context) and things that cannot change (bodily/physical/environment/context). Although, many coded factors related to the ‘self,’ this only explained slightly more than one-third of the overall components impacting a person’s sense of dignity. In efforts to develop instruments beyond the caring sciences, this factor distribution highlights three essential questions that must be answered: 1) How does someone recognize and value themselves? 2) What about relationships with others strengthen or weaken one’s sense of dignity? 3) What are the environmental and contextual things that a person cannot change that may be impacting their sense of dignity? Answers to these questions may address the root causes of marginalization and vulnerability for populations that have not had the opportunity to give power and voice to their dignity as a measure of accountability.

Conceptualization and Instrumentation. The Patient Dignity Inventory was developed through a series of semi-structured interviews with terminally ill adult cancer patients. Palliative research nurses administered the interviews with patients after being trained by an academic research team. The interviews were transcribed and coded by researchers. Scales, such as the PDI, are developed to measure phenomena we cannot assess directly. Other tools to measure patient dignity were developed using similar strategies.

The most prevalent dignity instrument development strategies were interviews, surveys, literature reviews, or a combination thereof. Other tests of human dignity in care settings expand concern beyond palliative care and include community-dwelling residents, non-terminally ill older adults, patient support staff and family members. The development of the Attributed Dignity Scale (ADS) is representative of most dignity instruments. After working with critically ill older adults, Jacelon began to conceptualize dignity in older adult care settings. The foundation of the Jacelon Attributed Dignity Scale (JADS) is symbolic interactionism. Jacelon conceptualizes dignity as “an intrinsic quality of being human that is manifested as an attributed, dynamic quality of the self, connoting self-value and as a behavior that demonstrates respect for self and others” (Jacelon & Choi, 2014). After a systematic literature review and five focus groups of diverse older adults, Jacelon initiated five test development phases: item generation, item review, cognitive appraisal, pilot testing, and construct validity evaluation (Jacelon, Dixon, & Knafl, 2009). Jacelon developed a model of attributed dignity that was the basis of the pilot version of the ADS but was altered through psychometric testing of the scale. Most tests followed a similar path to creation. The Dignity Instrument proposed by Wiegman (2003) is the only proposed instrument that exclusively used a literature review to develop an instrument assesses human dignity.

Rudilla (2015) heavily referenced the development of The PDI as background for the Palliative Patient’s Dignity Scale (PPDS). However, items for the scale were developed using an alternative method. The researchers triangulated data from patients, caregivers and their families. Other scales from the caring sciences focused on patient dignity but did not develop items based on the perspectives of a variety of different stakeholders that provided care to patients. Most scales used a combination of current literature and qualitative data collected from target populations.

The process used by each researcher or research team speaks to their underlying epistemology of human dignity. The instrument creators gave power to those who they thought were most important in understanding the concept of dignity within their respective fields of interest. While Jacelon used interviews of older adults, Rudilla purposely selected caregivers and their families as active contributors to the patient's sense of dignity. The processes used by researchers to develop test instruments affirm the dignity of those consulted. Evaluators must be conscious of the power dynamics represented in during instrument development. It is also important that researchers demonstrate different ways of obtaining an understanding of Black male dignity.

Test Delivery. Most scales were completed through self-report delivered through a paper form. When patients or subjects were unable to answer themselves, research nurses who were trained in the protocol assisted the patients. The Dignity Card-Sort Tool (Periyakoil, Kraemer, & Noda, 2009) and Perception of Dignity Card-Sort Tool (Periyakoil, Noda, & Kraemer, 2010) used the most unique approach to delivering a dignity instrument. Except for the DCT and pDCT, all instruments used five point Likert-scaled items. Initially the researchers created a rating scale of 18 items that they identified through a qualitative study of factors influencing the erosion of dignity. However, when they first piloted the tool, participants rated all the items as “agree” or “strongly agree”. To stratify the items, the researchers created a rank order paper survey asking participants to rank each of the items 1-18. However, participants assigned tie ranks or equal ratings across the board. The final stage of the tool was to create a card sort rank order tool. Each of the eighteen items were listed on an index card and participants had to arrange the cards in order from least important factor at the bottom of the deck and most important factor at the top of the deck. This process provided the most useful results for the researchers.

The OMEGA Tool Measuring Dignity (Loubser & Herbst, 2010) was the only tool that was delivered exclusively to caregivers instead of patients. Researchers trained informal caregivers of palliative care patients to become credentialed users of the tool. The caregivers needed to rate the degree of “acting out” when a person’s dignity was affected within one of the eight factors identified qualitatively through focus groups. The scores ranged from a scale a of 1 to 7 with scores 5, 6, 7 focusing on strong feelings that informal caregivers had about the role of family in the dignity of a loved one in palliative care. The highest score of 7 represented “OK” meaning that the family is a unified team managing the dying process of the patient.

Test delivery should be considered very important in developing potential instruments for Black male dignity. In the era of evidence-based practice and data-driven decision making, Black male youth are targets of over-testing. The instrument should not replicate paper-based Likert scaled instruments that have been symbolic of Black males marginalization from achieving success academically, socially and economically. Tests for Black male dignity should be innovative and intentionally address what is needed to hold organizations and institutions accountable for respecting, protecting and fulfilling Black male dignity.

Cultural relevance. By expanding the scope of measuring dignity in the caring sciences to Black males and Black male achievement studies, we increase the visibility of individual and collective vulnerability due to historically perpetuated marginalization from academic, social and economic success. The cultural relevance of human dignity is important for instrumentation. Considering dignity for Black males is not just an application of a universal construct to specific population; it is the recognition of a historical discourse and activism about respecting the human dignity of those who have been socially marked as less than worthy by others. Black male resistance to marginalization and oppression in the United States has been rooted in uplifting a

sense of Black male dignity. Bromwell (2013) argues that indignation, Black resistance to marginalization from democratic participation, demonstrates the impact of denying the recognition of dignity to a community of people. Black males and those serving Black males need culturally salient approaches to define and measure human dignity. The caring sciences have three examples that can be used to develop scales and indicators specific to Black male dignity.

As stated before, The Patient Dignity Inventory (PDI) has been translated into four different languages. Translation can be a dangerous job. There is an Italian proverb that states, “traduttore, traditore” meaning the translator is the traitor. This means that in the process of translation originally meaning an intent can easily be lost or misinterpreted. The rigorous methods used by the researchers creating the translated version of The PDI substantiate the importance of meaningful verbatim translation in measurement tools. Language is a transmitter of culture. Colloquialisms and cultural context can cause significant difficulty in translation. The research team that created and validated the PDI-S acknowledged the language difficulties. In the PDI-S, the research team substituted the PDI phrases “feeling depressed” and “feeling anxious” to “feeling discouraged” and “feeling nervous” respectively because previous research found that the original Spanish translations carried negative connotations that could potentially impact the reliability of the tool. The other translations did not identify specific language barriers but did address cultural contexts.

Cultural context refers to how culture can affect behaviors and opportunities. Cultural context is important for developing a scale and is relevant to understanding the prevalence of a scale. The PDI has been translated in four other cultural contexts than its intended audience. However, the creators of those tests have highlighted the ways in which culture may affect their tests differently. For example, the PDI-S researchers acknowledged the importance of cultural

context in test delivery. Their findings state, “Almost all patients chose to complete the PDI-S by having someone read it out rather than self-report. This might be because patients in our cultural context prefer to answer someone’s questions instead of filling out a questionnaire (Rullán, et al., 2015).” Further, the PDI-P found a factor loading that contributed more closely to the PDI-G than the original PDI, which was developed in a Canadian context. The researchers concluded that it may be possible that Iranian cultural is closer to German culture than Canadian culture (Borhani, Abbaszadeh, & Rabori, 2015). The OMEGA Tool Measuring Dignity (OTMD) created in South Africa was developed address cultural context within the rural communities that test was intended to be administered. In developing the OTMD, the researchers intentionally sought out participation from each of the eleven South African cultural groups to participate in focus group to reveal the domains for the potential instrument. Periyakoil et al. (2010) validated their instrument specifically within multicultural contexts. The researchers sought out long-term care nurses from different ethnicities across the globe, varying religious backgrounds and age ranges. The findings state that cultural backgrounds influence perceptions of what constitutes a dignified death. Cultural context has an impact on how a tool is developed, used, and understood within varying cultures.

Discussion and Application to Development of Dignity Tools

Connect empirical models of dignity to theoretical models in other fields. Although the caring sciences have the most developed empirical tools for measuring dignity, theoretical models exist in business and education. Managers and industrial-organizational psychologists have created models of dignity in the workplace (Hodson, 2001; Bolton, 2007). These models recognize workers within capitalism to be placed in a marginalized position and create process-based and theoretical representations to assess how dignity can be sustained on the job. In education, the

dignity of students is upheld against the emergence of zero-tolerance policies in schools. Zero-tolerance policies lead to students being expelled from schools and school districts. Advocates against these policies, such as Dignity in Schools (Scott, 2007), consider education a human right that must be protected. If students are removed from school and prevented from learning, their sense of human dignity is violated. This scope of work aligns with considerations found in constitutional law.

Address the epistemological reasoning for developing domains and constructs to define dignity. Epistemologies are theories of knowledge that explain how one knows something to be a fact and not just an opinion. Epistemologies answer questions about how one can know something to be true. In developing measurement instruments, epistemologies are closely connected to theories, which are used to conceptualize social science phenomena into measurable questions and problems. The instruments presented in this review negotiated epistemological concerns through choosing specific and intentional methods to identify domains and indicators of dignity within their respective target populations. Epistemological and theoretical foundations to conceptualizing measurement instruments provide critical background information that can speak to the efficacy of a culturally responsive tool. Patricia Hill-Collins cautions, “If the epistemology used to validate knowledge comes into question, then all prior knowledge claims validated under the dominant model become suspect (Collins, 1989).” Addressing epistemological concerns during the instrument development process can alleviate potential unconscious re-inscriptions of oppression.

Use innovative methods to deliver dignity instruments. Most dignity instruments use traditional methods of evaluation to assess manifest variables of a person’s dignity. Periyakoil et al.’s (2009; 2010) work should set a precedent of using innovative approaches of test delivery to

get results that are most meaningful to the key questions at hand. With the DCT and the pDCT, researchers and practitioners could get an accurate assessment of what factors are most influential on a person's dignity at a given point in time. In addition, traditional methods are closely related to reinforcing educational and social practices that have historically marginalized Black males from participating fully in society. Lastly, instrument delivery needs to be responsive across cultural contexts of language, class, and accessibility.

Recognize and consciously respond to the varying cultural contexts that shape Black male identity. Frantz Fanon states in the introduction to *Black Skin, White Masks* that we must root our social analysis temporally because our present condition will unquestionably be the roots of our future (Fanon, 1967). If we do not give value to experiences within their appropriate time, space, and place then we are forced to pass that failure on to future generations. For example, an exploration of dignity in Palestine found that personal and collective freedom and independence influenced perceptions of personal dignity in Palestinian youth (Amro & Giacaman, 2012). Further, the PDI inspired seven other instruments for assessing patient dignity. The cultural context of the PDI is an important consideration for others as they continue to build off Chochinov's work. For Black males, cultural context needs to be clearly outlined during the instrumentation phase. Black males, and by consequence Black males' dignity, are not a one-dimensional monolith of racialized experiences. Explorations of Black males' identity should reflect a thorough understanding of cultural factors that impact inherited and socialized ideas about personal and collective dignity.

Research approach and overview of research design

Dignity and work literature provides an opportunity to understand the role of work in society, the factors of one's relationship to work and the workplace and the ways in which dignity can be supported or denied through work within a given socio-economic context. In summary, empirical research on dignity provides important insights on translating dignity from an elusive construct to observable and measurable indicators.

1. How do frontline employees in human service agencies understand and interpret dignity concepts in relation to their work?
2. What components of dignity are most salient to frontline work in human service agencies?

To extend the findings of the pilot study, the purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the concept of dignity among practitioners in the field of human services as a first step to develop tools to evaluate progress towards creating equity within the communities that they serve. I developed a three-step process to answer the above research questions. First, I conducted interviews with participants who were a part of a previous research study that found dignity to be important for supporting racial equity. I used the findings from the interviews to inform an intervention with a broader set of participants. Second, I conducted focus group workshops for employees at various human service agencies as an intervention where participants could learn about dignity as a concept and discuss how it manifests in their own work. Third, I conducted post-intervention interviews with participants to get their feedback on the intervention, what they learned, what they took away, and what questions they still have. My unit of analysis is the individual as an employee within in a human services organization. The focus of this study is on the post-workshop interviews. I used focus groups because some of the most cited instruments from the caring sciences used focus groups to develop the conceptual determination of dignity for measurement.

Positionality

Gender inequity addresses opportunity gaps experienced by girls, but Kimberlé Crenshaw added the theory of intersectionality to the scholarly discourse which allows us to explore not just race or gender but race and gender (Crenshaw, 1991). The Black feminist epistemological approach is useful for understanding what Patricia Hill-Collins terms the “matrix of domination” that produces marginalized identities (Brewers & Collins, 1992). Black feminist epistemology is not the advocacy of privileging black women’s voices over other marginalized voices. It is the conscious standpoint interrogation of how we come to know and validate truth. I utilize this framework to substantiate the necessity of different epistemological processes to be used to understand different marginalized identities. African American women, conscious of the “matrix of oppression” created through race, class, gender, and sexual orientation are empowered to utilize their modes of knowledge production to create and validate information through dialogue, experience, and the ethics of care and personal responsibility. While Black feminist epistemology is focused on giving voice to Black women’s experiences, I am employing the tenets as a Black woman talking about Black male achievement. The intention here is to be conscious of how identities are situated within an oppressive reality while producing work that works to eliminate walls of the matrix of domination. In very clear words, I think it is the Black feminist scholar’s duty to address issues that face Black men for we are all oppressed under a “white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (hooks, 1994). My positionality informed my research methodology.

