

CHALLENGE

A Journal Of Research On African American Men

Multi-Cultural Psychology, Community Mental Health and Social Transformation

Thomas J. Price

Strategies for Educators: A Six-Step Program

Vernon G. Smith

Patterns of Problem Drinking Among Employed African American Men: Preliminary Results from a National Survey

Jack Martin, Steven A. Tuch,
Paul A. Roman, Jeff Dixon

Malt Liquor Beer Related Knowledge, Influences and Drinking Styles Among an Inner City Sample of African American Men

Didra Brown Taylor

Challenge: A Journal of Research on African American Men
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Editorial Policy: *Challenge* welcomes scholarly papers on any aspect of issues germane to African American life with particular emphasis on African American men. As the official publication of the Morehouse Research Institute, *Challenge* will publish invited papers presented at its conferences and solicited papers on selected themes that will be announced annually. Unsolicited papers will also be included as they relate to advertised themes.

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Preface

As many of you are aware, *Challenge* was not published for two years because of a change in administration and the creation of a new editorial board. I am no longer editor of the journal; that position has been transferred to Dr. Ida Rousseau Mukenge, who by the way is the founder of *Challenge*. Additionally, the editorial board has been revamped, new referees identified and a new agenda laid out. Historically, *Challenge* has not published thematic issues, but this too has changed. In the future, each volume will be devoted to a social, health or political issue, which disproportionately affects African American men. By changing formats, we hope to broaden our readership and expand the content area, which we hope will attract researchers from diverse fields.

As director of the Morehouse Research Institute, which houses the journal, I am pleased to present you with Volume 11. The editor will fill you in on the content of this special thematic issue in her introduction. Finally, on a personal note I would like to thank all of the contributors and readers and say I have enjoyed being the editor of *Challenge*. I hope you will always keep *Challenge* in mind when you have research you would like to share. Again, it has been both a personal and professional pleasure working for you. Enjoy the reading.

Obie Clayton, Ph.D.
Director
Morehouse Research Institute

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**A Journal of Research on
African American Men**

Preface

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Introduction

Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General identifies mental health as a "cornerstone of health" (p. 458). Although it was published in 1999, the report has not lost its currency. Recent national emphasis on health disparities does not overlook the importance of mental health in easing the burden of disease that is disproportionately borne by African Americans. Functioning and productivity for individuals and communities depend not only on the absence of mental illness, but the presence of mental health. The four studies included in this volume address mental health, a critical issue that affects African American men of all ages. The diverse yet complementary perspectives represented here reflect future directions for *Challenge*, as we seek to broaden our base of contributors and readers.

Thomas J. Prince in "Multi-Cultural Psychology, Community Mental Health, and Social Transformation," writes as a practitioner and theorist-researcher. He makes the point that although mental health may be identifiable as an *individual* phenomenon, it is not an *individualized* phenomenon. The causes, consequences and preferred therapeutic intervention models are all social in nature. Prince's skillful synthesis of insights from liberation psychology, cultural anthropology, and interventive methods offers an appropriate background for Vernon G. Smith's "Strategies for Educators: A Six-Step Program." Both Prince and Smith focus on solutions that are grounded in research but also include ideological foundations that call for a commitment to strong, viable communities and active engagement in promoting mental health. Smith stresses the importance of self-esteem in educational achievement. His program for educators identifies some special needs of African American male students and the critical roles of teacher preparation and community involvement in promoting academic excellence.

The next two articles report studies of alcohol use by African American men. Jack K. Martin, Steven A. Tuch, Paul A. Roman, and Jeff Dixon examine problem drinking in "Patterns of Problem Drinking Among Employed African American Men." Such studies of stressful life events have received less research attention than studies of mental disorders. The findings of Martin et al that suggest a role for identity and community (through religious involvement)

support Smith's emphasis on self-concept and Prince's focus on community, both as therapy and as context for intervention. The greatest increase in substance use disorders is among adolescents aged 15-24 and the social and economic costs associated with alcohol and substance use continue to rise (HHS 1999:166, 369). Didre Brown Taylor's study, "Malt Liquor Beer Related Knowledge, Influences, and Drinking Styles Among an Inner City Sample of African American Men," addresses the fact that African American men consume one-third of all malt liquor beer sold in the United States. She directs our attention to the need for qualitative ethnographic studies that can provide the kind of depth and community understanding that are necessary for the culturally-based interventions suggested by Prince. She also calls for comparative studies of women and men, recognizing once again the community context for mental health and mental health promotion. The diverse yet complementary perspectives represented here reflect both continuity with the past and new directions for *Challenge*, as we seek to broaden our base of contributors and readers.

Finally, we must acknowledge the extraordinary work of Dr. Obie Clayton, Director of the Morehouse Research Institute. As the founder of *Challenge*, I have only provided the concept. It is Dr. Clayton's leadership and commitment, along with the invaluable support of Ms. Iretha Johnson Stoney, Editorial Assistant, that have allowed *Challenge* to thrive and grow to its present state. We anticipate a thriving future for the journal and your continued support for our efforts.

Ida Rousseau Mukenge, Ph.D.
Editor

Reference

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). 1999. *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, National Institutes of Health

MULTI-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY, COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Thomas J. Prince

Corporate Performance Solutions, Inc.

ABSTRACT

Computer technology has revolutionized almost every facet of global society. The world wide web allows unprecedented exchanges of ideas around the world, and every discipline has been affected, including psychology. Exchanges with psychologists from other cultures has inspired discussions about the failure of psychology to champion human values and the empowerment of the poor and oppressed. Latino, African and Asian psychologists envision a discipline devoted to human liberation and the creation of a new person in a new society. These discussions are in response to what many psychologists see as the increasing use of psychological knowledge to manipulate and oppress. Psychology, they say, should be used to address human needs and promote social justice. They challenge psychology's traditional focus on minor reform because enhancing human welfare demands fundamental social change. This critical essay examines the role of psychology in mental health — both theory and clinical practice. It identifies the essence of psychology as a science devoted to individual and social transformation and suggests one approach to this fulfilling this responsibility.

LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY

The work of Martin-Baro, former Vice-Rector and Chair of the Psychology Department at the University of Central America in San Salvador, has greatly influenced this movement. Martin-Baro was a major force in the field of liberation psychology. Allegedly assassinated in 1989 by right-wing Salvadorian troops, he was very critical of the failure of the social sciences to address contemporary social problems. A Jesuit priest, Dr. Martin-Baro earned his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and devoted his life to the struggles of the poor in El Salvador. Psychology he thought had become blind to many structural determinants of individual and group life. Psychology he argued has served, directly or indirectly, to strengthen oppressive structures by drawing attention away from them and toward individual and subjective factors.

Drawing on famous Brazilian social theorist Paulo Freire and his (1970) concept of *conscientização*, the awakening of critical consciousness, Martin-Baro argued that if psychologists do not develop a critical consciousness that will move them toward a new emancipatory praxis, they will never be able to make a meaningful contribution to the real problems of human liberation (Hassett and Lacey 1991). *Conscientização*, as used by Paulo Freire, describes the process of personal and social transformation experienced by the poor and oppressed people of Latin America when they learn to read the surrounding reality and to write their own history. These tasks demand overcoming "false consciousness" and achieving a critical understanding of oneself, one's world and one's place in it.

The basic assumption of *conscientização* is that man's ontological vocation is to be a subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves toward ever new possibilities of a fuller and richer life individually and collectively. Knowledge is not true unless it has attached itself to the task of transforming reality. This reality to which humanity relates is not a static and closed order. It is the material used by people to create history, as they overcome dehumanizing forces.