Key Informant Interviews

I invited ten community members for key informant interviews. These individuals had either been a part of the pilot study or were engaged as key stakeholders during the reporting out

process. I could conduct full interviews with 7 community members. For descriptions of key informants see Table 1. The questions during this interview were focused on three things: their current understanding of the dignity framework, what they feel like is needed in terms of training and development around the framework and any foreseeable or anticipated challenges in presenting the framework to practitioners and the public. The purpose of these interviews was to gather information from community members about the reception of dignity as a potential framework for racial equity and recommendations for developing a scale to be used in the workplace to assess dignity. Key informants identified specific challenges and opportunities for moving dignity work forward. I incorporated the themes from the key informant interviews into the workshops.

Study Participants

I recruited participants in early fall to participate in focus group workshops later in the season. I aimed to have between ten and twenty participants and got a total of 16 people participate in the study from recruitment through interview. Recruitment happened through three methods. 1) Email - I sent follow up emails to participants in the pilot study and connections made through the reporting section of the pilot study. 2) Facebook - I sent out links for recruitment through Facebook networks. 3) Phone calls and Emails with previous partners during the pilot study. Sessions occurred in October 2015 on weekday evenings after traditional work hours. This time and schedule was developed through discussion with interested participants. Although we were not able to accommodate every participant that signed up, I feel confident that a dignity-based approach to scheduling was upheld. Table 2 displays the demographics of the focus group participants.

Data collection procedures

Post focus group interviews. Within two weeks after the workshops, I conducted a semi-structured interview with each participant. The purpose of these interviews was to gain an understanding of how participants felt about the focus group experience, assess their interpretations of the dignity concepts, provide an opportunity for them to share any additional information and to ask me questions about the research and its intentions.

Data analysis procedures

Interviews were analyzed using a combination of coding methods. For the initial analysis of focus group and interview transcripts, I used a priori coding based upon the dignity concepts shared during the focus groups. Shortly after, I recoded each transcript without the a priori codes. By using emergent thematic coding, I could identify the different ways reflected on their experiences at work and in the focus groups. I used dedoose® to keep track of my data, codes and memos. I also reviewed worksheets that the participants shared during the workshop and workshop evaluations. The worksheets were opportunities for participants to write down their thoughts regarding questions posed to the whole group but in relation to their specific work.

Key Informant Interviews

I invited ten community members for key informant interviews. These individuals had either been a part of the pilot study or were engaged as key stakeholders during the reporting out process. I could conduct full interviews with 8 community members. These people represented funders (philanthropic organizations), convening agencies (responsible for generating work plans around racial equity), practitioners (employees who are on the ground providing direct services or connecting directly with the service population) and participants (individuals who received

services or were within the target population). The questions during this interview were focused on three things: their current understanding of the dignity framework, what they feel like is needed in terms of training and development around the framework and any foreseeable or anticipated challenges in presenting the framework to practitioners and the public. The purpose of these interviews was to gather information from community members about the reception of dignity as a potential framework for racial equity and recommendations for developing a scale to be used in the workplace to assess dignity. In addition, I wanted to address any questions or concerns they had about the concept as best as possible before I commenced with tool development.

In summary, key informants echoed some of the findings currently in dignity and work literature, but also identified specific challenges and opportunities for moving dignity work forward. I incorporated the themes from the key informant interviews into the workshops. I wanted to make sure that cross-sector and inter-organization collaboration was an imperative. I also wanted the participants to feel versed enough in the language that they could share it with others and begin to create meaning around the concept for dignity unique to their work experiences.

Workshop Changes

After the first round of workshops, I used participant feedback collected verbally and through session feedback surveys to make slight changes to the content covered in the next workshop. I revised the workshop agenda to cover power and humiliation as concepts before providing a way for participants to analyze their work environments. This adjustment worked well. The data generated through participant's reflection of dignity and humiliation at work enriched conversation during the second and third focus groups. Consequently, with this change, the third workshop objectives shifted as well. Participants were eager to discuss measurement and

evaluation relating to dignity. I used the participant worksheet responses from the second session to narrow the objectives for the third session. In the third session, I used a graphic of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy to demonstrate the process of knowing a concept to evaluating a concept. To promote collaboration, participants spent significant time in their workshop describing dignity and humiliation in their work environments. I pushed participants to explain and provide evidence to one another about how they knew whether an act, event or communication deserved recognition as dignity or humiliation. I presented information about tools that are designed to measure and assess dignity in different ways. Participants could identify what their organization does well and what it does not do well in terms of protecting dignity and safeguarding clients and employees from experiencing humiliation. The three-session series ended with participants expressing gratitude for one another for listening and sharing.

Data Collection procedures

Post group interviews. Within two weeks after the workshops, I conducted a semi-structured interview with each participant. The purpose of these interviews was to gain an understanding of how participants felt about the focus group experience, assess their interpretations of the dignity concepts, provide an opportunity for them to share any additional information and to ask me questions about the research and its intentions. Fourteen of the twenty-one participants participated in the interview process. Scheduling made it difficult to get the remainder of the participants to complete the interview process. The attached demographic table provides some information about each participant. One-on-one interviews followed a semi-structured format and I intended to have conversational feel with the participants. The guiding questions / prompts were:

1. Describe your place of employment and the job that you do.

2. What have you learned from the workshops about dignity?
3. How does what you learned about dignity relate to your work?
4. What could you use more of to strengthen your use of what you learned in the workshops on your job?
5. Do you have any examples from your work of how dignity relates?

The pilot study, where we learned practitioners needs around language and instrumentation for their work towards creating equity, used a similar question format to understand how the work with boys and men of color was understood by practitioners in the city of Milwaukee. The pilot study used three questions after the organization already shared that it has committed efforts to addressing the outcomes of boys and men of color in Milwaukee: 1) What is the work that you do with boys and men of color in Milwaukee? 2) What is your vision for boys and men of color in the city? 3) How does your work contribute to that vision? The findings of that study led us to understand that dignity was most important for organizations who were doing work with boys and men of color. I developed an understanding of dignity and specifically Black male achievement work and delivered a series of workshops to teach practitioners about dignity and its applicability to their work with improving the lives of boys and men of color.

The goals of the workshops were to:

- Expose practitioners to current research on dignity
- Create space for practitioners to share their experiences
- Engage practitioners in developing an applied understanding of dignity for their work

These goals were based on the assumption that practitioners would find some connection between dignity and the work that they do

The findings outlined in this chapter share the summarized responses of the 14 interview participants with thematic connections addressed at the end of the chapter. These meetings were audio-recorded, transcribed by a third party, and analyzed using dedoose®, a web-based data analysis tool. Below I present the themes generated from the focus groups and the interviews.

Analysis

I originally analyzed the interviews using a priori coding based upon the dignity concepts shared during the focus groups. Shortly after, I re-coded each transcript without the a priori codes. By using emergent thematic coding, I could identify the different ways reflected on their experiences at work and in the focus groups. I used dedoose® to keep track of my data, codes and memos. Please see Appendix for codebook. A year later, I decided to recode my data using domain and taxonomy style of coding (citations). I identified the initial domains based on my research question and methodological approach. My central research question. “How do frontline employees in human service agencies understand and interpret dignity concepts in relation to their work?”, focuses on the application and interpretation of dignity by the participants in the workshop in relation to their professional identities. My initial domains were: “dignity”; “black males / boys and men of color” and “workshops”. After coding the domains, I categorized the coded excerpts into categories and used emergent coding techniques to identify themes within each category.

Chapter 4: Findings

Purpose of the Study

As a pilot study, I was a member of a research team running a project to address social, economic, and educational development for boys and males of color (BMOC) in the City of Milwaukee. We created a survey asking local organizations working with boys and men of color to report on their current scope of work, staff demographics, services, programs and institutional capacity. Organizations had the option of participating in a site visit after completing the survey. Fifty-three organizations participated in the survey and 21 organizations continued through the site visit phase. The site visit included an interview with organizational leadership that could speak to the organization's mission, vision, and program activities. Our results were published in a report entitled, "Dignity Based BMOC Work: What it Is and Why It Matters." The findings concluded that organizations needed tools to improve their work supporting boys and men of color in the Greater Milwaukee area (Irby, 2016). These tools included specific language for practitioners to describe their work beyond the outcomes measured for funders and the need for evaluative tools to measure their progress towards eliminating inequities. The practitioners felt that they did not have the theory, language or tools to talk candidly within the sector and with funders about the depth of work done on the day-to-day basis to achieve success with boys and men of color.

The research team proposed the concept of dignity to answer the needs indicated by the field. However, specific details were needed. The team could not state how dignity as a concept could be understood amongst practitioners or to what extent would the concept of dignity could

be useful for evaluating programs that addressed racial equity such as that identified by BMOC work.

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways human service practitioners understand dignity in relation to their work and to the extent which dignity relates towards meeting the needs identified in the pilot study. I hosted a three-part workshop series on dignity entitled, Radical Accountability in Creating Equity through Dignity (RtD). Table 5 provides a brief description of the workshops series. Participants were invited to interview after the workshop series so I could gain an understanding of how participants felt about the focus group experience, assess their interpretations of the dignity concepts, provide an opportunity for them to share any additional information and to ask me questions about the research or the workshops. Through analysis of the data, I identified three major findings. First, practitioners classified RtD as a theoretical framework that described the relationships they had with the process of creating equity in the communities that they serve. Secondly, practitioners utilized fluid conceptions of time and positionality to develop an applied understanding of RtD Lastly, practitioners used *Dignity Conscious Events (DCEs)* as opportunities to understand the different ways dignity was relevant in their personal and professional lives.

Study Demographics

Table 4 describes the demographics of the participants in the focus groups. Thirteen of the twenty-one practitioners from the focus groups participated in the post-workshop interviews. Table 8 describes the demographics of the participants who participated in the interviews. Representation based upon race and ethnicity, gender, role in organization, and prior exposure to the framework was comparable to the participants in the workshops. Most interviewees were

Black women that worked in direct service roles and that had no prior exposure to dignity as presented in the research study.

Dignity as Theory

In the workshops, participants spent time understanding dignity. They participated in small group discussions and individual reflections while learning about dignity and the history of its applicability as an accountability measure in the caring science and human rights fields. I contend that R.A.C.E. through Dignity (RtD) provided a theoretical framework that describes the relationship practitioners in the field of human services have with the process of creating equity in the communities they serve. I presented RtD as a method for practitioners to learn about dignity, but practitioners identified that what they learned was a theoretical framework with defining concepts and specific language that was useful for their work. The interview data revealed how dignity makes the mark as a theoretical framework, yet leaves some things to be desired from the lens of practitioners. Further, practitioners prioritized relational and recognition dignity as core concepts of RtD as a theoretical framework. Lastly, RtD operated as a tool for practitioners to identify and assess how they and others had their dignity respected, protected and fulfilled, yet, practitioners still desired more in terms of an operational tool to use in their organizations.

Theoretical frameworks are inductively developed through qualitative research to explain or predict phenomenon. Theories provide a context for examining a problem by identifying relationships between variables. In this case, the two variables were practitioners in the field of human services and the process of creating equity within the communities that they served. Practitioners saw the idea of dignity as simple, yet, needing a theoretical framework to use it in relation to their work. The definition of dignity as a mutual sense of self-worth amongst the

worthiness of others received no criticism from the practitioners. The idea made logical sense to all participants in the study. Practitioners did not critique dignity as a concept. They did express frustration about not having had this framework available to them inherently in their work. One practitioner summarized, “someone has to put a scholastic piece to get people to understand what should already be implanted in us.” To be more specific, the practitioners immediately considered dignity as having the potential to explain how they related to the process of creating equity. As one practitioner stated, “sometimes you need someone to put a theory to it.” Another practitioner, who opened her interview by stating, “I loved it because of the theory and the concept. It just made so much sense.” She also mentioned that these ideas were already present in the work that she does. She continued, “What I understand about it is simply reflected back into the work that I do. The more you talked about it, the more it was like wow, we do that and not know that we do that...it all boiled down to dignity.” The findings of the pilot study are affirmed by the findings of this study. Practitioners needed a theoretical framework and extending the study, dignity served as a useful way to shape the theoretical framework that they needed.

The discourse of dignity for human service practitioners. RtD provided a specific language that human service practitioners could use to challenge observations of oppression. While the data is not enough to create concrete principles, there are foundational concepts that were identified by the practitioners. Dignity was the conceptual foundation that I proposed as an answer to the needs of practitioners identified in the pilot study, however the participants in this study spoke to dignity as a theoretical framework with specific concepts and language. Simply put, practitioners felt connected to the word dignity as it describes the applicability of their own work. A practitioner said during the interview, “and I love that word...dignity.” Beyond it being

emotionally appealing, the word with a theoretical foundation provided a language tool that practitioners could use in their practice. One participant commented, “just having that language to sort of tie things together for me I think was really important”. Another participant spoke to how she could change the way she was speaking to young people. She said that the theory helped her “reframe the way she said it.”

Eight participants spoke specifically to how they could utilize dignity as a new language in their work. I am providing examples that demonstrate how practitioners used or planned to use the language of dignity in their work. A Black woman participant shared that she felt that she was being questioned by co-workers about her ability to chair a task force after bringing up race. The workshops gave her another language to use to see if they would respond differently. She said, “what I wanted to do at this next meeting on Tuesday is talk about dignity instead of talking about race and see how they respond to that.” She also said that using dignity as a language would be a way to protect her own dignity at work. She said, “I think it could be a way to have the conversation in a way that still provides some dignity for me.” Another participant also discussed how dignity as language could help further conversations about race. He said, “I think Black folk who really want to be adamant about hitting those key things in this work, this approach allows us to get to things that they want us to get to.” This participant was someone who had heard of the dignity concepts prior to the workshop and commented that the language was being well received in local politics. He said, “we can really have an authentic conversation about what dignity is and the issues it is trying to get to.” Another participant who works in youth advocacy but also is a local spoken word artist said learning about the framework challenged her to think about her poetry differently. She said, “I have to watch about that. Your poems should speak dignity.”

Six participants used the language to develop critical questions in relation to their work. These questions included: “Are you really promoting dignity?” “Am I providing them with a curriculum that is giving them a real connection the material?” “Who am I to define what’s okay or to say when something is good enough if it’s about somebody else?” “What does it mean to live a dignified life and how can everyone have that?” “What does that say to clients and why do we ask this question, does this question leave anybody out?” “Dignity is kind of in every relationship, isn’t it?” These participants used the new language concepts to reflect on their personal and professional work experiences. In these examples, RtD provided practitioners specific language to identify and in some cases assess essential pivot points that indicated the potential for a dignified or humiliating moment they experienced or witnessed.