Martin-Baro (1994) contended that psychology as a discipline has not been clear about the intimate relationship between a liberated personal existence and a liberated social existence. This has contributed to obscuring the relationship between personal

estrangement and social oppression. In this paper we will examine some criticisms made by the liberation psychologists, suggest possible solutions, and discuss some social and therapeutic implications of these criticisms for multi-cultural psychotherapy in the United States.

CRITIQUE

The major criticism of the liberation psychologists is that psychology has for the most part ignored the effects of racism, sexism, class and noxious psychosocial environments on individuals. It has instead provided victim-blaming definitions that serve power interests and attempt to fix the inner nature of individuals rather than environments (Holland 1992). Political power, they argue is, a neglected issue in psychology and attitudinal change is given much more consideration than power redistribution although a multitude of disabling human conditions are derived directly from social factors. The liberation psychologists are also very critical of psychology's incapacity to explore the realities of the poor and disfranchised. They argue that the task of therapists is to achieve the restoration of alienated persons and groups by helping them attain a critical understanding of themselves and their reality. Psychotherapy, they argue, must take aim directly at the social identity worked out through noxious social environments and shape a new identity for people as members of a human community in charge of history. To accomplish this, they contend that therapists must advocate for social structures that foster human development (Martin-Baro 1994).

This is a theme echoed by American psychologist Edmund Sullivan in *A Critical Psychology* (1984). Sullivan argues that psychologists take structural relationships of power — such as capital over labor and men over women — and change them into intrapsychic phenomena. Thus, women's inequality in relation to men for example, can be seen as precipitated by a motive called "fear of success" (Horner 1970). Black children's inequality to whites can be seen as cultural deprivation, an "ideologization" of reality that winds up consecrating the existing order as natural. Sullivan thought it important to acknowledge that class relations have profound effects. Members of the dominant class experience life as agents, while developing a sense of agency is a difficult endeavor for members of non-dominant classes. Sennett and Cobbs support this position in

The Hidden Injuries of Class (1972), their attitudinal study of American workers. They allege that the hierarchical nature of social relations has significant personal costs that most psychotherapies have largely ignored. Sullivan argues, that power is distributed unequally over different social groupings and this inequality is reflected in rates of mental illness.

A review of decades-old literature does show substantial evidence that adverse socioeconomic and political circumstances inflict deep physical and psychological wounds (Catalano 1991; Elder and Caspi 1988; Jahoda 1988; Mirowsky and Ross 1989; Rutter 1988; Steele and Aronson 1995; Weisband 1989). Catalano published several studies linking disabling social structures to higher rates of child abuse (1981), behavioral disorders (1980), depressive symptoms (1994), alcohol abuse (1993), and suicide (1989). Bulhan (1985) inventoried a growing body of research literature that documents the disastrous effects noxious social environments have on African American people. Elder and Caspi (1985) studied the impact of drastic income loss on children and found that, although mediated by the child's characteristics and parenting behavior, economic hardship adversely influenced the well being of children. Mirowsky and Ross (1986) reviewed the research on social patterns of distress and found that the subjective quality of social conditions can be evaluated by mapping the relationship of feelings such as fear, anxiety, frustration, demoralization and hope to specific social conditions. These examples from the past support arguments for acknowledged links between disabling social structures and individual psychological malaise that the discipline has been unwilling to address.

Further evidence of the negative psychological effects of adverse socioeconomic conditions is also seen in anthropological research of the 1970s on the "culture of poverty-learned helplessness" as a prelude to more recent work on stereotype threat. Steele and Aronson (1995) suggest that negative social stereotypes can affect negatively the intellectual test performance of members of a stigmatized group, despite their economic status. This research indicates that whenever African American students perform an explicitly intellectual task, the threat of confirming or being judged by a negative social stereotype about their intellectual ability causes them to perform more poorly. Awareness of the negative stereotype, Steele hypothesizes, redirects

attention needed to perform the task to other concerns (self-concept threat), resulting in lower test performance.

Another body of literature has been devoted to examining the iatrogenic aspects of psychological and psychiatric practices in mental health settings and a common theme here has been the contribution and consolidation of mental illness through labeling (Brown 1985; Cohen 1990; Dean, Kraft, and Pepper 1976; Grusky and Pollner 1981; Morgan 1983; Walsh 1988). Labeling is intimately related to social control. Mental illness is a negative social evaluation of norm-violating behavior rather than a value-free disease process. Sullivan (1984) suggested that a critical orientation would take a different approach. Instead of treating individual symptoms and labeling them, therapists would be more effective if they became involved in policy development and community mobilization to make corporate interests sensitive to the needs of the community.

In summary the rationale of liberation psychology is drawn from the American Psychological Association (1994) which explicitly defines the goal of advancing the field of psychology as "a means of promoting human welfare." Therefore, it is an ethical obligation for psychologists to share their expertise when such involvement would be a benefit to society. If the research indicates a link between social structures and mental health, then therapists as advocates of human welfare must encourage the development of social structures that *serve people* and psychotherapy must become an instrument of social change and transformation.

The ideas of the Liberation Psychology Movement are not new. In their critique of psychology and psychotherapy however they often fail to distinguish between the many different theoretical frameworks of psychotherapy. For example, the existential and Gestalt psychotherapies have always been clear about the importance of self in context. There have also been many attempts in the past to make the discipline of psychology an instrument of social change. Adler, who helped develop the field of social psychology, was a major influence in turning the focus of psychologists to the importance of social variables. He stressed the importance of human society, not only for the development of individual character, but also for the orientation of every action and emotion in the life of a human being. Adlerian psychology did not permit its practitioners to function in

isolation from social reality. It demanded from the individual psychologist a commitment to the health of society and individuals. Adler felt that psychologists had a duty to speak out when irrational forces threatened to disrupt the orderly process of society or whenever the basic values of freedom, autonomy and self-determination were threatened by political movements or institutions. The psychologist, Adler argued, must defend rational values in an increasingly irrational world. He or she must identify pathology in the political process, whether it is manifested in the person of the leader or the movement he represents.

Another early social psychological theorist concerned about social transformation was Eric Fromm. He also argued that character affects and is affected by social structure and social change. Fromm believed that society by making demands upon humans that are contrary to their nature drives people into insanity, antisocial conduct or self-destructive behavior. Some efforts for social change have even come from prominent presidents of the American Psychological Association, notably Kenneth Clark (1974) and George Albee (1981, 1986, 1990). Other initiatives to employ psychology as a tool for social transformation include community psychology (Heller and Monahan 1977; Levine and Perkins 1987; Mulvey 1988; Rappaport 1977, 1981, 1990; Sarason 1982, 1984) and feminist psychology (Allen and Baber 1992; Hare-Mustin and Marcek 1990; Holland 1992; Kitzinger 1991; Morawski 1990; Riger 1992; Wilkinson 1991).

Self and Society

The critical viewpoint of liberation psychology has a well-respected history within the discipline. The arguments have however become more sophisticated and are seemingly being supported by a growing body of research. What is new are the call to advocate for the poor and disfranchised and the inclusion of psychologists from other cultures in an enlarged dialogue. Another major difference is the radical psychologists' rejection of the notion of a supreme self, a key feature of current popular psychology because they argue that it helps in the preservation of the structural status quo (Cushman 1990). The supreme self is conceived of as an entity with magnificent powers. Both success and failure are attributed to it. Themes such as the possibility of self-improvement through self-help are based on the supposed existence of this inner supreme self.

The liberation psychologists, however, argue that this notion interferes with the critical scrutiny and possible transformation of social systemic causes of happiness and misery. In this world view, self supersedes the social system; therefore changes ought to come from the former and not the latter. Thus, self-interest is promoted through stressing self help instead of stressing the need to help others. This proposition has gained further support from observations of Third World psychologists on the behavior of colonized people who, by accepting the colonizers definitions of their problems (eg., laziness, genetic inferiority, manifest destiny etc.) cease to oppose domination (Bulhan 1985). This argument of the liberation psychologists provides the active therapist today with valuable material to clarify the nature and direction of our loyalties and responsibilities. The liberation psychology movement raises five points that are important for the active therapist today:

1. **The importance of social context and the need to be sensitive to issues of gender, class and race.** When we apply the ideas of Martin-Baros and other multi-cultural psychologists to a U.S. context, it is clear that the deep divisions in our own social structure carry profound consequences for individual and social psychology but receive inadequate attention from psychologists or other social scientists.
2. **The need to attend to the poorer sections of our society.** Therapists have a responsibility to use psychological science in the public interest. We need to move from passive receivers of information to active agents in the process of critically evaluating and integrating knowledge. This means applying psychological science to public policy questions and becoming more involved in advocacy work in the public interest.
3. **The need for American psychologists to end their intellectual isolation** (Sexton and Misiak 1984). Psychologists in the U.S. are often criticized for knowing too little about the progress of psychology in other countries. Psychologists need to learn that the model they see in the United States is not the only possible model and that basic assumptions about the nature of psychology are questioned

in other parts of the world. This exposure would help the discipline become more self-reflexive by incorporating the diversity that exists in our global village.

4. **The importance of being an agent for the client.** Thomas Szasz noted in *Law, Liberty, and Psychiatry* (1963) that if a psychiatrist tries to serve society and a patient simultaneously, society's needs generally take precedence unless he is constantly vigilant in protecting his patient's interest. It is very important that the primacy and importance of the basic therapist/client relationship not be lost in the often complex social situations that can arise.
5. Finally, if individual transformation occurs through the changing of one's external reality, as Paulo Freire and the liberation psychologists argue, then **therapists may need to be more active and conscious change agents in society.** Psychotherapy in the new millennium can play a greater role in promoting social change by designing interventions that enable communities to take control over environmental factors that impede individual development and growth. One area in which this is already happening is in the treatment of victims of child abuse, sexual abuse and domestic violence. As a rule, psychotherapies are shaped by the pathology that they must treat.

New Directions

In *The Social Control of Mental Illness*, Horowitz (1982) contended that each major style of therapy naturally emerges out of the nature of social relationships in a particular society.

Within communal social groups, the style of therapeutic control tends to absorb the individual into the collective life. He argues the one-to-one relationship between therapist and patient characteristic of modern therapies is rarely found in non-Western settings.

The notion that mental illness is a problem rooted in the personality of individuals is a recent conception. Modern individualistic styles of therapy have developed within the context of social and cultural changes that are a unique feature of modern Western Societies. Foucault (1976) places this shift in Europe during the latter part of the 18th Century. To be effective, new therapeutic

paradigms for this millennium must establish a focus that connects people directly in human and practical ways.

As indicated above, research suggests that mental illness is not a culture-free phenomenon. The tendency to label an individual mentally ill varies directly with the cultural distance between the observer and the actor and successful psychotherapy occurs within a narrow cultural space. As the cultural distance between therapists and patients increases, the conditions for cooperative change diminish. Psychotherapeutic relationships are only likely to emerge when therapist and patient share a common cultural space (Horowitz 1989). The providers of psychotherapy in contemporary American society usually come from a narrow cultural and social class base, and they enforce whatever is considered the standard of meaningful reality in their own group. There is a critical need to broaden the cultural-therapeutic base if American psychology is to become truly multi-cultural. It must develop communal models and social interventions if it is to address the needs of the oppressed, cultural minorities and the poor.

The key element in liberation psychology has been the absence of a practical therapeutic method of reconnecting people. An approach, which may address the gap between psychological vision and social actualization, is the prescription of community service as a therapeutic intervention. Our hypothesis is that community service if structured properly is healing because it fosters ontological experience.

Community Service As Therapeutic Intervention

The utility of service as a teaching tool is well documented in the literature. Combining service and learning in the field of education is again experiencing a resurgence after a decline of the community service movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The new initiative in service learning is promoted by the National Society of Internships and Experiential Education created under President Clinton's bill National Service Commission and AmeriCorps. The basic proposition for combining service and learning is that experience is the best teacher. The most comprehensive compilation of research on the benefits of service learning is *Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service* published by the

National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (1990). Our present focus is on the use of service as a therapeutic technique available to the therapist as an intervention in psychotherapy. The rationale for involving clients in community and public service as a therapeutic technique is similar to the rationale for combining service and learning.

1. Service provides new perspectives from which to analyze oneself and one's world critically.
2. Service offers an opportunity to immerse oneself in new situations that reveal and address unmet needs and face new challenges.
3. Service demands that the individual act on previously underutilized parts of themselves.
4. Service is a way to gain affirmation from others
5. Service also a way to work through social wounds and issues surrounding culture and race
6. Service reveals truths that are both joyful and disheartening
7. Finally, the greatest power of service is that it reveals that one is not powerless, that a contribution can be given and a difference can be made.

Other lines of research have for some time established the positive impact of service on ego development, self concept, individual and social adequacy, and psychological orientation to other people (Sprinthall 1974; Usher 1977; Robinson 1975). Service may also provide an opportunity for therapists to evaluate a patient's conflict areas. The therapist's leverage and impact might be greatly increased because he or she is working with first-hand material that manifests itself during the service experience. Patients may also learn how their behavior is viewed by others, how they create their own victimization, how they avoid decisions, how their behavior makes others feel, how their failures to wish, decide, choose, and will can create limitations. It allows the client to set concrete action-oriented goals which may increase the patient's sense of responsibility for individual change. It also may help clients confront the fact that life is sometimes unfair and unjust; that there is no escape from some of life's pain; and may help clients develop a sense of potency through social action. Yalom (1980) identifies this as a strong argument for

using service as a clinical strategy to liberate the clients' will and their sense of authority over their lives.

Community service may also be an excellent setting to analyze miscarried relationships. The great diversity of feedback that one gets during the service experience may be far more powerful and informative than sporadic feedback from other sources. In most psychotherapy systems, it is important to investigate that client's relationships with others. Through relationships, clients will display their interpersonal pathologies and thus enable the therapist to use this information. The service experience, if carefully structured to be therapeutic, may give that client an opportunity to try out new modes of relating. Real relationships with real people can be healing and meaningful. Our argument would be that one is altered by the service encounter. In fact, service has been used in Eastern spiritual traditions for many years to foster spiritual growth and development. Learning to extend oneself to others in an authentic, need-free fashion may assuage social alienation and transform the individual and his or her community. The following ode by the ancient Indian mystic Rabindranath Tagore captures this Eastern attitude:

I slept and dreamt that life was joy.

I awoke and saw that life was service.

I acted and behold service was joy!

The service experience alone however does not guarantee either significant learning or healing. The service experience must have built-in structured opportunities for the client to think about and process their experience with others. Purpose, planning, preparation, care and effort are some of the needed ingredients. This reflective component is probably most useful when it is intentional and continuous throughout the experience and provides opportunities for feedback from the therapist besides the people served and the program leaders. The therapist should stress engagement rather than exposure. Detailed, explicit and comprehensive personal and social objectives are essential.

Finally, the service process would have to be designed to be demanding not only intellectually but emotionally. Clients should be asked to think about difficult social problems, personal feelings and the helping experience. The therapist must be creative in supervising the experience and should strive to enhance interpersonal

skills, like sensitivity to others, and active engagement with responsibilities. The ongoing reflective discussions between therapist and client, we think, could build social, and multi-cultural perceptiveness and an ability to listen with an open mind both to the experience one is in and to others. The therapeutic goal would be to nurture a positive and empowered relationship with society and a greater existential awareness. It is therefore important not only for the therapist to provide a clear structure in the beginning of the therapeutic process but to allow clients to identify their own problems and to design their own service solution.