Conceptual foundations of dignity as theory. In the workshops, I presented the core concepts are divided into two domains: inherent and non-inherent. Within each domain, there are concepts which describe the different ways dignity manifests. I translated the domains to language that was relatable to practitioners in the human services field. Figure 5 is a graphical depiction of the domains as used during the workshops.

Theories consist of concepts that explain the relationship between the variables at hand. In this study, the variables, practitioners in human services and processes for creating equity, were described through concepts of dignity. Through the interviews I realized that practitioners conceptualized dignity differently than the network of two domains as presented in the workshops. The practitioners focused on two specific concepts, relationships and recognition. These were key to identifying dignity within their work. The notion of inherent vs. non-inherent dignity was not described by any of the participants. However, relationships and recognition, varied from the definitions presented in the workshops and among the data collected from the

participants. The data revealed that practitioners in the human services field had a unique conceptual organization of dignity that helped them relate dignity as a theory to describe their work.

Recognition dignity. Recognition dignity was identified for the participants as their individual self-worth and the validation of that self-worth by society (Rao, 2011). My analysis of the findings does not negate the framework provided by Michael but it provides a richer conceptual understanding of recognition, particularly as it relates to practitioners in the field of human services. Practitioners discussed recognition in two ways: self-awareness and radical empathy. While Rao's definition focused on how the individual sees themselves within society, the practitioners connected recognition to how they see themselves among others and how they see others among others and themselves. An additional layer that the practitioners provided was the recognition of socially constructed identities such as race, gender, and sexuality having specific encumbrances that either they or others needed to recognize.

Four participants discussed recognition in terms of being Black. In these instances, practitioners wanted themselves and others to recognize the "burden of Blackness." For example, one participant shared that it was hard for her to advocate for culturally responsive practices at her job because it seemed selfish and self-serving. She said, "It's hard when you are a Black woman to push strategies that are more supportive for you." She wanted to advocate for culturally responsive practices because it would help "make the organization stronger", but her self-awareness of her socially constructed identities made it difficult for her to do that effectively. In another case, a practitioner shared that she had disagreements with a co-worker about choosing between two candidates for their program. The candidates were married, a white woman and a black man. There was contention about one household receiving double the

benefits of the program. The practitioner advocated for the black man to be included in the program because she felt the program could not “have helped her as much as we could help him.” She argued with her co-workers, “consider him as a Black father, as a Black man, as a Black student.” She wanted the committee to recognize the burden of “overcoming so many things as a Black man” as a part of the application process. A white female participant shared an example of recognizing Black through colorism. She took a selfie with a co-board member and she said, “I love this picture, and he’s like, I’m too dark.” She then stated that she did not recognize the nuance in the phrase “I’m too dark” responding to colorism as experienced through blackness. She said, “So I’m dealing with dark as a light issue, and he’s dealing with dark as how he wants to look and I wasn’t hearing him until the drive home.” In this example, the unrecognized burden of Blackness related to dark as proximity to whiteness not just picture contrast. In these examples, although recognition is described through the “burden of Blackness” participants addressed recognition dignity in different yet overlapping ways.

Participants spoke to their own self-awareness around socially constructed identities, provided reflection on how those identities may impact or influence a situation and then in some cases empathized or addressed how they could empathize more quickly. These examples demonstrate how race informs dignity for practitioners. It includes self-awareness of identity and the potential of your identity to have an impact on how other perceive you. Recognition of race is also about the social construction of race and how it informs interactions unconsciously. This finding leads me to wonder to what extent recognition dignity is connected to implicit biases. Perhaps, the ways in which the practitioners understood recognition as they reflected on their work also demonstrates how a person can unpack their implicit biases and better understand how they “see” or recognize others.

Three participants also recognized the significance of gender as it pertained to the composition of the workshops. One participant said, “I just loved sitting around a group of women.” There was no explicit connection between how the practitioners interpreted dignity and participating in the workshops with mostly women. However, it demonstrates that the practitioners recognized gender for themselves in the same ways they recognized race in terms of interpreting their work. Specifically, practitioners were self-aware of their social identities and conscious of women as a social category. In the same way practitioners recognized race as significant in their reflections, gender was an identity that at least three participants considered as they participated in the workshops.

Relational dignity. Relational dignity was the second most prominent concept in the interview data. In the workshops, relational dignity was discussed as the need for human beings to be in relationship with one another. According to Michael (2014), relational dignity is the worth of ones’ life due to the relationship to self, others, and the world. The practitioners in the study did not contradict Michael’s definition, but they did provide a deeper understanding of agency and autonomy in relationships. Relationships, personal or professional, give meaning to a person’s life. The core assumption of relational dignity is that living in involuntary isolation is undignified. The participants in the study felt very strongly about relational dignity defining their work. One participant even said, “so about the relationships you want to have, I think that’s the core of our work.” It makes sense that people who work in the human services sector feel particularly connected to the concept of relational dignity. This seemingly natural parallel sets models and measures of dignity in the human service sector apart from the traditional dignity and labor literature that focuses on blue-collar working relationships. Relational dignity is the autonomous decision to have relationships with people, organizations, communities and

circumstances. Recognition dignity is the awareness of identity and how it can influence or impact others and yourself. Like recognition dignity, relational dignity is a core concept of dignity as a theory that explains the relationship practitioners in the human services field have with creating equity.

Practitioners prioritized relational dignity in their interviews, however the meaning went beyond just being in relationships with other human beings. Relational dignity also included the autonomy of individuals to choose relationships and those included relationships with people, organizations, or circumstances. Six participants centered relational dignity during the interviews. Based upon the interview data, the participants defined relational dignity for the participants as the extent to which a person related to the people, organizations, or circumstances around them on their own terms. One practitioner, a Black woman, shared about an experience they had at a racial justice summit in the area. After sharing a personal story about how she was mistreated by healthcare professionals because of her identity and her diagnosis, the practitioner witnessed another Black woman respond to her story with righteous anger that paralleled her feelings. Immediately, the practitioner said, “I felt like a piece of my dignity was restored in my right to be angry about my experience.” The practitioner summed up the story by talking about relational dignity. Through recognition dignity, she was able to see herself among other Black women. However, what became important to her was “developing that relationship because I didn’t have a lot of good healthy relationships.” The practitioner experienced not having the relational dignity she desired from healthcare practitioners or other Black women. However, in telling her story, her relational dignity was restored.

In another example, a practitioner at a workforce development agency said that relational dignity was important because “the relationships that they have in their organizations, the

organizations relationships to them, the organizations relationships in the community, the whole web intersecting ways we have relationships and we don't even have a tool or a framework for beginning to really unpack all of that.” She also shared that building relationships was the core of the work she did at her organization. She identified feedback circles as a method the organization used to cultivate relational dignity within the organization. Staff in the organization “share how they strengthen the team, the assets they bring and their areas of growth and then anything extra they should know but they don’t think they know about themselves.” She felt that feedback circles “really strengthens the relationships” because it helps the staff “develop the capacity to resolve conflict.” This is an example of a practitioner using what was learned in the workshops as an applied theory to explain their work. Similar to recognition dignity, human service practitioners complicated relational dignity beyond just having relationships but also addressing autonomy in relationships and relationships to people, organizations and circumstances.

Potential for applied theory. Applied theory describes how theories explain actual phenomena for practical purposes or uses. Throughout the interviews, practitioners shared how they applied the theory after the workshops or how they would hope to apply the theory in the future. This demonstrates how the practitioners valued what they learned in the workshops. Thus, I found that RtD provided a tool for practitioners in the field of human services to identify and assess how they and others respected, protected and fulfilled a sense of dignity within their communities. The workshops used literature from the field international human rights to describe the different ways dignity has been applied. Human rights scholarship focuses on the impact of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ratified by the United Nations in 1948 (Michel, 2014). The preamble of the UDHR identified human dignity as critically important to world peace. Specifically, the OHCHR states that countries that sign international treaties are obligated

to respect, protect and fulfill human rights such as dignity. The workshops gave the practitioners a theoretical framework to identify and assess the ways in which dignity is respected, protected and fulfilled for themselves and others. The practitioners did this through posing critical questions internally and externally, and identifying dignity as a language that could be used to challenge observations of oppression or promote equity.

Summary. The first major finding extended the recommendations provided from the pilot study. According to practitioners in the field of human services dignity is a theory that describes the relationship between practitioners in the field of human services and the processes of creating equity in the communities they serve. The practitioners provided evidence for this claim in three ways. First, participants explained how dignity described what they were doing or hoped to be doing as practitioners in the field of human services. Participants labelled the work they do as practitioners creating equity as respecting, protecting and fulfilling a sense of dignity for the clients. Secondly, practitioners identified two major concepts that explain how the two variables, practitioners in human services and the processes of creating equity, relate to one another: relational dignity and recognition dignity. Lastly, practitioners identified dignity as a language that they could use to talk to others in their respective fields about creating equity. Using the language as a tool, some participants also identified critical questions that developed from using dignity as a theoretical framework for understanding their work. In the next finding, I explain how the conversations I had with participants regularly intertwined time and positionality while interpreting dignity as a theory.

Dignity Conscious Events (DCEs)

Practitioners in the field of human services define dignity through Dignity Conscious Events (DCEs). DCEs are opportunities for practitioners to perform or witness the affirmation or denial

of dignity after participating in RtD workshops. Since the participants identified dignity as a theory applicable to their work, they shared stories describing how they applied the theory. These specific moments need to be identified explicitly as this framework is turned into functional evaluative tools to assess organization's progress towards creating equity. These events are categorized as internal or external based upon the interview feedback.

Internal Dignity Conscious Events (IDCEs). Internal consciousness events centered identity as it related to the practitioners while external consciousness events centered identity and different indicators of dignity in relation to others. Racial identity was most prevalent the consciousness event during the interviews. Eight of the participants discussed their racial identity during consciousness events. These examples came from participants from all racial identities. Practitioners described internal consciousness events as moments in which they felt that their personal sense of dignity was affirmed or denied by others. Here are four short examples of IDCEs reminding practitioners of their own sense of dignity.

Corva, an executive director at a local chapter of a national nonprofit, reflected on her own interrogations of her recognition dignity by discussing identity in her personal and professional life. Corva connected the different spaces she engages with different levels of awareness concerning her identity. She immediately connected her personal experience to the way she leads her organization. She stated, "I went to a gala last week and it had been a long time since I was in a space that was about Latinos for Latinos and there were mostly Latinos there and I felt good. When I walked in the room, I felt relaxed and I realized all of the ways that I tense up to get through the day or carry myself..." Corva identified the gala as an IDCE for herself. As an Afro-Latina woman, she shared how entering a space where her identity was centered reminded her of the moments where she does not get affirmed in the same way.

Patricia, an employee at a shelter for homeless persons, reflected on how she is perceived by her peers at work. She stated she was surprised by the amount of diversity at her job in a small Midwestern suburb. Yet, her co-workers said “some real, kind of like out of line, why do you have this job” sort of comments to her. She felt that those attitudes also transfer to the client experiences. In the following example, Patricia talks about how her identity and an identity of client were perceived by a co-worker. Her co-worker said, “I’m not trying to say anything, but black women scare me.” Patricia continued, “I was like okay, well you must not realize who you are talking to, and she was like, oh no, my kids are half black. Like for real? I was like this is not happening.” Patricia identifies as a Black woman. In the excerpt from our conversation above, Patricia is indignant at the fact that she and the client in conflict are not seen as possessing the same identity. During this IDCE event, Patricia is not seen by her co-worker as a Black woman, the way that she sees herself.

Tasha is a school counselor in a local public school system. She is a woman of color and has lived in Milwaukee for most of her adult life. She was born in Iowa and continues to hold close family connections. She recently completed her graduate studies at the local university and has been working in school settings for the last five years. Tasha and I had a relaxed conversation over a cup of tea in my graduate student office. She seemed a bit unsure that she was giving me the “right” information but was willing to share all the connections she had made in processing what she learned about dignity in the workshops. She mentioned in the conversation how there is no way to talk about dignity without considering unconscious inherent biases. She continued by describing how her own experiences shaped that feeling, “I always know when somebody is trying to get to what kind of brown are you? They’ll dabble around the Hispanic thing and then if I don’t give them a reaction, they’ll move towards the Middle Eastern thing and it’s this game.

It's almost like they can't have a conversation with me as a human being until they figure out, 'Where can I put your version of brown?' 'What can I attribute your non-whiteness to?' Tasha described how her own racial identity was a source of many previous DCEs.

Tasha also shared another type of IDCE. Tasha said dignity connected to understanding why she makes certain decisions when interacting with someone. She mentioned how it should change how she responds to a person begging for money on the street. She said, "I usually give money, but sometimes I decide in my mind I'm not going to give that person money, and so why? It's change that's in my car, I would give it to somebody else, but why not that person? There is something mentally stopping me." Tasha displayed a high level of vulnerability where she called herself out for not always dignifying others. Tasha described two different internal recognition events. In the former, she identified her own challenges in respecting, protecting and fulfilling the dignity of others. While this level of vulnerability was not displayed by all participants but demonstrates how IDCEs are about your experience and agency contributes to another's affirmation or denial of dignity.

Nelly, a white woman, works with refugee resettlement in the area. Her identity as a white person was salient to her as she considered the dignity framework in relation to her job. Although she is white, many of the caseworkers are former refugees from outside of the United States who are now citizens and working for the organization to ease resettlement for new refugees in a new land, with new culture but with someone who speaks and understands their language or experiences as a refugee. She stated,

"I was born here and I'm white, so for me it's a constant balance to keep them in perspective, to be very aware of how I'm interacting with people, how clients are seeing me versus my coworkers because I feel like a lot of times people

who are newly arrived to the country that when they think of Americans, they think of white, so it's something that's a daily thing, and thinking of my coworker, who is their actual casework says something to them, to make sure I'm saying exactly the same thing, that they know it is exactly the same answer, that nothing I say is stronger or more American or more true."