As mentioned earlier the psychology of the 21st Century, especially for cultural minorities, the poor and the oppressed, must address the pressing social issues these communities face. Ironically, using community service as a social intervention has been pioneered by the court system. Today, judges routinely assign community service hours as part of court alternative sentencing programs. Yet, very little analysis has taken place. One possible solution may be the use of community-intervention research methodologies, which may help psychologists design therapeutic techniques to address problems affecting disfranchised communities. This would mean moving research and the therapeutic encounter from the office or lab into a social milieu where real people deal with real problems and where the therapist and the client struggle for empowerment not only in the intrapsychic world but also empowerment in a genuine social sense.

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Strategies for Educators: A Six-Step Program

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ABSTRACT

New teachers often have little or no preparation for engaging in the teaching-learning process with African American students. Moreover, they have probably had even less training in issues specific to African American males. This article focuses on ways to enhance learning experiences of African American males through self-esteem. We begin by defining and describing elements of self-esteem and analyzing selected literature as it relates to the education of African American males. We then suggest specific educational strategies for African American males, although they are also appropriate for others. These suggestions can help prepare pre-service teachers for a type of diversity seldom addressed in traditional teacher education programs.

In the quest for excellence in education, educators have explored many factors that contribute to the quality of educational achievement among African American male students. Some assert that achievement can be improved with more financial resources. Others identify staff development and new methodologies that will meet the needs. Still others believe that poverty, racism and sexism diminish achievement, along with personal abilities and what is traditionally seen as intelligence. While all of the above seem to influence educational achievement in a myriad of complex and

interrelated ways, we believe that to improve educational achievement for all students, especially African American male children, approaches must incorporate specific strategies to foster positive self-esteem. In this article, we seek to add to the discourse that currently surrounds the educational attainment of African American males by exploring self-esteem as an integral factor in success. We begin with a brief discussion of the concept of self-esteem. We then focus on the impact of self-esteem on student performance while stressing the critical need for addressing issues of self-esteem in working with children in inner city schools, especially African American male students. We end the article by presenting practical classroom strategies for the teacher. The strategies are designed to increase self-esteem, mold positive attitudes and build confidence through classroom experiences for African American males.

SELF ESTEEM DEFINED

We use the framework presented by Kunjufu (2000) to discuss the notion of self-esteem: "Self-esteem is one of the most important possessions a person can have. We often hear people wishing they had a job, clothes, car, money, spouse or children, but seldom do you hear people talking about self-esteem and feeling good about themselves" (p. 17). Discussing self-esteem in terms of ownership is especially important in the context of African American children, males in particular. One of the legacies of slavery in America is the presence of a large population of individuals historically socialized not to be owners, but to be owned. Self-ownership in the context of education becomes important to developing the African American child. Bandura (1984) defined self-esteem as a construct through which a person demonstrates feelings concerning his or her self-respect, self-acceptance, personal worth, competence, strength, achievement, adequacy, identity, independence, prestige, status, recognition, dignity, and appreciation among others. Reasoner (1982) encompassed the various feelings into five characteristics of self-esteem (security, identity, belonging, purpose and personal competence). A sense of ownership is embedded in all characteristics.

Heath and McLaughlin's (1993) work in troubled neighborhoods in three major metropolitan areas of the United States revealed puzzling cases of successful children whose home and

community lives should have foretold disaster but who had somehow survived, who had not been destroyed by their environments. Subsequent work by Bean (1992b) extended the work of Heath and McLaughlin by exploring student resiliency through the concept of self-esteem. Self-esteem then is defined not only as the way people feel about themselves, but also as one's level of personal satisfaction and well being. These are three intricately linked components. Feeling good about oneself is to some degree being satisfied with oneself. Satisfaction is the result of the child having done enough of the things that fulfill their needs and wants.

As with all feelings and beliefs, self-esteem exists in the subconscious; it is an abstraction through which educators must synthesize meaning. Of most importance to educators is the notion that the things children do (behavior) or say (reflection of thinking) are expressions of self-esteem. Bean (1992 b) argued that self-esteem, though an unconscious construct, affects everything one does especially when emotions are involved. The relationship of self-esteem to these emotions is presented in his model of the conditions of self-esteem. There are four senses that contribute to building high, healthy, self-esteem (Table 1). Raising self-esteem involves helping children who have difficulty with one or more of these four feelings to experience them more often and more intensely.

Self-Esteem, Behavior and Academic Achievement. Studies support the notion that a student's self esteem is revealed through his or her behavior (Luster and McAdoo 1995, Myers 1998, Smith 1999; Washington and Lee 1982). While it is not clear which factor is most influential, it is clear that they have a strong positive correlation. Experience teaches us that self-esteem affects academic achievement, participation in class and other activities, and completion of school, among other student behaviors, and that academic achievement, participation in class and other activities, and completion of school affect self-esteem. Students who believe that they can achieve exhibit high self-esteem by trying and usually succeeding. In contrast, students with low self-esteem usually exhibit low achievement and students with low achievement usually exhibit low self-esteem. They think, "Why attempt if I am going to fail anyway?" As stated earlier, Bean also tied self-esteem to feeling satisfied, and suggested that people do things to make themselves

Table 1. Senses of Self Esteem

Sense	Connectiveness	Uniqueness	Power	Models
Definition	satisfaction from the people, places or things to which children feel connected.	Acknowledgement & respect for the qualities & characteristics about self that are special and different	the competence to do what they must resources required to effectively express competence opportunity to use competence to influence important life circumstances	human, philosophical, & operational models to help make sense of the world used to set personal goals, values, standards, & ideals
Children with a high sense feel:	they are a part of something related in important ways to specific people, places, or things identify with a group of people they belong to something or someone they are important to others	there is something special about them they know things or can do things that no one else knows / can do that other people think they are special are able to express themselves in their own unique way	they can do what they set out to do confident they can handle, one way or another, what is put before them to do, including things that might be risky or challenging they are in charge of their own lives, overall, despite having to depend on others some of the time comfortable when they have a responsibility to fulfill others can't make them do things they don't really want to do	they know people they feel are worthy of being emulated confident that they can tell right from wrong and good from bad consistent values and beliefs guiding and directing their actions in different situations. can depend on prior experiences to help them avoid being intimidated by new ones a sense of purpose and know, more or less, where they are headed

Adapted From "The Four Conditions of Self-esteem: A New Approach for Elementary & Middle Schools" (Beane 1992:29-35).

feel good when given the opportunity. Children who anticipate doing well on an important test are more likely to take time from fun activities such as playing or watching TV to study. They change their behavior because they anticipate that by studying they will do well on the test, thus experiencing a high degree of satisfaction with themselves — a feel-good experience (1992b:15-16).

Academic standardized tests contribute to the development of low self-concept/self-esteem. This is no surprise if one examines the development of academic standardized tests. The testing for academic admissions began in the 1920s, when the College Board hired psychologist Carl Campbell Brigham to develop standardized testing. Brigham considered the arrival of Blacks to the U.S. as the most sinister development in the history of this continent (Brigham 1923, Leman 1999). He further believed that the weakened state of the white race was a direct consequence of the abolition of slavery, that Blacks should be stopped from mixing freely with Caucasian people, and that intelligence testing would serve as one instrument for establishing and maintaining that barrier. Leman (1999) demonstrated that the use of standardized achievement tests has served as a barrier for many qualified ethnic minorities. Low achievement scores have a direct and negative impact on self-concept and since high academic achievement is valued by most, such scores would have a direct and negative impact on self-esteem.