Nelly connected her IDCE to her racial identity and nationality. Like the previous finding, the fluidity of positionality allowed Nelly to speak of her race and nationality simultaneously. She was conscious of how it could influence clients and impact her co-workers. Clients could, because of her race and nationality, use her as a leverage point for responding and reacting to others. Nelly recognize the potential of that based on her self-awareness of her identity as White and American. She also connected that with the potential for her co-workers to be undervalued by the clients. She identified conversations with clients as IDCEs that could provide dignity to her co-workers. In the next section, I discuss External Dignity Conscious Events (EDCEs), instances where practitioners described how they witnessed the dignity of others being affirmed or denied.

External Dignity Recognition Events. Humiliation is an unwelcome assault one human dignity (Palshikar, 2005). Palshikar states in a thorough explication of humiliation that it has three forms: loss, redefinition and conquest. These forms are not mutually exclusive and can happen concurrently with one another. Loss, is the recognition of one's changed position after an attack on one's dignity. At work, loss can be considered through firing, insubordination or promotion denial. Redefinition is when an assault on your dignity results in a change in perceived identity. For example, popular recording artist Kanye West articulated this assault in his song "All Falls Down". He states, "even if you in a Benz, you still a n*gga in a coupe" (West

& Hill, 2004). Here, West succinctly captures humiliation through redefinition. While acquiring a Mercedes Benz car might be a status symbol that should afford an individual all the rights and privileges associated with the high-class lifestyle of a luxury vehicle his social reality can easily redefine him what someone would consider to be the lowest form of human driving an undignified vehicle. Lastly, humiliation also occurs as a matter of conquest. In retrospect, a person or group of people can understand and interpret an act of communication as a matter of conquest. The culture clashes that occur through war depict this form of humiliation. From, the Beijing Conference of 1848 to the genocide of indigenous people in North America, world history includes global power shifts based on humiliation through genocide. I describe three participants EDCEs as representative of the nine participants that described moments when their consciousness made them aware of another person's dignity.

Yvonne, another participant who worked in the health care industry discussed several recognition events from her family life. She is a white lesbian woman and the mother of an adopted Black daughter. Yvonne spoke of her daughter experiencing challenges at school as humiliation. Her daughter's hair is a locs, a hairstyle traditionally worn by Black people globally which involves twisting, tying or knotting the hair in ropes. The styles vary globally, but many styles, like the one this young Black girl had, take months to cultivate. Recently, there was an outbreak of head lice in school. The principal in the school told Yvonne that they were not going to tell the parents. Yvonne responded, "If my daughter gets head lice, I'm in a fucking lot of trouble. I'm going to have to shave her head, so if you don't take this serious, I got a problem and its racially specific." Yvonne described the recognition event when the principal shared these words with her. She immediately thought of the potential humiliation of her daughter and its

connection to her racial identity. Yvonne's example demonstrates how she was externally conscious of how the dignity of identity was missed by her daughter's principal.

Lorraine is a PhD candidate from Louisiana studying at a local public university and researching how millennial Black women navigate higher education. Lorraine had an experience where a presenter did not represent, recognize or relate to the identities or values of the group of students and educators who were in the school building. Lorraine was in a workshop led by a white woman who did not have a thorough background about the statistics or history of predominately Black schools. Lorraine shared that the presenter used destructive and dehumanizing language that did not affirm the Black males in the room. She said, "I don't know if there could have been a more undignified experience to have and not giving the males a chance to counter anything she was saying, not giving them a chance to speak from their own experiences and I think that is a big part of the dignity framework that I connect with, the acknowledgement of a person and one of the ways to acknowledge them is to allow them to speak from their experiences." Lorraine understands dignity as an imperative for educating students of color. While the content of the learning process might be based on requirements set forth by an external entity such as a state department of education, the delivery of the content and how students are given a bridge to connecting what they have experienced and known to new information should also dignify who they are.

Leanna, a leader at an education serving organization, gave an example about a recent recognition event. She had gotten a request from a service provider that normally did not work with her organization. The organization had a mission to take homeless children and non-homeless children and put them in the same early childhood center. Leanna had questions about how that worked using what she learned for RtD to help her understand. She said, "my question

was how would you actually identify somebody in that space and put them in a space like that and still maintain their dignity?” The recognition event gave her a chance to utilize what she learned in the workshops. She said, “It was a way for me to be able to how at the very core of how you are identifying or not identifying people are you able to think about their dignity.”

The request from the service provider was the recognition event that she used to step in and speak up about the potential dignity harm that the organization could possibly make.

Summary. Dignity Conscious Events (DCEs) are opportunities for practitioners to perform or witness the affirmation or denial of dignity. Practitioners described them in two distinct categories: internal and external. Internal Dignity Conscious Events (IDCEs) were mostly about having other recognize them for their identities. However, some practitioners also discussed their agency in providing recognition to others. External Dignity Conscious Events (EDCEs) occurred with practitioners witnessed the opportunity for others to experience humiliation. In the examples provided, the practitioners intervened to address the events before they became harmful to others. DCEs are important to consider for human service practitioners. They are the opportunities where thoughts, words, and actions manifest experiences that can either promote or deny the dignity of practitioners or their clients. The ability of practitioners to identify recognition events could help them to better understand and respond to the dignity of their clients. Where it pertains to their own experiences with dignity affirmation or denial, practitioners can also add to the strength of an organization’s dignity responsiveness by sharing their stories.

Fluidity of Time and Positionality

Cosmograms. In the workshops, participants were introduced to cosmograms. Cosmograms are graphical depictions of time and space. A version of the Ba-kongo Cosmogram

was used in the workshop. My depiction of the cosmogram was inspired by the work of Dr. Gregory E. Carr, Associate Professor of Africana Studies and Chair of the Department of Afro-American Studies at Howard University. The Ba-Kongo Cosmogram represents the division of the earthly realm from the spiritual realm at a sacred point, “on the ground of the dead and under all-seeing God (Thompson, 1984).” I presented the cosmogram as a tool for individuals to understand themselves and the organizations that they work. (See Figure 6).

In the first workshop, I asked everyone to put themselves at the center of the cosmogram, using four directional lines pointing north, south, east and west to describe their place in the world. To the west, was their past, all things that happened to create who they are currently. To the north, were all the things impacting them in this moment. To the east, all the things they wished to build or make manifest. To the south, all the things they were currently helping to shape in this current context. Every participant filled out the cosmogram for themselves and for their organization, noting significant events, challenges, mergers, celebrations, hires, fires, and everything in between. Participants talked about their diagrams with each other during the session. The participants shared that they enjoyed this activity and learned a lot from the activity. My intention in using this information during the workshop was to help participants develop a frame of reference of the work of their organization to share with others. I was unaware at the time, but I prepared an opportunity to collect data for a phenomenological data analysis.

Epiphenomenal Time. While all participants shared with at least one other person. I was the only person who viewed all the cosmograms. Through analyzing the cosmograms simultaneously, I witnessed the multidimensionality of time present in the participants’ efforts to situate themselves in time and space. Some of the participants worked within the same organization with the same job title, yet their cosmograms were so vastly different. For example,

the north direction of the cosmograms varied among participants although there were shared experiences relating to the state of the sector, or location in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is intuitive that one would expect each person to have different histories, but to think about the north and south directions, which described the “now” of people sharing the same geographical location yet placing themselves in such different spacetimes. This one activity demonstrated to me the multidimensionality of a current moment and the boundaries of time as a construct as a description for any event or person. Participants found the cosmograms useful. One participant shared a sentiment that captured what five participants explicitly shared during the interview, “You know that little chart you gave, the be present, the cosmogram...All of that made of how I have looked at me and dignity. It has been so inter-reflective but it has been coming out.” The cosmograms gave participants the opportunity to understand themselves as they interpreted their identities in relation to the shared “now”. I included the cosmograms in the workshop so participants could contextualize their role within their respective organizations. The participants extended the connection of the cosmogram to their work and onto interpretations of dignity. In the next section, I will share an example that demonstrates how an Epiphenomenal Time, conception of the “now” which the past, present and future is always was used by participants during the interviews interpreted (Wright, 2015). Eleven of thirteen participants used epiphenomenal time personally and professionally to describe their experiences with dignity. Two exceptions will be described later in this section.

Positionality. As the workshop series continued, participants regularly compared personal experiences to professional ones seeing no need to separate the two to understand and interpret dignity for their work. In the session evaluations, participants also eluded to the fact that they saw applications to their personal and professional lives. All participants saw the dignity

concepts as relevant to their work, but they also included comments such as “I want to govern my life with this” and “this helps me at work, but it’s helping me be a better person”. Different from the dignity and work literature, the human service sector employees saw dignity as lens that looks at themselves as a part of the organization to create an outcome or product and as someone with a history of experiences relating to understanding dignity that impacted how they did their work. This view presented by the practitioners is in direct conflict with the dignity at work literature. Dignity and work literature centers blue-collar work and a unidimensional view of the employee. The current literature sees dignity as an issue for people as employees of the organization but does not make any connection to the employee’s personal life or lives outside of the workplace. These reflections were important during the workshops. In the interviews participants described themselves and their relation to the past, present and the future. Epiphenomenal time connects time and positionality by understanding them both as fluid and conceptualized similarly by practitioners after participating in the RtD workshops.

I am using excerpts from an interview with Erica, an African American woman who works two jobs, discuss fluidity through time and positionality. Each practitioner’s use of epiphenomenal was unique to their own personal and professional work histories. Epiphenomenal time refers to how someone understands the current moment. To use epiphenomenal time, a person is consciously understanding the now through interpretations of the past and the future simultaneously. What all participants shared was that through thinking about dignity in the now they could interpret dignity in the past and in the future. Erica’s interview responses demonstrate how a practitioner interprets dignity across spacetimes, a combination of time and positionality. Erica demonstrated an epiphenomenal sense of time in relation to her work in three ways. The past, present, and future interplayed throughout the

conversation and even within the same sentences. Further, her positionality was fluidly described.

Erica's Story. Erica works with teens in an alternative school setting teaching them about positive self-care strategies and management of their anger and stress. She described how she checked herself in the moment when talking to young people after the dignity workshops. She had been experiencing challenges with her students, “they will come to class and do every and anything possible, sit and talk to each other, be on their cell phone, take the pass and be gone for 30 minutes”, that prevented her from doing her work as she planned. She found herself getting upset and saying, “look, I’m not going to keep repeating the same thing over and over, you all are going to need to get this.” However, since she had attended the workshops she was able to hold herself accountable to maintaining the young people’s dignity. She said, “I had to check myself, like wait a minute, let me come back because I did not treat you all with respect or dignity...so modeling that was really important, that’s the primary work.” In this example, Erica describes her current work through what she learned in the workshops. This story is a part of “the now.”

Erica shared about past personal experiences and how it related to understanding her own sense of dignity. She announced the detour from the conversation during the interview by stating, “it sounds strange but I’ll just take you on a journey of my little world for a minute again.” With this announcement, Erica indicated that she was recognizing the now as a moment she was fully engaged in, but to make her point, she needed to go take me to a different moment in time to understand how she was showing up currently. She explains how she is interpreting events in the past now that she as the RtD theoretical framework. Erica was diagnosed with endometriosis, a chronic disease that causes intense pain and discomfort. She had surgery to help her condition.

Afterwards, she visited a specialist. The specialist was unwilling to give her any pain relief medication and accused her of being drug-seeking. While attending a racial justice summit, she shared this story with the audience. A white woman, commented on her story. She did not respect Erica's sense of recognition dignity. Another Black woman at the event responded to the white woman on Erica's behalf. Erica said, "before that my, my anger or my pain or my experiences, none of that was accepted." She shared the story to explain how she understood dignity, recognition and relational, in the past.

Erica also works in the local court system connecting individuals to batterer's intervention programs. Erica also gave examples of how she would like to implement new things in her practice because of her experience in the workshops. Erica also connected dignity to her work at the courthouse, too. Retrospectively, she looked at some of her practices in working with clients as they leave court. She explained how they have a lot of paperwork, but that she always gives them a folder for their paperwork so that they could have some privacy. She also said that she makes sure to shake their hands afterwards and wish them luck." She saw these things as giving her clients a sense of recognition dignity. She said, "I think they're just recognizing that, that small thing, is really huge to them." She also spoke to how she wished to provide other instances of dignity by "putting sayings or some kind of inspirational message or something like that to take when they leave."

She mentioned that although she was in the workshops thinking about her young people and the batterer's intervention work, she also related this to her previous work as an advocate for sexual assault survivors. Erica has shared her story as a survivor publicly in various events across the city. In the interview, she spoke of her previous role in sexual assault survivor advocacy and her current volunteer work with a local commission to address domestic violence and sexual

assault. She shared with me how dignity relates to sexual assault work. She shared that survivors “could be going through the system and if your dignity wasn’t already destroyed by the sexual assault then it will be destroyed when you encountered police who haven’t be trained”. As she is sharing about her past work, she states that she wants to “back up”. She backs up to begin talking about work that she is currently doing as a member of the commission. She felt that she needed to express her current context so I that I could understand her experience in the past. She also discussed in her interview about the privacy needs of her clients as a dignity issue. She also saw herself, as a victim of sexual assault, as also needing the affirmation provided through the workshops. During the interview, she saw her work in the present connected to her personal experiences from the past to the point where her current experiences were used to explain her past. Epiphenomenal time considers the “now” as a product of the past, present and the future. Erica considered her understanding of dignity as reflections of her past, the hope for the future and how she understands herself in the current moment. Erica’s story shows how practitioners reconstructed their perception of self in relation to dignity after the workshops. Participants reconstructed their sense of self across time in dynamic ways after the workshops. This fluidity is significant for instrumentation using RtD. Goals and objectives for organizational evaluations often use time-bound indicators for defining success. As practitioners reevaluate and reconstruct their sense of self through a new lens of dignity, the linear notion of time in traditional evaluation tools may make it difficult for comparison.

Others. Two participants did not share personal stories that demonstrated fluidity across the present and the past in their reflections. Nelly stated that she did not like nor want to talk about herself in the interview. She gave a lot of information about her work and experiences with the families, including reflexive thoughts about her positionality as a white woman working with

immigrant populations in the Midwest but did not share personal stories about her own life. Nelly did talk about other professional positions she held, but they did not extend into her personal history beyond her professional identity. Nia also did not share any personal stories. She did not share that was intentional, but kept the conversation centered on her role within her organization. In hindsight, I wish I had asked more questions about those connections, but the stories that were organically shared by participants were powerful.

Summary. Erica's interview is representative of how most participants interpreted their past, present and future experiences with dignity. Using Epiphenomenal Time, participants constantly blurred the lines between personal and professional experiences; past, present and future experiences; and their work as providers or receivers of services. Although there were exceptions, the use of epiphenomenal time by most participants should be considered when developing tools to understand dignity in human services.

Summary of Findings

The goals of the workshops were met. Practitioners learned about the concepts, shared their experiences, and made connections between the concepts and their work. In summary, the data from the study led to three major findings. First, RtD is a theoretical framework for human service practitioners to understand themselves in relation to the processes of creating equity through their organizations. RtD is relevant to human service practitioners. Relational and recognition dignity are most significant for practitioners. RtD also offered the practitioners a language to talk about their desire for equity in more palatable ways. Secondly, practitioners used epiphenomenal time to understand dignity in their work. Lastly, Dignity Conscious Events were the moments when practitioners either performed or witnessed dignity or humiliation. In chapter 5, I explain how these findings contribute to developing tools for practitioners.

Chapter 5: Implications of Dignity For Boys And Men Of Color: An Exploration With Practitioners In The Field Of Human Services

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways human service practitioners understand dignity in relation to their work, and to the extent which dignity could address unmet needs practitioners have in their work towards creating racial equity within the communities that they serve. Specifically, practitioners identified in a pilot study that they did not have theory, language, or tools to talk candidly within their respective sectors and with funders about the depth of work done on the day-to-day basis to achieve success with boys and men of color. To address this, I hosted a three-part workshop series on dignity entitled, Radical Accountability in Creating Equity through Dignity (RtD) for practitioners. After completing the workshop series, participants were invited to participate in an interview, so I could gain an understanding of how they felt about the focus group experience, assess their interpretations of the dignity concepts, provide an opportunity for them to share any additional information, and to ask me questions about the research or the workshops.

Through the analysis of the interview data, I identified three major findings. First, practitioners classified RtD as a theoretical framework that described the relationships they had with the process of creating equity in the communities that they serve. Secondly, practitioners utilized fluid conceptions of time and positionality to develop an applied understanding of RtD. Lastly, practitioners used *Dignity Conscious Events (DCEs)* as opportunities to understand the different ways dignity was relevant in their personal and professional lives. These findings have

implications for practitioners and evaluators of human service programs and initiatives that address racial equity.

Implications for Human Services Practitioners

Human services practitioners identified RtD as a theoretical framework that accurately described the process of creating racial equity within the communities that they serve. Theoretical frameworks consist of concepts that explain the relationship between the variables at hand. In this study, the variables, (a) practitioners in human services and (b) processes for creating equity, were described through concepts of dignity. Through the interviews, practitioners conceptualized dignity differently than the network of two domains that were presented in the workshops. The practitioners focused on two specific concepts, relationships and recognition. These ideas are key to identifying dignity as a theoretical framework within their work.

Recognition dignity was identified for the participants as their individual self-worth and the validation of that self-worth by society (Rao, 2011). While Rao's definition focused on how the individual sees themselves within society, the practitioners connected recognition to how they see themselves among others and how they see others among others and themselves. For example, practitioners did not just see recognition as significant to their communities of concern at work, but as a dynamic, relative and reiterative concept that constantly centered and re-centered "self" using a consciousness of power. Consequently, an additional layer that the practitioners provided was the recognition of socially constructed identities such as race, gender, and sexuality a specific encumbrances that needed recognition.

Relational dignity expanded recognition to include the autonomous decision to have relationships with people, organizations, communities, and circumstances. Thus, it is the awareness of identity, and how it can influence or impact others and oneself. Human service practitioners routinely focused on aspects of dignity related to identity and relationships. Recognition of who people were and who they asserted themselves to be was important to these employees. In addition, the employees wanted to be recognized by their supervisors and clients in terms of race, class, gender, and background. When human service practitioners felt unrecognized, they compared their personal experiences to potential programs, policies, and processes where clients could not be recognized. Recognition is used as a tool of connection. A sense of connectedness helped human service employees identify to what extent they provided adequate and necessary support to their clients.

Like recognition dignity, relational dignity is a core concept of dignity as a theory that explains the relationship practitioners in the human services field have with creating equity. This finding is significant in two ways. First, the scholarly literature does not situate dignity as a relevant concept in human services work. This study provides evidence that supports exploring dignity in human services further. Secondly, dignity could reshape the discourse for practitioners in ways that are meaningful and connected to their experiences, instead of reducing the experiences to scholarly discourses.

The literature review on dignity explored four main areas where dignity has been discussed at length: caring sciences, international development, human rights, and labor rights of workers. International development and human rights literature discuss dignity as a concept following philosophical debates. However, the literature focuses on making humanness a legal concept that is debated and argued in international courts. The RtD use of dignity does not align to these

conceptions of dignity. RtD is about all human beings without reservation or legalistic determination of human worth or merit. As for the labor rights of workers, the focus on dignity is limited to how workers experience the work place. The workers in this study looked at dignity as it relates to their roles in addressing inequity. This included situating themselves at the center of dignity concerns but also situating their clients and others. In the caring sciences, the literature focuses on operationalizing dignity as a concept useful for accountability for care for patients nearing the end of their lives. Similarly, the instruments developed in the caring sciences used methods such as the one employed in this study to perform concept determination about dignity. In this way, this study aligns with caring sciences while also filling a gap.

Further, RtD may be able to shape the discourse around racial equity away from problem identification and towards accountability. Practitioners shared in the workshops how dignity was useful for them when communicating about accountability, with regards to addressing race as a tangible issue within their work. The workshops could be reformatted to present the framework as a tool for action, accountability, and analysis for organizations working to address racial equity. The actions relate to the skills of practitioners, being able to understand and apply concepts of dignity to their work. Accountability is shaped through organizations thinking critically about how their work can potentially affirm or deny a sense of dignity for staff or clients. Dignity may be used as a rubric where practitioners can understand to what extent their work is not only meeting objectives relative to program need and participation, but also addressing what it means for participants to be recognized for their core sense of humanity, and not just their labels associated with their needs. In the revised workshops, participants will explicitly learn how to identify Internal and External Dignity Conscious Events to increase their capacity to respect, protect and fulfill dignity for their clients.

Implications for Evaluating Progress Toward Racial Equity Goals

The American Evaluation Association (AEA) Guiding Principles for Evaluators stress that evaluators must respect the dignity of all evaluation stakeholders. In summary, this principle is met when evaluators demonstrate a comprehensive and thorough understanding of context, minimize harm to the extent it does not compromise evaluation results, attempt to foster social equity, and respect differences in race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation (Miller et al., 2005). The AEA Statement on Cultural Competence strengthens how evaluators can conduct evaluations with a respect for the dignity of persons. Essential practices for culturally competent evaluation include acknowledging the complexity of identity, recognizing the dynamics of power, eliminating language bias, and acknowledging that methods and tools for evaluation are not culture free (American Evaluation Association, 2011). These foundational documents in the field of evaluation demonstrate that evaluators are concerned with how dignity is respected and protected through the evaluation process.

RtD may be a useful collective impact strategy for My Brother's Keeper or other initiatives intended to address "wicked problems". Wicked problems are complex social problems that are difficult to solve because of incomplete or contradictory knowledge, the number of people and opinions involved, the large economic burden and the interconnected nature of these problems with other problems (Buchanan, 1992). As stated in the problem statement, My Brother's Keeper proposed collective impact theories to be used within My Brother's Keeper initiatives. Collective impact is the long-term commitment of a group of actors from different sectors that commit to a common agenda for solving a specific problem (Hanleybrown, Kania, & Kramer, 2012; Kania &

Kramer, 2011; Preskill, Parkhurst, & Splansky Juster, 2014). The five conditions for success of collective impact were related to the findings and reflections of practitioners. Collective impact requires a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone organization. Through this study, practitioners from different fields and sectors with a shared agenda around racial equity were able to find common ground in a theoretical framework. This framework could be used to develop tools that can be used as shared measurement and accountability towards mutually reinforcing activities.

The discourse on dignity in evaluation literature is largely about ideations of ethics and values. As an ethic, dignity is seen as an important guideline or standard of practice in conducting evaluations. Ethical considerations of dignity explain how a person should be treated during the evaluation. Ethics are shared across the field and can serve as the criteria for judging the value or merit of an evaluation and its components. Peer reviewed articles in evaluation discuss dignity as a form of respect in the evaluation process (Dailey, Robertson, & Gill, 2015; King, Nielsen, & Colby, 2004; Morris, 2015; Rugh, 2004). As a value, dignity represents individual decisions of an evaluator. Peer reviewed articles in evaluation discuss dignity values in terms of the evaluation process and of the evaluand (Bledsoe, 2014; Sheinfeld & Lord, 1981; Spiel, Schober, & Reimann, 2006). Dignity is important to evaluators but there are few peer reviewed journal articles that address practical matters of evaluation such as instrumentation or methodologies based on dignity. Evaluators need tools to help understand how dignity is upheld in practice (Hendricks and Bamberger, 2010; Kallemeyn, 2009). Without precise indicators or instrumentation, evaluators have no empirical basis for ensuring the dignity of persons for the evaluand or during the evaluation process. However, the caring sciences have developed a number of tools for measuring dignity in patients. This body of literature is extensive and should provide evaluators examples of

understanding dignity as an empirical concept.

Evaluators must address the epistemological reasoning for developing domains and constructs to define dignity. Epistemologies are theories of knowledge that explain how one knows something to be a fact and not just an opinion. Epistemologies answer questions about how one can know something to be true. In developing measurement instruments, epistemologies are closely connected to theories, which are used to conceptualize social science phenomena into measurable questions and problems. The instruments presented in this review negotiated epistemological concerns through choosing specific and intentional methods to identify domains and indicators of dignity within their respective target populations. Epistemological and theoretical foundations to conceptualizing measurement instruments provide critical background information that can speak to the efficacy of a culturally responsive tool. Patricia Hill-Collins cautions, “If the epistemology used to validate knowledge comes into question, then all prior knowledge claims validated under the dominant model become suspect” (Collins, 1989). Addressing epistemological concerns during the instrument development process can alleviate potential unconscious re-inscriptions of oppression. In this case, the epistemological foundations of the RtD framework rests among practitioners doing the work to address racial equity.

Recommendations

Conducting Further Research. Practitioners classified RtD as a theoretical framework that described the relationships they had, with the process of creating equity in the communities that they serve. Theories are developed through qualitative research to explain or predict phenomenon. This study created a theoretical framework for practitioners to interpret the relationship between their work and the process of creating equity within the communities they serve. The interview

data revealed that practitioners understood RtD as a theory, with specific concepts and useful language for practitioners to use to discuss and analyze their work. Practitioners needed a theoretical framework and by extending the pilot study, dignity became a useful way to shape the theoretical framework practitioners needed. Practitioners identified two components of the theory: discourse and concepts. Practitioners used dignity as a discourse to challenge oppression and promote equity in their work. Practitioners identified the core concepts of the RtD theoretical framework as recognition and relational dignity. This finding provides evidence for utilizing RtD to theorize the challenges and successes of human service practitioners and their organizations, in creating equitable outcomes for the communities they serve. Further research could test the boundaries of the theoretical framework for practitioners thinking through sector-specificity, locality, and utilization.

Educating Practitioners through RtD. Practitioners used Dignity Conscious Events (DCEs) as an opportunity to understand the different ways dignity was relevant in their personal and professional lives. DCEs were the moments when practitioners experienced or witnessed the affirmation or denial of their own or someone else's dignity. DCEs happen internally and externally. Internal DCEs are instances where practitioners considered their own identity and its impact on others. External DCEs occur when practitioners observe others dignity either affirmed or denied. Through this finding, practitioners identified the method they used to interpret dignity. Practitioners can use these events as case studies to build organizational capacity or as examples for on-boarding new staff who are new to building a dignity-based practice within human services work. Practitioners can be educated through RtD to better understand DCEs in order to develop strategies to respect, protect and fulfill a sense of dignity for clients, staff, and the broader community of concern.

Piloting Instrumentation. RtD is a theoretical framework that could provide a basis for instrumentation that addresses collective impact goals. Based on the findings, instrumentation must be aware of item time frames. The findings indicated that practitioners utilized fluid conceptions of time and positionality to develop an applied understanding of RtD. Further, practitioners redefined their conceptions of self after learning about dignity. They fluidly described their past, present, and future while describing how dignity has changed their lens on their experiences and interactions. Consciousness of this relationship to time is important because scales used across organizations in order to fulfill collective impact intentions may be interpreted in relationship to different patterns or events across sectors, organizations and individuals. The conceptualization of dignity as a latent variable needs strong contextualization for practitioners to contribute to shared measurement systems, that will also support mutually reinforceable initiatives and activities to address racial equity.

Radical Accountability for Creating Equity (R.A.C.E.) through Dignity

“Radical simply means grasping things at the root.”

Dr. Angela M. Davis

Address given to the National Women’s Studies Association annual conference at Spelman College on June 25, 1987

Radical Accountability for Creating Equity through Dignity (RtD) is a framework for understanding how a school/organization can address racial equity through respecting, protecting and fulfilling a sense of dignity for African-Americans and other people of color. The process is radical because of the intentional focus at addressing the root components of human engagement: personal and collective dignity.

The *Radical Accountability for Creating Equity through Dignity* framework:

- centers dignity as a mutually reflected sense of worthiness between individuals, groups and their communities that deserves recognition and accountability;
- interrogates and challenges interlocking systems of oppression from global and local viewpoints, and
- holds both the individual and the collective responsible for creating and sustaining equitable communities at all levels of engagement.

Radical Accountability for Creating Equity through Dignity is not a strategy or checklist. It is a process that addresses multiple levels of organizational and program impact simultaneously through a cohesive framework for critical thinking and engagement. It can be used in conjunction with other culturally responsive strategies and practices. It is a call to action to address the societal impacts of oppression from interpersonal to systemic levels within your school/organization.