In response, there has been a variety of research focused on enhancing achievement through building self-esteem. Many of these programs have involved urban youth, educationally disadvantaged youth and youth traditionally known as “at risk” (Sparks and Stinson 1991).

Poverty, discrimination and racism are other important variables that have an impact on the academic achievement of minorities and, thus, their self-esteem. This combination of poverty and discrimination compromises the development of study habits and the acquisition of knowledge, and serves as the reason for academic underachievement among minority students, according to Cervantes (1988). Racism has caused some to assert that minorities are socially and intellectually inferior to Euro-Americans (Herrnstein and Murray 1994). Thus, the poverty, discrimination and racism that minority students experience in the U.S. contribute significantly to academic

underachievement by affecting self-concept, spawning stress in their lives and limiting academic success.

Suggesting that black young people are in general at risk, Abasto and Abasto (1991) noted that this is due to a number of factors. They describe the black youth's dilemma as follows:

First of all, Black youth who are having problems lack a sense of connectedness to other people, the society and history. They do not see a place or purpose for themselves in the world that seems inviting, challenging and attainable. Their lives are unstable due to poverty. Their communities are often filled with drugs. The images they see are often either ones with which they don't want to identify or that influence them to behave self-destructively (p. 17).

Price (1992) stated that "Millions of Americans, a disproportionate number of them minorities, are going backward, losing hope, finding it increasingly difficult to share in the American dream (p. 212)." Jones and Watson (1990) pointed out that a number of causal variables interact to increase attrition and risk among particular demographic and socioeconomic populations:

Schools are an umbrella system or organization from which discrimination and differential treatment are often meted out. Subtle forms of discrimination can serve to undermine student's self-esteem and ultimately facilitate attrition. As a result of the social stratification in society, teachers and administrators may inherit a reality that creates an aversion to high-risk, low-income and minority students. This internalization is then reflected in their attitudes and behaviors toward those students. . . . Such negative behaviors can lead to low aspirations and low self-esteem. And low self-esteem can in time cause students to cooperate with systemic forces and participate in various forms of antisocial behavior (p. 2).

Abasto and Abasto (1991) pointed out that young black people also lack a sense of power as well as uniqueness. They feel invisible and powerless, rather than feeling that they can have some impact on the world.

African American Males and Self-Esteem. Currently African American males suffer inequalities in almost every sector of society, disproportionately facing social, economic and political challenges (Booker 2000). Inequalities are displayed in the extreme ranges of representation in society. In marginal sectors of society, such as prison, African American males are over represented, but they are under represented in mainstream sectors such as higher education and political office.

The mass media are the largest source of knowledge for society (Kunjufu 2000). The images presented by the popular media impede the day-to-day work being done to build high self-esteem. They deprive young males of the senses that are essential for healthy self-esteem, especially the sense of models. By presenting unrealistic and damaging images, popular media deliver crushing blows to young African American males daily. African American males are often presented as either thugs or heroes, both dangerous to the building of high healthy self-esteem. The thug is a younger man under educated, violent in behavior, addicted to a variety of social ills including alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. His days are filled existing in a perpetual haze of forgetting his current reality. The hero is a sports figure, wedded to his game. His days are lived in a spotlight, every movement scrutinized for mistakes, every interview carefully scanned for enunciation and diction. The lack of positive realistic social options creates empty identity pockets for young African American males. In the space of this emptiness the self-esteem of young African American males is negatively affected, ultimately resulting in a lack of self-knowledge, self-love and self-esteem. Myers, Bastien, and Miles (1992) wrote:

Self-knowledge being the basis of all knowledge, the unconditional positive regard for the natural order must begin within and be generated outwardly, manifesting at a critical point in terms of interpersonal relations among people. Self-love as the basis of all love starts within and moves outward in phases of the most similar to most dissimilar (p. 12).

The lack of positive role models and realistic life choices in the current social reality affect the self-concept and self-esteem of the child and ultimately the child's behavior. When children cannot find

a way to feel good, they will try to feel less bad (Bean 1992b). Studies show that the social self-esteem of African American males is much higher in relation to the academic self-esteem, suggesting that students may try to build the social self-esteem as a way to counter the lower academic self-esteem (White-Johnson 2001). However, work in this area also suggests that increased attention to the social can be detrimental if it contributes to neglecting the academic by pushing it further and further away and increasing the risk of failure.

In 1993, the Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males conducted hearings in several cities with large African American populations. During the hearings school officials repeatedly reported the underachievement of African American male students and noted the high drop-out rate (Smith and Pernel 1994). The drop-out problem begins early in the educational process and the rate for minority students is substantially higher than for others. Among other symptoms of educational risks, Thornburg, Hoffman and Remeika (1991) pinpointed the high dropout rate for Blacks and other minority youth. Nearly twice as many Black and Hispanic students as Euro-American students drop out before completing high school (National Center for Education Statistics 1997). In a discussion on African American males and schooling, Kunjufu (1989) pointed out that the critical time in the educational experience of a young African American males is as early as age nine.

All too often, young African American males who do not drop out are educationally marginalized. African American males are most likely to be punished for behavior problems, most likely to be labeled as behavioral disordered or emotionally handicapped, sorted into special education courses and given out of school suspensions (Duncan 2000; Smith 2000; Weinstein 1991). In Milwaukee in 1998 African American males made up only 26 percent of the school population but 94 percent of the expelled population. The figures prompted a citywide initiative to address the negative educational experiences encountered by many of the African American males in the city (Span 2000). Unfortunately, the actions of Milwaukee are not the norm for the rest of the nation. Studies continue to address what seems like a mass exodus from academe by African American males. This may be interpreted as an action against schooling as an agent of social reproduction. Polite (2000) found that African

American males' resistance to schooling was often linked to the feelings of alienation by school staff:

Not all, but far too many teachers demonstrated little or no care for the African American males at MHS. A few teachers, particularly some in the school's business department, informed me that they experienced very different, positive relationships with the African American male students. However, increased social distancing between the teachers and students at MHS was an identifiable factor associated with the patterns of schooling avoidance and the poor overall educational outcomes for the school's African American males. The majority of these students reacted by ceasing to care about school or school personnel, becoming disruptive and putting forth very little energy in the area of academics. Their reactions contributed to making the school climate a chaotic one (p. 207).

Other studies point out that attitudes of school personnel contribute to further this alienation (Lee 1991). White-Johnson (2001) asserted that many minority students, feeling the effects of social isolation and segregation, believe they are out of place in school.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Price (1992) concluded that the issue is not whether to boost self-esteem, but how and towards what end. As we look at strategies that teachers can use to help improve the self-esteem of their students we must address the topic of teacher self-esteem. This is a must, since children's relationships with their teachers are intense, ongoing and have emotional consequences. In addressing strategies to enhance the self-esteem of students, Beane and Lipka warned that we must first identify which component part of the broader area, self-perception, needs attention and always be sensitive to the dangers of inferring self-esteem on the basis of values held by anyone other than the learner. They noted that when we simply tell a gang leader that he ought to feel good about himself, we may be reinforcing anti-social values. In other words, for some children we need to help them clarify their self-concept, while with others, we may need help to re-evaluate their value-base, as we work to improve self-esteem.

Strategy 1: Develop Personal Esteem. “Sometimes it is difficult for us to really get to know ourselves. Why? Because the process of mentally looking closely at yourself — called introspection — requires some quiet concentration and a lot of honesty. Yet, in order to determine what direction you want your life to take, you need to know your likes, dislikes, skills, strengths, weaknesses, and values” (Johnson 1992:3)

Teachers who do not feel good about themselves and are not satisfied are not prone to be helpful in developing high self-esteem in their students. Teachers who are comfortable with themselves and view what they are doing as worthwhile tend to be more accepting, warm, fair and non-judgmental with their students. They create an environment of acceptance, listen empathetically, build trust and promote warm relationships that lead to high student achievement. Do whatever you can to maintain or build your own self-esteem, such as forming a teacher support group, furthering your education through professional development, or developing a hobby.