Anticipated Immediate Outcomes

- Create shared language of race/identity among school/organizational community
- Increase capacity of individuals to talk about race and dignity with peers and students/clients

Activities

- Interactive dialogue-centered workshops
- Creating maps, zines, and models
- Personal reflections
- Group readings / Case studies

Preparation Questions

- What trainings/PD sessions on race/identity/equity/culture have leadership participated in over the last three years? What did leaders learn from those trainings? How have leaders applied what you have learned to your work in the building?
- What trainings/PD sessions on race/identity/equity/culture have teachers/staff participated in over the last three years? What have teachers/staff brought back to the building from attending those trainings? How have teachers/staff applied what they have learned to their work in the building?
- How would someone describe the building climate for students/clients in regards to race/identity/equity/culture? How would someone describe the climate in the building for teachers/ staff in regards to race/identity/equity/culture?
- What challenges do you currently have with talking about race and identity in the organization?
- Describe a situation dealing with race/identity/equity/culture in your organization.

- What support is needed to create the most equitable school environment for all students?
- How would you describe your personal journey with learning about race/identity/equity/culture?

The R.A.C.E for Dignity Approach

Engaging this work supports critical consciousness-raising through radical education.

This curriculum uses critical pedagogy to challenge manifest and latent structures of oppression. Dialogue is an essential tool for building community. Curriculum activities encourage open and honest dialogue among participants. Open and honest does not mean harmful and unchecked. Our goal is clarity and understanding. We embrace our capacity to strengthen our ability to listen, reflect and then respond to others. Our goal is that everyone can grow through the process.

We are citizens of the world and we are responsible for the future. The curriculum remains dynamic and personal because we are always decolonizing and deimperializing. Decolonization critiques what the systems of oppression have perpetuated, upheld, and maintained within the American social context. Deimperialization critiques the systems of oppression perpetuated, upheld and maintained through American empire globally. African-American or Black identity is a product of these processes at home and abroad. Creating equity means that we are aware of these processes and are committed to repairing the harm they have caused.

Anti-blackness happens within communities of color. Racism uses whiteness as currency which allows a person's skin color to define their social position. Within that system of racialization, people across the spectrum can participate in upholding the system that dehumanizes

everyone by targeting Black people. It is subtle and without the breadth of power the full system of racism has, but anti-blackness allows people of color to differentiate themselves and therefore legitimize racism and racialization to their benefit.

Discussions of equity demand a shared understanding of power. Our approach is equity-focused and dignity-based. The curriculum addresses the inherent power conflicts within oppression. Race, racism and racialization of Black and other people of color is the focus of this curriculum. However, marginalized identities include but are not limited to gender, class, sexuality, ability, nationality and/or religious practice. R.A.C.E. through Dignity considers these identities within and around race. This approach centers the power of stakeholders, staff and clients. Institutional power can sustain or challenge inequity or disparity. Interpersonal power recognizes the agency and assets of all stakeholders. Through a dignity-based approach, all stakeholders should feel included and valued throughout the learning process. The facilitators also engage in a self-reflection report at the end of every curriculum component.

The Ground Rules of Intellectual work help us continue to grow and develop this work in real time.

- **Be present**
 - We must be cognizant of the time and space we are in. We must know how history shapes our current context and the power we have to impact the future. This process is continuous.
- **Listen openly and reflect consistently.**

- R.A.C.E. through Dignity challenges everyone to engage new knowledge and reflect in many ways about their own journeys.
- **With new knowledge comes new responsibilities; use it!**
 - With all new knowledge comes new responsibilities. We have a responsibility to use the knowledge that we gain through our endeavors to better our communities and the world. The facilitators engage in a self-reflection report at the end of every curriculum component using the ground rules.

What We Mean By Dignity

Dignity is the relationship between how you value yourself and how your community values you. A person's sense of dignity is understood through a network of individual, interpersonal, institutional, organizational and societal experiences. All human beings are born with dignity, an inherent sense of self-worth expressed through self-determination, rank and humanity. Lived experiences either affirm or negate one's sense of dignity. Dignity is reciprocal self-worth shared between an individual and society. Every human being should understand themselves to be worthy because the people around them are worthy. Conversely, everyone should be treated with a sense of worthiness because each person sees themselves as worthy.

Let's Get Specific

The R.A.C.E. through Dignity curriculum identifies eight core components of dignity that ground learning modules, activities, and accountability frameworks. These core components were developed through an extensive literature review and primary research on dignity with direct service organizations. The components are applicable to all organizations and vary in engagement based on the organization's scope of work and competing priorities. However, every organization

should be able to interrogate their culture and services through all eight components. This workshops series should take place over 9 weeks.

Self-Determination	To control one’s own life and livelihood, to define the world in our one’s own words, images, and interests and to decide for oneself and their own communities
Honor	To acknowledge everyone, including ourselves, as worthy of the highest honor and respect
Humanity	To validate inherent value in one another through the shared human experience
Identity	To see people for who they are, as they are and to recognize and appreciate all aspects of a person’s identity including but not limited to race, religion, gender, sexuality, class or ability
Merit	To earn recognition, status, and all associated benefits for one’s skills, talents and efforts
Access	To have all basic needs met according to the upheld values of the community.
Relationships	To exist in community with others, free from forced isolation and to protect each person’s relationships
Excellence	To support everyone’s pursuit to achieve human excellence

“And yet if we cannot as a culture accept the way white supremacist thinking and practice informs some aspect of our lives irrespective of skin color, then we will never move beyond race.”

bell hooks

Writing Beyond Race (2013)

Foundations of R.A.C.E. through Dignity

- We must understand our social context and its impact on providing services to African-Americans and other people of color.
- Discrimination based upon Race, Gender, Class, Sexuality, Religion, and Ability are acknowledged within the White Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy (WSCP). Each form of discrimination on its own or in concert with one another may be referred to as “systemic oppression”.
- White Supremacist Thinking is the conscious and unconscious acceptance of subtle and/or overt racial subordination and domination that allows the WSCP to exist and persist. White Supremacist Thinking is consistent and pervasive in our society.
- R.A.C.E. through Dignity is counter to WSCP because of the intentional focus on an individual’s identity as valuable and additive opposed to a barrier or a penalty in every interaction.
- The transition from White Supremacist Thinking to R.A.C.E. through Dignity. requires a transformational individual and collective process.
- White Fragility can be a barrier to this process. White Fragility is the socialized expectation of racial comfort when dealing with racial stress. Working through and understanding

White Fragility is a necessary for success.

- Oppression is ideological, institutional, interpersonal and internalized. R.A.C.E. through Dignity works through understanding, identifying, healing and owning the personal and collective work to address oppression at all levels.

White Supremacy? This goes there?

Yes. It. Does. Through the curriculum, participants will learn about white supremacist thinking. White supremacist thinking is the conscious and unconscious acceptance of subtle and/or overt racial subordination and domination. It is not a frame of mind limited to white people, nor is it meant to focus on white people as the only source of racism. White supremacist thinking is a product of our socialization. It is reinforced through systems including schooling, media and popular discourse. The way we think and the words we use matter. Engaging this curriculum challenges inadvertent white supremacist thinking and its manifestations in our language and actions.

So...are you ready to use this curriculum?¹

We hope so! We have five critical questions that your team should engage before starting this curriculum.

- How, if at all, has your organization previously discussed race within the work of the organization?
- Why is your organization interested in developing a racial equity framework at this time?
- How do you know your leadership team has the capacity to be advocates of a framework for creating racial equity across the organization?

- What are current organizational priorities that may impact your organizational community from embracing a new framework?
- What resistance to discussing this framework might be anticipated?

The R.A.C.E. through Dignity Process

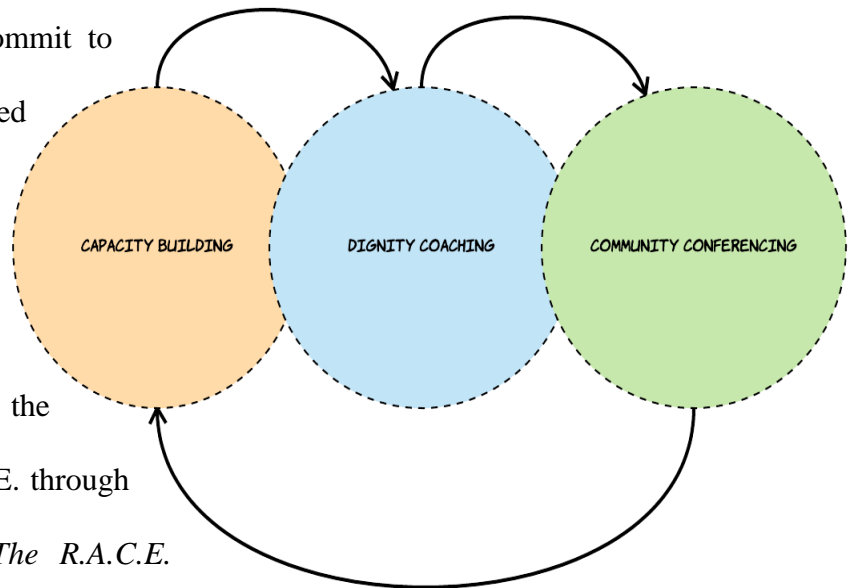
Capacity Building

First, the organization must develop the capacity to utilize dignity within organizational language, policy and practice. The workshops are an opportunity for the R.A.C.E. through Dignity team to serve as a facilitator and thought partner as the organization participates in the development process. This step develops the foundation for creating equity across the organization. The broad topics of the workshops are:

- Through Dignity and Humiliation
- Understanding Oppression
- Connecting Racialization and Dignity
- White Supremacist Thinking / White Fragility
- Building and Protecting Dignity in your Organization
- Measuring Dignity
- Creating Indicators
- Identifying Commitments
- Creating a Tool / Framework / Aim Statement for Accountability

Dignity Coaching

Second, the organization must commit to progress reviews on their identified commitments using the tool or framework created during the capacity building stage. The first round of Dignity Coaching will be co-facilitated by a member of the organization and a member of the R.A.C.E. through Dignity team. This process will use *The R.A.C.E.*



through Dignity Coaching Workbook

Figure 3: The Dignity Process

to monitor the implementation

R.A.C.E. through Dignity in the organization. The second round of Dignity Coaching will be facilitated by a member of the organization with a member of the R.A.C.E. through Dignity serving as a thought partner. This step allows the organization to have a partner during the process of implementing the framework while also developing internal capacity.

Community Conferencing

Third, the organization should develop a list of lessons learned and wisdom gained from the process. This information should be compiled for review by participants. After comments and questions are addressed, the organization should present their work to a group of people outside of their organization's immediate work or services. Through the community conference the organization presents its process, successes, and challenges with questions and comments from peers. This step is meant to enhance the work of the organization through critical engagement and opportunities to think about next steps.

Who Should Participate From My Organization?

Everyone! The curriculum is structured to be facilitated for groups with no more than 30 participants. Depending on capacity and resources, it may be more feasible to have a selected group representing different staff members / organizational leaders that can participate in the process before involving all members of the organization. The Dignity Coaching stage will be useful for moving the material from the small group to the larger group. It is recommended that large organizations consider dividing their participants in to separate learning communities that come together during the Community Conferencing phase.

Expected Outcomes: Characteristics of R.A.C.E. through Dignity

Committing to doing ongoing critical self-reflection. Critical self-reflection is taking the time to intentionally think about one's own practice, impact and consequences of action and inaction. During reflective processes, practitioners can think critically about spontaneous responses to language and events in retrospect. Through this examination, practitioners will be able to identify competing priorities and commitments that affect their work habits and styles. Practitioners that understand their own responses to situations through reflection are able to develop a sense of self-awareness that is malleable and contextually responsive.

Utilizing a complex sense self-awareness on institutional and interpersonal levels. Self-awareness is conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives and desires. Self-awareness is the capacity for

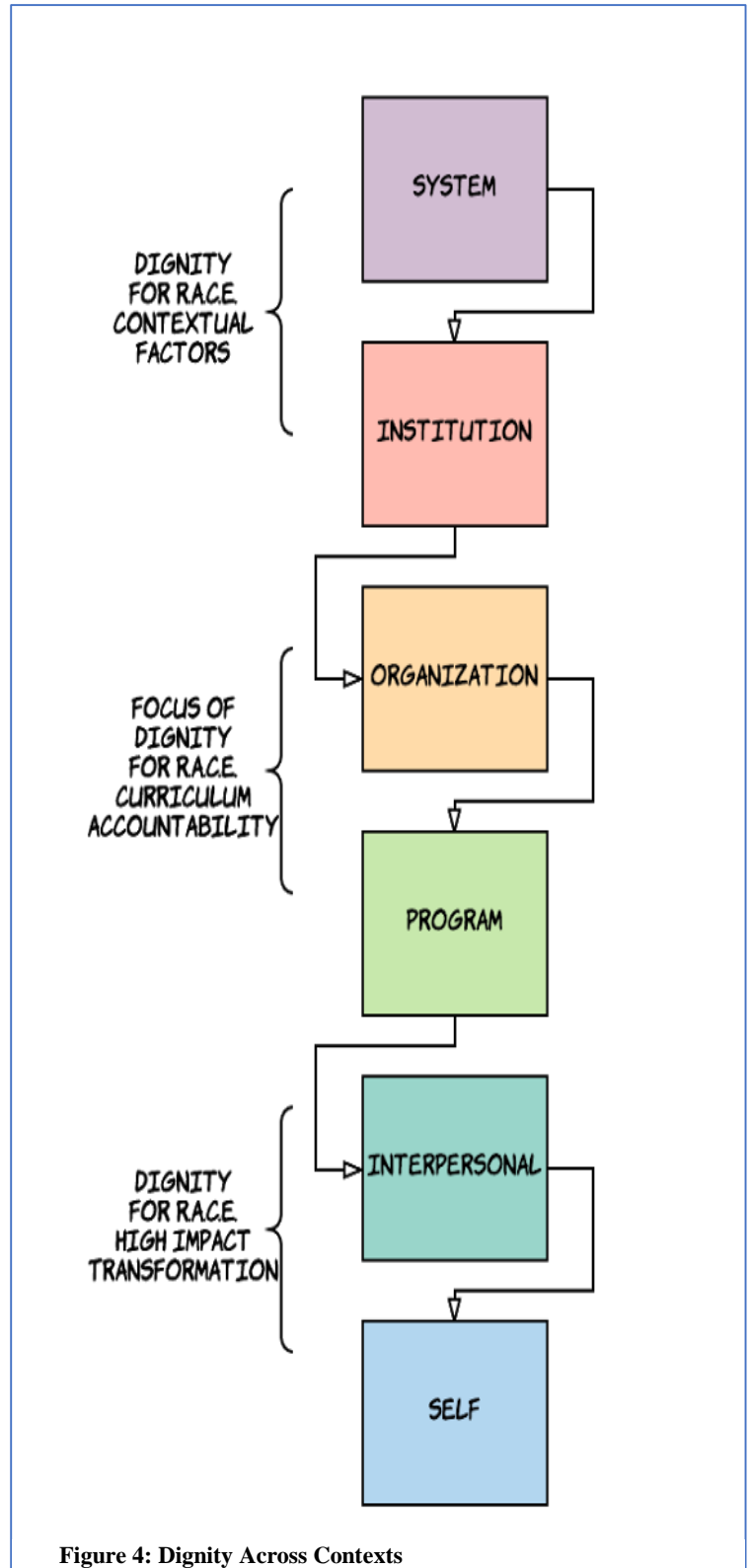


Figure 4: Dignity Across Contexts

introspection and seeing oneself as an individual with agency and capabilities. A person comes to self-awareness by understanding their identity and its relationship to space, place, time, history, environment, and context. Once a person commits to prioritizing a sense of self-awareness in their work with others they can begin to look at their progress towards increasing their ability to respect, protect and fulfill another person's sense of dignity.

Practicing radical empathy. Radical empathy is a deep spontaneous acknowledgement and recognition of another's lived experiences without having lived their experiences (Koss-Chioino, 2006). A person will not be able to practice radical empathy without having a thoroughly developed sense of self and self-awareness around others. A person commits to practicing radical empathy in their everyday interaction with others. The challenge is to empathize without pre-text or qualification. This is a fundamentally radical thing to do because it assumes the humanity of another person before judgement.

Recognizing relationships. People working at school/districts that center the dignity of their clients and participants recognize that relationships are necessary for one's life to have meaning and worth. Through relationships, individuals share and develop their knowledge, values and beliefs. As the relationships progress, a person may affirm or disconfirm another person's dignity. Relationships are defined by understanding one's power in relation to others. A person must recognize the potential of relationship, the engagement of relationships and the ending of relationships.

Challenging one's own beliefs despite good intentions. In this stage, a person recognizes a belief that they hold may not be true. The process of challenging beliefs may include internal (personal) and external (with others) dialogues. A person challenges their beliefs by critically analyzing why they believe as they do, where this belief came from and if it is possible that they may need to change their beliefs.

Acknowledging inherent value of every person by making connections. A person needs to understand that another person's beliefs about themselves have to be recognized and valued despite well-meaning good intentions. All stakeholders involved need to be affirmed as valuable to the shared context.

Redistributing power. Dignity is mediated by power. Where there is a power imbalance, some people are awarded dignity while others are experiencing humiliation. This creates a situation of imbalanced power that maintains and perpetuates inequity. To address inequity, those with power must give up some of their power to those without power. In youth work situations, adult youth workers create opportunities for young people to understand and utilize their own power.

Tables and Figures

Figure 1 My Brother's Keeper Theory of Change

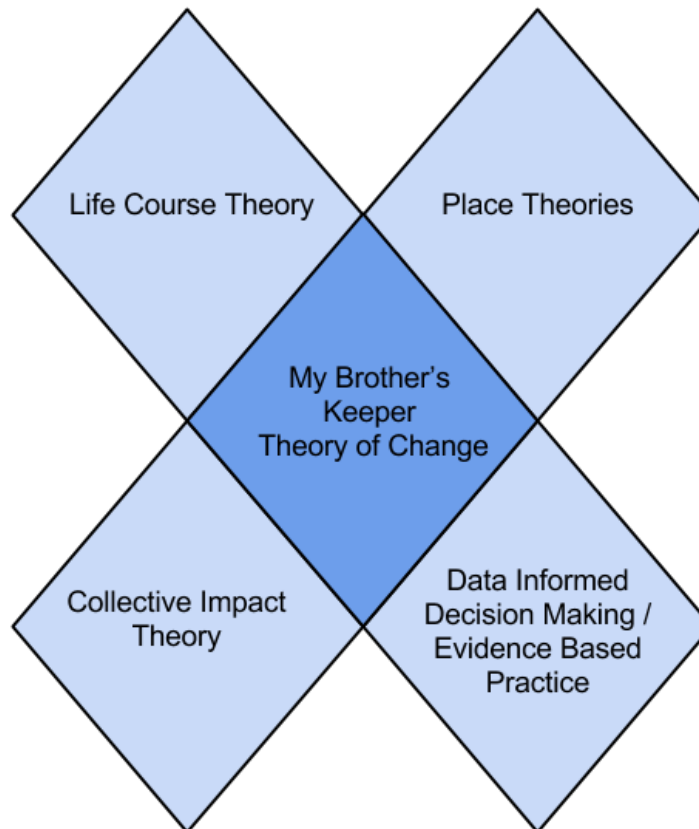


Table 1: Aligning MBK Theoretical Frameworks to A Dignity-based Framework

Theory	Value	How dignity upholds these values?
Collective Impact	shared measurement across organizations with a shared vision committed to addressing a common goal	Dignity is a shared concept among organizations that work with boys and men of color. Dignity measurement would help participating MBK communities and organizations to have aligned measurement and evaluation practice.
Place	subjective experiences of the individual in identified spaces	Dignity indicators value the subjective experiences of individuals. By understanding the dignity of boys and men of color
Life Course	the impact of one's life on one's future	Dignity measurement focuses on how an individual currently feels about their own dignity. Dignity measures over the lifespan of boys and men of color may help organizations to work together within the collective impact model.

<p>Data Informed Decision Making</p>	<p>enhanced data access can improve decision making</p>	<p>Dignity is an indicator of success with organizations that are successfully working with boys and men of color that is not adequately tracked or measured. Using a dignity measure will allow organizations to provide evidence for their success. In addition, other organizations can utilize a shared measurement to track success towards a shared goal.</p>
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Table 2: Dignity Instruments in the Caring Sciences 2000 - 2015

Name of Instrument	Year	Country	Field	Target Population
The Dignity Instrument	2003	United States	nursing	nurses
Patient Dignity Inventory (PDI)	2008	Canada	palliative care	palliative care patients
Attributed Dignity Scale (ADS or JADS)	2009	United States	gerontology	older adults
Dignity Card Sort Tool (DCT)	2009	United States	palliative care	nurses, community dwelling and hospice patients
Preservation of Dignity Card-Sort Tool (pDCT)	2010	United States	palliative care	community dwelling Filipino Americans
The OMEGA Tool Measuring Dignity (OMTD)	2010	South Africa	palliative care	informal caregivers of home-based care
"Unnamed" (Palestinian)	2010	West Bank, Palestine	health policy	Palestinian Refugees

Measurement Instrument for Dignity AMsterdam (MIDAM)	2011	The Netherlands	palliative care	people with Advanced Directives in institutional care
Patient Dignity Inventory - Italian Version (PDI-I)	2011	Italy	oncology	patients
Patient Dignity Inventory - German Version (PDI-G)	2013	Germany	palliative care	patients with cancer
Measurement Instrument for Dignity AMsterdam in Long-Term Care facilities (MIDAM-LTC)	2014	The Netherlands	palliative care	nursing home residents
Palliative Patients Dignity Scale (PPDS)	2015	Spain	palliative care	home care patients
"Unnamed" (Italian)	2015	Italy	hospital care	hospital patients
Patient Dignity Inventory - Persian Version (PDI-P)	2015	Iran	coronary care	cardiac patients
Patient Dignity Inventory - Spanish Version (PDI-S)	2015	Spain	oncology	patients with advanced cancer

Table 3: Concepts Present in Dignity Instruments

Instrument Name	Self / Internal	Relationships	Environment / Context	Behavior / Actions	Physical / Bodily
Attributed Dignity Scale (ADS or JADS)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Dignity Card Sort Tool (DCT)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Ferri, 2015	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Khatib, 2010	Yes	No	No	No	No
Measurement Instrument for Dignity AMsterdam (MIDAM)	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Measurement Instrument for Dignity AMsterdam in Long-Term Care Settings (MIDAM-LTC)	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Palliative Patients Dignity Scale	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Patient Dignity Inventory (PDI)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

Patient Dignity Inventory - German Version (PDI-G)	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Patient Dignity Inventory - Italian Version (PDI-I)	Yes	No	No	No	No
Patient Dignity Inventory - Persian Version (PDI-P)	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Patient Dignity Inventory - Spanish Version (PDI-S)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Preservation of Dignity Card-Sort Tool (pDCT)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Dignity Instrument	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
The OMEGA Tool Measuring Dignity	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Figure 3: Distribution of Concepts Across Dignity Instruments

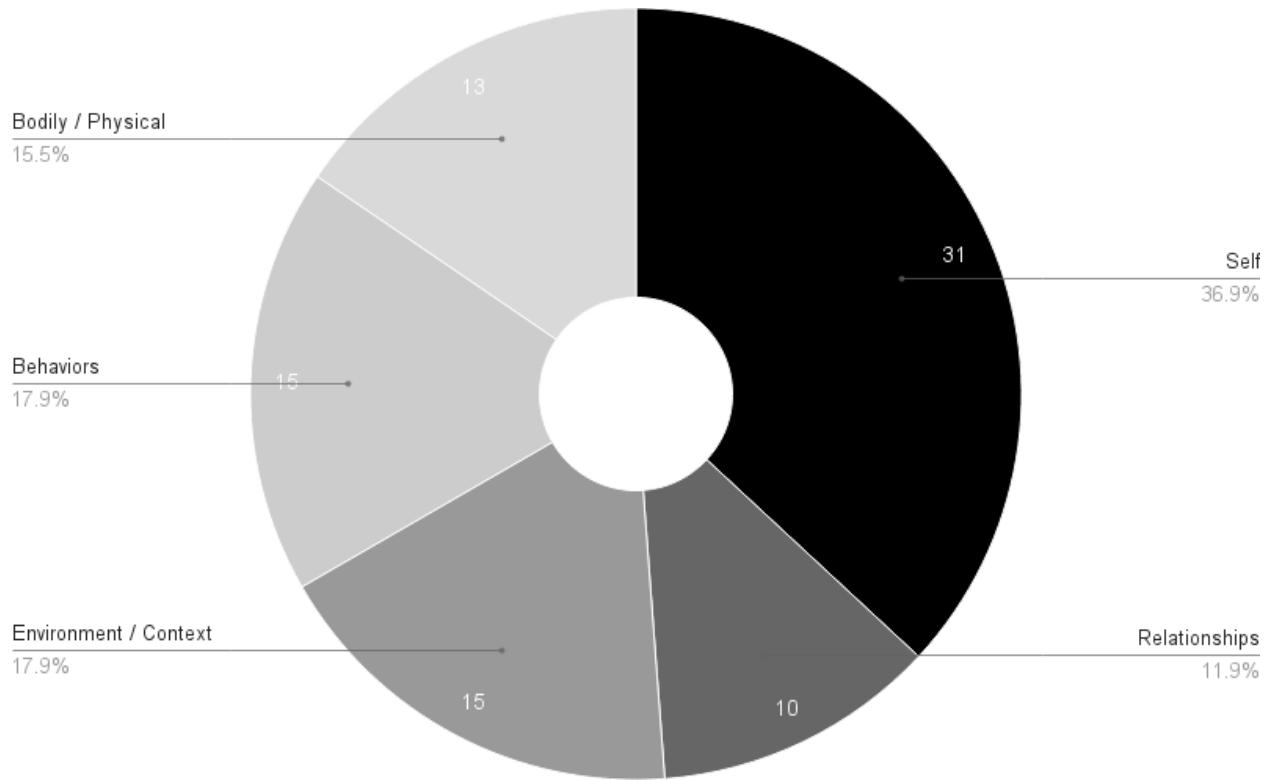


Table 4: Key Informant Participants

Name	Gender	Role
Rivera	M	Practitioner
Hannah	F	Administrator
Angie	F	Administrator
Leanna	F	Administrator
Bob	M	Researcher
Whitney	F	Practitioner
Wanda	F	Practitioner

Table 5: Focus Group Participants

Focus Group Participant Demographic Information n=21	
Race & Ethnicity¹	
American Indian / Alaskan Native / Indigenous	14.3%
Asian	0
Black / African American	76.2%
Latina/o/x	14.3%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	0
White	28.6%
Gender	
Female	90%
Male	10%
Gender Non-conforming	0
Role in organization	
Board Member	0
Administrator	21%
Direct service provider	42%
Consultant	0
Volunteer	0

¹ Percentage totals do not equal 100 because participants were able to check all categories that applied to them.

Other ²	37%
Prior Exposure to Dignity Framework³	
No	79%
Yes	21%

Table 6: Original Focus Group Session Descriptions

Title	Descriptions
Session 1: Dignity as a Guiding Principle	In this session, participants will learn about dignity as a network of concepts. The purpose of this workshop is to gain a conceptual understanding of dignity as a guiding principle for racial equity. The introduction includes an overview of the literature on dignity in three fields: international development, African-American social and political thought, and the caring sciences.
Session 2: Race, Gender and Dignity	Participants will explore the ways in which instances of dignity or humiliation have been related to racialized tensions on macro and micro levels. The conversation is directed towards challenging our underlying assumptions about race and gender and identifying organizational level

² Included program participants and combinations of the role options

³ Included participating in the pilot study or seeing conference presentations about the topic prior to the research study.

instances that support broader systems of oppression through race and gender.

Session 3: Dignity-
based Policy,
Practice and
Evaluation

In this session, participants will discuss the policy, systems, and environmental change aspects related to understanding dignity within their own organizations. The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for participants to think through the practical application of a dignity-based framework within their current organization.