Strategy 2: Construct a Culturally Relevant and Nurturing Environment. A teacher who is committed to enhancing student self-esteem should look at the climate of his/her classroom because it is in this space that the child has the most experiences while in school. The level of cooperation, the tone and the humanitarian spirit among other factors will affect the child’s self-esteem.

Bean (1992a) added that teaching methods, instructional styles, communication patterns and activity selections are influenced to a considerable degree by the teacher’s beliefs, values, personality, prior experience and feelings of comfort and satisfaction. Teachers’ awareness of their own styles and the effects of these styles will give them information about how they influence the climate in their classrooms. Wise teachers will assess their styles and develop strategies that combine classroom practices which make them comfortable with good, effective teaching methods. The bottom line, however, is that teachers must keep in mind that classroom climate is affected by their own conditions of self-esteem.

In thinking about classroom management as respectful discipline, the following techniques create an environment that maintains a high level of respect for students:

- Discipline the child in private; do not humiliate a child in front of the class

- Let the child know that he/she made a poor decision, not that he/she is a bad person.
- Whenever possible, let the consequences be known ahead of time.
- Make sure that the consequences are appropriate to the child's poor decision.
- Maintain consistency in discipline, so that the child knows what to expect.

Strategy 3: Understand Cultural and Ethnic Heritage. The cultural and ethnic heritage is extremely important in fostering self-esteem for young African American males. Due in large part to degrading popular representations of African American culture and heritage through the one-dimensional lens of various performers and hip hop culture, one would believe that African American culture and ethnic heritage can be condensed into superficial behavioral fads. Knowledge of the numerous perspectives and dimensions that encapsulate the African American culture and the Diaspora of the African ethnic experience over time is a self-esteem builder. The student is able to build an identity based on history, a variety of stories, experiences and knowledge that are unique and realistic to him. He can see himself connected to a people, not just the product of slavery. He understands that he has roots.

Specific to the African American cultural heritage is the purposeful inclusion of the perspectives of native-born African Americans in U.S. history, the contributions of African ethnic immigrants to African American culture, world geography, and history centered on the relationship between Africa and the various world African ethnic identities. Strategies may include structure based on various commonalities between African American and African cultures such as enhanced oral communication, building social skills, and learning how to build community. Children with low connectiveness benefit from relating to others. They develop a world view that links them to the African Diaspora. Self in this instance includes all of the ancestors, the yet unborn, all of nature and the entire community" (Kunjufu 2000:10).

Strategy 4: Establish personal ties with students. Effective teachers know their students; they establish and maintain personal

ties with their students. In a recent presentation on African American males and self-esteem, Smith (2000) discussed the concept of connectedness and its importance for action. People define themselves, think and act, according to the most important connections.

To get to know your students, have them write out on cards some biographical information that describes them but does not make it too obvious who they are. Include such things as hobbies, talents, major trips they have taken and so on. Collect the cards and read them while the class attempts to guess who is being described. Use them later to refresh your knowledge of personal attributes of the students, remember their birthdays, etc.

Strategy 5: Enhance Values and Value-indicators. Beane and Lipka (1986) suggested that we cannot speak of enhancing self-esteem without realizing that we must also enhance values or value-indicators. Values have to do with beliefs, aspirations and interests, and self-analysis of lifestyle. Value indicators are ways that teachers can observe the value construct. Research in this area advocates the following:

- Help clarify values or value indicators.
- Encourage the development of values.
- Promote the process of valuing through encouraging consideration of alternatives and consequences of choices, promote analysis of lifestyles to determine if values are being carried out, and offer opportunities to act on the basis of values held.
- Help individuals examine the sources of and influences on personal values or value-indicators.

Further, Bean (1992a) noted that teachers must realize what factors they can control. These include rules, standards and expectations. The degree of control over these factors may be influenced by the structure of the school and its relationship to the community.

Strategy 6: Enrich and Broaden the Curriculum. Include relevant activities as curriculum supplement. Relevance in curriculum rests on the assumption that there are specific types of learning processes particular to African American students. Willis (1992) provided an overview of the diversity in these processes, but asserts the

underlying assumption that African Americans are influenced by the African heritage and culture. Shade (1992) suggested that African American students lean towards processing information in ways that are more perceptual, that is based on visual transformation of information through cultural foundations. We do not advocate stereotyping students based on cultural characteristics as we know individual differences far outweigh cultural similarities; however, when planning curriculum activities for African American students, especially males, the cultural component becomes salient. Specific strategies include

- using community resources and extend the web of cooperation to the home and community as much as possible;
- including relevant activities as curriculum supplement;
- promoting parent/classroom interaction;
- allowing students to teach you and each other by building on existing strengths;
- incorporating peer-tutoring and cross-age tutoring;
- using praise to describe the accomplishment rather than the person; i.e., accomplishments should not be the measure of a student's worth;
- pairing of students who are competent in a given area with students who are having trouble with that area and letting them help each other. One who teaches also learns. This can be especially effective in reducing prejudice and building confidence for both parties.

CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to increase understanding of self-esteem and how it affects academic achievement and general success of young people. Attention is placed on minority, low-income and high-risk children. The primary purpose, however, is to strongly recommend that professional development be designed, implemented and continued to help teachers develop expertise in working with

minority students, especially African American males. We believe the rate of achievement can be increased significantly if we focus positively on self-esteem and that doing this will lead to a more self-actualized society.

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Patterns of Problem Drinking Among Employed African American Men: Preliminary Results from a National Survey

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ABSTRACT

Existing surveys of African-American drinking patterns have not adequately differentiated those social structural and cultural variables that may account for intra-group differences in alcohol consumption patterns. In this report we provide a brief overview of the existing literature and develop logic to support a more comprehensive modeling of blacks' drinking behaviors that explores the influences of several social structural and cultural variables hypothesized to either place African Americans at risk for, or protect against, maladaptive drinking. Using data obtained from a subsample of 826 employed African American men drawn from a recent survey of

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African American workers we broadly establish the theoretical utility of a model of drinking behaviors that focuses on a series of empirically verified race-specific risks and protections that partially account for blacks' intra-group variation in drinking patterns and outcomes. This model provides a more nuanced and much-needed alternative to the "Social Disorganization Paradigm" that has too long dominated the sociological discourse on race and drinking behaviors.

According to some commentators, alcohol abuse is the number one health and social problem in the Black community (Williams 1982; Harper 1976). Alcohol researchers, however, have largely ignored patterns of drinking in this population. As Harper and Dawkins (1976) point out in their frequently cited review of over 16,000 alcohol-related studies published between the 1940s and the 1970s, only 77, or approximately 5 percent, dealt with African-Americans' drinking, and only 11 studies dealt exclusively with members of this population (Harper and Dawkins 1976). The reasons for this omission emphasize African Americans' relatively small proportional representation in the U.S. population, (Caetano 1984; Herd 1985). Specifically, two factors have combined to limit studies of African American drinking: (1) the difficulty in recruiting African American respondents on other than an availability basis; and (2) the statistical fact that there are often too few African American respondents in national samples to develop reliable estimates (Martin 2000).

Recently, however, scholarly attention to African Americans' patterns of alcohol consumption has increased (Jones-Webb 1998; Martin 2000). The efforts of researchers involved in analyzing data from the African American over-sample from the 1984 National Alcohol Survey (NAS), and the Epidemiological Catchment Area Surveys (ECA), have significantly increased our understanding of drinking patterns and, in particular, the prevalence of problem drinking behaviors in the African American population (Herd 1985, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1994a; Herd and Grube 1993, 1996; Clark and Hilton 1991; Robins 1985). This literature remains deficient, however, in at least one important regard. The existing surveys of African-American drinking patterns have not adequately differentiated those social structural and cultural variables that

distinguish sub-groups within the African American population. In other words, the existing research has not sufficiently considered intra-group differences in African American drinking (Fernandez-Pol, Bluestone, Missouri, Morales, and Mizruchi 1986; Martin 2000).

Below we provide a brief overview of the existing literature and develop logic to support a more comprehensive modeling of Blacks' drinking behaviors. We then examine data obtained from a recent survey of African American workers to explore the influences of the social structural and cultural variables that comprise this model as they operate to either place African Americans at risk for, or protect against, maladaptive drinking.

RACE AND ALCOHOL USE

Existing Data and the Dominant Theoretical Model. Studies of American drinking behaviors and attitudes that have used adequate national or regional probability samples with sufficient numbers of African Americans to produce reliable estimates have documented remarkably similar overall alcohol consumption patterns for African Americans and whites (Harper and Saifnoorian 1991; Martin 2000). Aggregate level similarities in DSM-III assessments of lifetime or current alcohol disorder and alcohol symptoms among African Americans and whites have also been documented (Robins 1985). For example, aggregate prevalence estimates from the 1984 NAS indicate that similar numbers of African American and White men (29 percent versus 24 percent respectively) report abstaining from alcohol use (Herd 1991; 1990). Additionally, the proportions of African American men who could be classified as infrequent, less frequent, or more frequent drinkers were not significantly different from the proportions of White men in these categories, although whites were somewhat more likely to be considered heavy drinkers (Herd 1991: 310).

Aggregate level data comparing African American and White drinking patterns, while informative, nonetheless conceal several important differences in African-American drinking practices. Perhaps the best example of these differences is found in the drinking patterns of African American women. Compared to their White counterparts, African-American women are more likely to abstain,

less likely to be frequent or heavy drinkers, and less likely to develop problems with their drinking (Herd 1991). Similarly, many of the commonly held associations between socio-demographic attributes and drinking do not apply, or are in some cases reversed, among African Americans (Caetano 1984; Caetano and Herd 1984; Herd 1990; Robins 1985; Warheit, Auth, and Black 1985). Notable in this regard are the relationships between drinking, age and socioeconomic status. Counter to patterns observed in the White population, among African Americans, drinking and drinking problems are inversely related to income level, and positively related to age (Caetano 1984; Herd 1990; Robins 1985). Finally, recent data indicate that aggregate level estimates mask the tendency for African Americans to disproportionately experience negative consequences associated with heavier drinking (Herd 1994a).

While there has been some movement toward developing an understanding of variation in drinking practices within the African American population (Fernandez et al. 1986; Gaines 1985; Herd 1987 1994b; Herd and Grube 1996), most conventional analyses of these behaviors continue to treat African Americans as a homogeneous group. This is to say, African American drinking has tended to be viewed as a characteristic response to more-or-less uniform negative social and economic experiences. For the most part, this literature has assumed that as a result of common norms, values and experiences, African Americans demonstrate uniform behavior (Gaines 1985). The result of having ignored intra-group variation among African Americans is a paucity of reliable data on class, familial, religious or regional differences in drinking patterns. Lacking such data, there is a tendency to assume that such differences do not exist. This untested assumption of uniformity amounts to little more than a sophisticated form of stereotyping, and by underestimating the variability of behaviors among African Americans, it ultimately leads to an overestimation of the contribution of race to drinking patterns.

The Need for an Alternative Model of African American Drinking Behaviors. The findings of systematic variation in the drinking patterns of African Americans noted previously raise the question as to what factors other than race, account for these differences. These findings also seriously question earlier approaches

that treated African American drinking patterns as monolithic. However, the paucity of research on African American drinking has led to the emergence of several popular myths, stereotypes and unicausal "folk theories" on African American drinking (Benjamin and Benjamin 1981; Gaines 1985; Warheit, et al. 1985). The reliance on such paradigms is particularly distressing in view of the otherwise widespread belief among alcohol researchers that alcohol use and abuse and its correlates are extremely complex phenomena that defy simplistic explanation.

Perhaps the most popular of the unicausal folk theories is the social disorganization perspective. As Herd (1987) points out, alcohol researchers often invoke a social disorganization perspective to explain African American drinking behavior. For the most part, a social disorganization explanation of African American drinking practices tends to blame African Americans for their problematic or maladaptive use of alcohol. This perspective focuses on the role of intra-psychic deficiencies that presumably reflect a "cultural inferiority" (relative to the dominant White culture) that characterizes the African American community. As a result of various features labeled as social ills that have plagued the African American community (i.e., matriarchal family structure, high rates of crime and delinquency, weak attachment to jobs, etc) , African Americans are seen as having internalized personality attributes and lifestyle orientations tolerant of drinking and drunkenness (Herd 1987).

The current study begins with the recognition that the vast majority of adult African Americans are integral participants in "mainstream" American social structure, most notably through their employment statuses. However, the disproportionate representation of African Americans among the unemployed (not working but looking for work) and the non-employed (not working and not looking for work), has subtly encouraged researchers to employ social disorganization and like paradigms in accounting for drinking patterns and associated behaviors. The broader research literature, however, has demonstrated the importance of social integration in explaining both problem drinking and buffers against such behavior. It is thus important to include integrative experiences in any attempt to explain African Americans' drinking behavior, and employment is well-established as a major "hub" of social integration at both the personal

and social level. The overarching concern of the study proposed here is to generate a more complex theoretical modeling of African American drinking that incorporates a series of social structural and cultural risk and protective factors that should account for intra-group variation in drinking patterns.

Risk and Protective Factors. In recent years a substantial literature has developed in an attempt to identify various situational and psychosocial factors that place an individual at increased risk for problem drinking (Kumpfer 1984). This literature, however, has tended to ignore race-specific differences in risks. The model proposed for the current study takes as its starting point the assertion that historically and contemporarily the status of African Americans has exposed members of this population to unique stressors that elevate the risk for alcohol problems. In particular, African Americans have been the victims of stress producing race-based prejudices, biases and discriminatory practices that have also relegated large numbers of blacks to segregated and marginal positions in both the economy and the larger social structure.

Prejudice and Discrimination as Risk Factors. Despite evidence of liberalizing trends in whites' racial attitudes (Tuch and Martin 1997; Schumann, Steeh, Bobo, and Krysan 1997), race-based discrimination and anti-Black affect remain enduring features of American life such that substantial numbers of minority group members report personal experiences with various forms of racism and discrimination (Kessler, Michelson, and Williams, 1999; Yen, Ragland, Greiner, and Fischer 1999a; Sigelman and Welch 1991; Jaynes and Williams 1989; Kluegel and Smith 1986). By elevating levels of life stress and dissatisfaction (Takeuchi, Uehara, and Maramba 1999; Beatty and Tuch 1997), these personal experiences of unfair treatment can have adverse effects on mental health outcomes, including a reliance on alcohol (Bell 1982; Harper and Dawkins 1976; Harper 1979; Harper and Saifnoorian 1991; Primm and Wesley 1985). Recent studies have found that personal experiences with discriminatory behaviors are associated with elevated levels of psychological distress, depression, and anxiety (National Research Council 2001; Ren, Amick, and Williams 1999; Williams, Yu, Jackson, and Anderson 1997; Pak, Dion, and Dion 1991; Burke 1984), with a few studies finding direct effects of

discrimination on patterns of problem drinking (Yen, Ragland, Greiner, and Fisher 1999a, 1999b). Thus, discrimination experienced by African Americans is a stressor that places them at risk for the development of problem drinking patterns.