Table 7: Code Book

Parent Code	Child Code(s)	Definition	Excerpt
Context		Participant background including personal and professional histories	“I'm kind of too new into the program to feel like I have a really good feel in the field, because I've only taken one trauma class. I didn't get my undergraduate in social work, social work is really kind of new for me...”
Dignity Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity/Recognition • Autonomy • Rank • Humanity • Attributed • Inflorescent • Attributed • Relational 	Reflections on the concepts or connections to the concepts through personal and professional experiences	<p>“Dignity means to me showing respect for a person no matter the label. It doesn't matter that I'm black, that I'm woman, so I deserve it because I'm a woman or I deserve it because I'm black or any form of minority.</p> <p>It's because I'm human you should treat me with respect.”</p>

Evaluative Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators • Capacity 	<p>a cognitive process, motivated by inquisitiveness and a belief in the value of evidence, which involves: (1) identifying assumptions, (2) posing thoughtful questions, (3) pursuing deeper understanding through reflection and perspective taking, and (4) making informed decisions in preparation for action.</p>	<p>“We are floundering because we don't know necessarily what it is their intent or what they're trying to do, and it's not their fault, it's just they put the horse before the cart. They got the data council 2 years after they started the initiative. So, instead of having the data people there when the data people should have been there in the very beginning, they waited, and now we have to back up and go, hey what's going on over here in terms of data and evaluation.”</p>
Personal Anecdote		<p>Stories that participants retrospectively connected to</p>	<p>“When I was about 6, 7 or 8, I could climb the trees better than the boys. I had 6 cousins, I had 2 brothers,</p>

dignity concepts learned in
focus groups

neighborhood boys and I was the only girl and I had 1
friend that lived across the street, but she didn't come
out all the time, and so I only had the boys to play with,
so I was just a tomboy and loved it. I would beat them
to the top of this huge tree every single time, there was
only 1 cousin that could keep up with me, and my
mother would watch me,..Don't climb that tree no more
or I'm going to whoop you. She told me don't even
touch that tree. So I said okay. Go outside and time
passed and I was leaning up against the tree and she
called me in the house and she whooped me for
climbing that tree. So that essence and that imaging,
the dignity of who I am was stopped just that quickly
because for whatever reason hers was stopped and she
in her own anger and whatever stopped mine...”

Post- Workshop Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation • Personal • Professional 	Details on experiences during the workshop and after the workshop prior to interview	<p>“Honestly, I feel like this was phase 1. This is dignity 101. I would probably have to take dignity 101 again because as much as I got out of it, there was stuff that I didn’t get and then I need personally more of this. Not to move forward with adding into my work, but to kind of strengthen my understanding of how I can use it professionally and personally, and I think that’s really what I would need. I need dignity 101 or 101B and then is the application.”</p>
Race		Mentions of race	<p>“I was mildly skeptical at first because I’m white and because I’m an evaluator and this model talks significantly about really being sure that you have a diverse set of evaluators to do evaluation, and so I was a little concerned, like hey where’s my place in this, which is how we always think, and will I be able to do</p>

this work in the way that it is going to be effective if I
don't have a team of people.”

Table 8 - Revised Codes

Dignity	Restoring dignity
	Reflecting on self
	Having a language
	Listening with dignity
	Interpreting interpersonal actions
	Identifying institutional responsibility
Black Males / Boys and Men of Color	Discussing Black males
Workshop	Workshop Dislikes
	Workshop Likes

Table 9: Focus Group Participants

Interview Participant Demographic Information n=13	
Race & Ethnicity⁴	
American Indian / Alaskan Native / Indigenous	7.7%
Asian	0
Black / African American	61.5%
Latina/o/x	15.4%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	0
White	15.4%
Gender	
Female	92.3%
Male	7.7%
Gender Non-conforming	0
Role in organization	
Board Member	0
Administrator	15.4%
Direct service provider	84.6%
Consultant	0
Volunteer	0
Other ⁵	0%

⁴ Percentage totals may not equal 100 because participants were able to check all categories that applied to them.

⁵ Included program participants and combinations of the role options

Prior Exposure to Dignity Framework⁶

No	84.6%
Yes	15.4%

⁶ Included participating in the pilot study or seeing conference presentations about the topic prior to the research study.

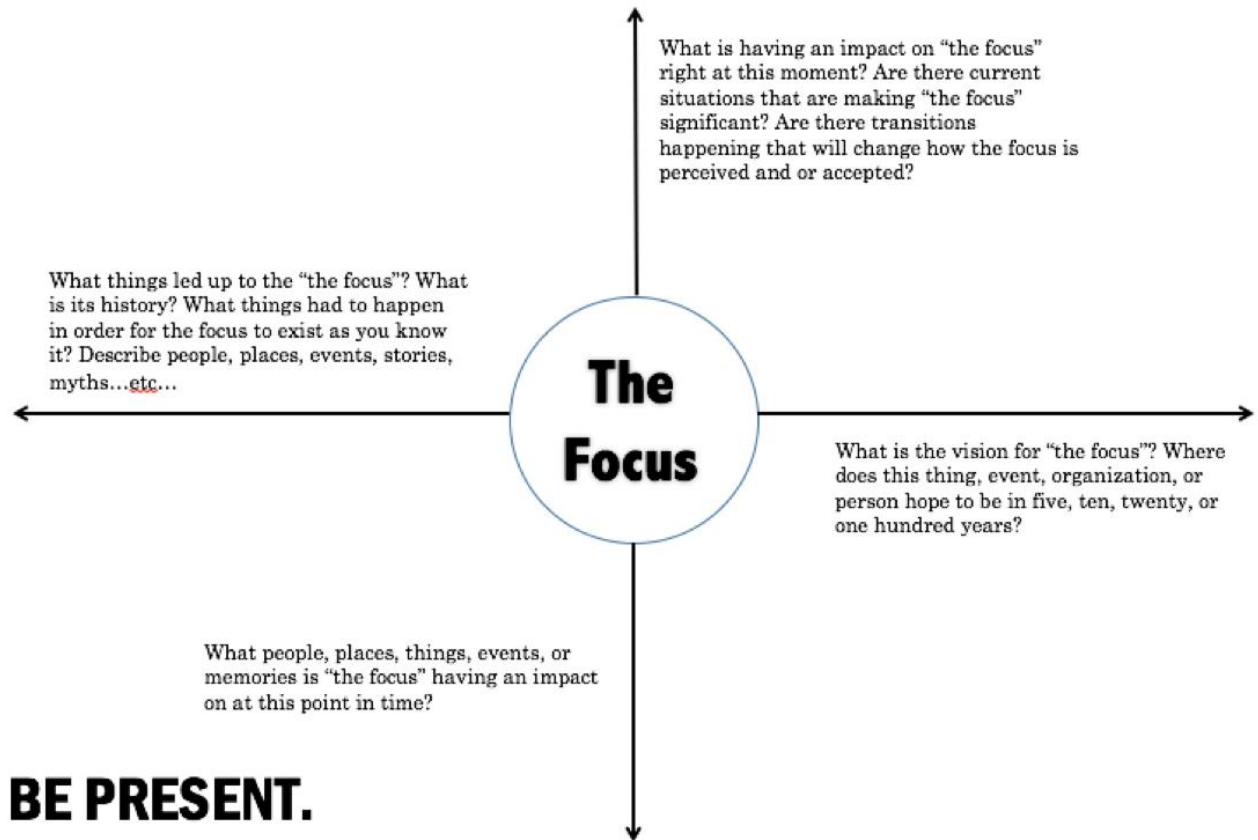
Figure 4: Dignity Concepts Presented in Workshops (Michael, 2014)

INTRINSIC HUMAN DIGNITY



NON-INTRINSIC HUMAN DIGNITY

Figure 5: Ba-Kongo Cosmogram Presented in Workshops



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- 2008 Certificate of Entrepreneurship
Howard University
- 2008 Certificate of Nonprofit Leadership (CNP)
Nonprofit Leadership Alliance - Howard University Chapter

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2017 Eliminating Racism Award (YWCA)
- 2011-2016 Chancellor's Graduate Student Award (Partial)

2011-2015 Advanced Opportunity Program Fellow (Full)
2008-2010 University Graduate Scholar (Full)
2004-2008 Legacy Award Scholarship (Full)

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2017-2018 Instructor
Center for Gender and Sexualities Studies
Marquette University

- INGS 1001 Introduction to Gender and Sexualities Studies

2012-2014 Senior Lecturer
Department of Women's and Gender Studies
University of Wisconsin - Whitewater

- GENED 110 Introduction to Social Science
- WMNS 100 Introduction to Women's Studies

2012 Lecturer
Department of Educational Policy and Community Studies
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

- EDPOL 506 Research Techniques for Community Organizers
and Community Educators

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2015-2016 Graduate Research Assistant
Department of Education Policy and Community Studies
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

2014-2015 Graduate Research Assistant
Research Center for Urban Education Leadership Development
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2017- Owner - Ubuntu Research & Evaluation
2016- District Teacher Leader - Wauwatosa West High School
2015-2017 Consultant and Member - Derute Consulting Cooperative
2014-2015 Assistant Director, UWM Women's Resource Center
2013-2014 Program Coordinator, UWM McNair Program
2010-2012 Project Assistant, UWM Women's Resource Center
2009-2010 Editor, New Visions for Public Affairs, University of Delaware
2008-2010 Coordinator, Delaware Academy for School Leadership

FELLOWSHIPS

- 2017-2018 Building Beloved Community Fellowship
Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA)
- 2015-2016 Graduate Education Diversity Intern (GEDI)
American Evaluation Association
Center for Urban Population Health

PUBLICATIONS

- Irby, D. & Liston, M. (under review). Toward a Dignity-based Paradigm for improving the lives of Boys and Young Men of Color in the United States.
- Liston, M. (2017). "There's No Sally And Thomas Here!": Scandal, Twitter, And Black Feminist Epistemology. In R. Goldstein & L. Nicosia, Through a Distorted Lens: Media as Curricula and Pedagogy in the 21st Century (1st ed.). New York: Sense Publishers.

EVALUATION REPORTS

- 2017 MKEScholars Program at UW-Milwaukee
Program Evaluation (in progress)
- 2016 Associates in Commercial Real Estate - LISC Milwaukee
Program Evaluation (co-written with Dr. Danielle Apugo, University of DC)

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

- 2017 20th Anniversary of the GEDI Program
Evaluation 2017 - American Evaluation Association
- 2017 White Supremacist Thinking and Dignity-based Evaluation
Evaluation 2017 - American Evaluation Association
- 2017 Dignity-Based Evaluation
Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA) Conference
- 2016 Dignity for Evaluating Black Male Achievement
Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA) Conference
- 2016 An African-centered Approach to Evaluation Capacity Building
International Congress for Qualitative Inquiry - Champaign, IL
- 2016 Dignity-Based Evaluation for Boys and Men of Color
Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment - Chicago, IL
- 2015 When and Where I Enter: Explorations of Black Feminist Content Analysis
International Congress for Qualitative Inquiry - Champaign, IL
- 2015 Reimagining the Future of Organizing for Education for Our Students: A Pan-African Discourse Analysis

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- 2015 What Matters Gets Measured, What's Measured Matters: Dignity's Place in Evaluation
UWM School of Education Research Gala
Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations - Seattle, WA
- 2014 The Raced and Gendered Pathology of Black Male Achievement
Association for the Study of African American Life and History - Memphis, TN
- 2014 There's No Sally And Thomas Here!": Scandal, Twitter, And Black Feminist Epistemology
International Congress for Qualitative Inquiry - Champaign, IL
- 2013 Speaking to After Through the Mbongi: Building Intellectual, Institutional, and Ideological Community
Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations - Washington, DC
- 2012 The Class Anti-Mobility Triumvirate
Midwest Labor and Working Class History Colloquium - Milwaukee, WI
- 2012 Graduate Women's Roundtable
National Conference for College Women Student Leaders - Washington, DC
- 2012 Critical Race Theory and Scholar-Activism: UWM Women's Resource Center Bridging the Gap for Students
American Multicultural Student Leadership Conference, UW-Stout

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

- 2017 "It's All About Dignity" (Keynote)
26th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Celebration
- 2016 Dignity First for Boys & Men of Color: What It Is and Why It Matters (Workshop Series)
Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee
- 2016 Dignity and Youth Work (Keynote)
City Year - Milwaukee
- 2016 The Importance of Dignity in Food Justice (Keynote)
The Table
- 2016 Dignity for Racial Equity (Guest Lecture)
University of the District of Columbia
- 2016 Lifecourse Initiatives for Healthy Families Grantee Forum
Center for Urban Population Health
- 2016 Brighter Futures Grantee Forum
Community Advocates

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- 2015 Youth Food Justice Workshop Series (Host / Organizer)
Milwaukee Food Council
 - 2015 Dignity-based Practice for Work with Black Males
Summit on Black Male Youth
 - 2015 Dignity First for Boys & Men of Color: What It Is and Why It Matters
Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee
 - 2015 Black Lives Matter and Food Justice (Class Lecture)
Oberlin College
 - 2015 Gender Justice (Workshop)
Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service
 - 2014 The Intersections of Race and Gender in Food Justice (Class Lecture)
Oberlin College
 - 2014 Understanding Food Justice (Workshop)
Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service
 - 2013 Building Community Capacity Using African-centered Practices
Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service
 - 2011 The Male/Female Principle in Africa (Class Lecture)
Class Lecture: University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

GRANTS

- 2016 Community-University Partnership Grant, Lead-Her
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (\$3,500)
- 2015 Travel Award
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (\$400)
- 2015 Travel Award
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (\$100)
- 2015 Elect Her, Campus Women Win
American Association for University Women (\$10,000)
- 2014 Campus Action Project
American Association for University Women (\$5,000)
- 2014 Travel Award
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (\$1,000)
- 2008 American Humanics Student Association, Howard University Chapter
State Farm Youth Advisory Board (\$100,000)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- 2017- Maroon Calabash Birthwork Cooperative
- 2015- American Evaluation Association
- 2014- Milwaukee Evaluation!

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- 2014- American Education Research Association - Div G
 - 2014- Association for the Study of African American Life and History
 - 2008- Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations
 - 2006- Alliance for Certified Nonprofit Professionals

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 2017 Moderator/Host, Lessons from the Long Black Freedom Struggle Summit
- 2017 Chair, 2017 Social Justice and Evaluation Conference
- 2015 Organizer and Host, The Praxis of Food Justice and Black Lives Matter
- 2015 Producer, Butterfly Confession - Milwaukee
- 2015 Producer, Pocketbook Monologues - Milwaukee
- 2014 Organizer and Host, Big Hair and Brunch - Milwaukee
- 2012-2017 Juneteenth Day Celebration Organizer at Alice's Garden
- 2012-2015 Founder and Chair, All Black Everything