Economic and Occupational Outcomes of Discrimination as Risk Factors. Aside from the stressful psychological effects of perceptions of race bias and discriminatory practices, many African Americans experience a host of economic and occupational stressors that reflect their disadvantaged status in American society. For instance, the African American unemployment rate remains approximately twice that of Whites (Jaynes and Williams 1989; Farley 1984). Moreover, employed African Americans differ significantly from White workers with respect to a wide range of employment conditions and rewards. Relative to Whites, African American workers tend to be concentrated in low-paying and low-skilled occupations and have jobs that provide lower levels of non-material rewards (Tuch and Martin 1991). African American workers also are less likely to attain positions of authority within work organizations (Kluegel 1978); experience fewer intra-firm promotions (Sandefur 1981); are more often subject to bureaucratic rather than informal social control (Blum, Harwood, and Roman 1992); are more likely to be underemployed (Terry 1981); and realize lower economic and occupational returns to education (Stolzenberg 1975). Further, African Americans are over-represented in firms in the economic periphery where opportunities to develop human capital are limited (Beck, Horan, and Tolbert 1978), and experience greater job insecurity due to their greater likelihood of displacement during economic recessions (DiPrete 1981). Finally, affirmative action programs notwithstanding, African Americans continue to encounter discriminatory hiring practices (Feagin and Feagin 1986) and barriers to membership in industrial and trade unions (Bonacich 1976; Leigh 1978).

Considerably less clear is whether the stresses associated with these patterns of economic and occupational marginality place African American workers at risk for the development of alcohol problems. There appears to be ample theoretical and empirical support, however, for the general contention that economic stress places individuals at greater risk for the development of alcohol

problems. Studies have consistently shown that alcohol problems are more prevalent among the economically disadvantaged (Cahalan and Cisin 1968; Ojesjo 1980; Room 1977; Trice and Roman 1973); those experiencing economic strain (Pearlin and Radabaugh 1976; Seeman and Seeman 1992); and the unemployed (Catalano, Dooley, Wilson, and Hough 1993; Ojesjo 1980; Smart 1979). Particularly relevant to this last point, a recent analysis of the effects of unemployment on drinking problems found being unemployed placed African American men at significantly higher risk for negative drinking consequences (Herd 1994a). Similarly, the concentration of alcohol problems among members of lower socioeconomic groups also seems to apply to members of the African American population (Herd 1985). Finally, although not specific to African Americans, there is evidence that the threat of job loss is associated with health-related outcomes (Catalano and Serxer 1992; Catalano, Rook, and Dooley 1986), including alcohol consumption and instrumental drinking (Steffy and Laker 1991).

Similar to economic stress, a growing body of literature indicates that various forms of problem drinking are at least modestly affected by the pressures of job demands that exceed individual stress thresholds. Drinking outcomes have also been related to the estrangement from the social matrix experienced by workers who find their jobs to be non-rewarding and unchallenging (Martin 1990). Stressful dimensions of work related to employee drinking behaviors include low levels of pay and fringe benefits (Martin, Blum, and Roman 1992); unfair promotion opportunities (Fennell, Rodin, and Kantor 1981); low levels of job complexity (Parker and Brody 1982; Parker and Farmer 1988); low levels of decision latitude (Bromet, Dew, Parkinson, and Schulberg 1988) and low levels of job satisfaction (Martin and Roman, 1996)

Thus, to the extent that African American workers as a group are likely to experience a variety of stressors related to marginal economic and occupational statuses, we expect that reports of alcohol problem behaviors and outcomes will be higher among African American workers who report high levels of economic strain, who are at the lower brackets of household income and who perceive their jobs to be unrewarding, unchallenging, and/or stressful.

Race, Stress, and Drinking Motives. The perspective on African American workers' problem drinking developed to this point

suggests that stress associated with perceptions of prejudice/discrimination and economic/occupational marginality affect African American workers' alcohol consumption patterns directly. While direct effects of these structurally-based risks are expected, recent studies provide evidence that the linkage between chronic stress and drinking is more complex than a simple direct effects model (Martin, Roman, and Blum 1996; Martin, et al. 1992; Harris and Fennell 1988). In particular, there is evidence that elevated levels of stress also indirectly influence alcohol consumption patterns by conditioning intra-psychic dispositions. Specifically, one result of perceived and/or experienced disadvantage may be to condition individual definitions of alcohol use as an effective coping mechanism. Such individual definitions/reasons for drinking when motivated by an attempt to modify or alleviate unpleasant affect are typically characterized as "escapist" and may reflect attempts at self-medication (Martin, et al. 1992). More important, escapist reasons for drinking have been found to interact with levels of consumption and ultimately increase the probability of alcohol abuse (Donovan and Marlatt 1982; Farber, Khavari, and Douglass 1980). There are several reasons to examine escapist motives for drinking as a risk factor in the current study. Previous research has found high rates of escape or personal effects drinking among members of ethnic and racial minority groups (Cahalan and Cisin 1968; Cahalan, Cisin and Crossley 1969; Neff 1991), particularly among African American men (Williams, Takeuchi, and Adair 1992). More important, there is evidence that escapist coping styles may be more common when the individual perceives that he or she has little or no control over outcomes (Folkman 1984). Thus, insofar as African Americans have little control over their sources of stress (i.e., racial biases, discrimination, and marginality), escapist drinking may become more likely (Huselid and Cooper 1992).

Thus far we have considered the influences of three classes of alcohol risk factors. It is important to note, however, that while there is good reason to expect that race-specific stressors place African American workers at increased risk for the development of alcohol problems, it is also likely that there are unique protections available in the African American community that can mitigate against the development of these problems. In particular, there is at least cursory

evidence that having a strong sense of racial group identification, and/or involvement in African American religious life, are two protective factors that mitigate against problem drinking and make the development of escapist drinking motivations less likely.

Racial Group Identification. With one notable exception (Herd and Grube 1996), the potential influence of racial group identification on the drinking patterns of African Americans has not been the subject of a systematic inquiry. For the most part the literature on racial group identification among African Americans focuses on the feelings that some African Americans have about being Black, on their sense of group commitment and cohesion, and on their perceived location in the social structure (Broman, Neighbors, and Jackson 1988; Demo and Hughes 1990; Porter and Washington 1979). Most commonly, this literature has sought to identify the sociodemographic correlates of racial identification (Demo and Hughes 1990; Broman, et al. 1988; and Sanders and Vetra 1993). Thus, studies of African American group identity have identified several features of the experience of being Black in American society that might affect the intensity of racial group identification. Less frequently, however, the racial group identification dimension has been related to behavioral and attitudinal outcomes, with the majority of these treatments examining either political participation (Ellison and London 1992; Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk 1981) or feelings of personal efficacy (Hughes and Demo 1989; Gurin and Epps 1975). There is, however, recent evidence that racial identification is related to the drinking patterns of African Americans. For example there is documentation that African Americans with little or no sense of racial identity are more likely to abuse alcohol (Caution 1986; Gary and Berry 1986; Harper and Saifnoorian 1991). Additionally, racial identity has been found to be related to attitudes toward the use of alcohol, with African Americans who are more cognizant of racial issues being less tolerant of alcohol abuse (Gary and Berry 1986). Caution (1986) has also suggested that racial identification provides a protective device by fostering the development of values inconsistent with alcohol abuse. Finally, in the most directly relevant analysis to date, Herd and Grube (1996) provide clear evidence that the strength of Blacks' racial identification has important negative effects on drinking patterns. We expect, then,

that reports of alcohol problem behaviors and outcomes will be lower among African American workers who report a strong sense of racial identification.

Participation in the Black Church. Traditionally, the Black church has occupied a unique place in the lives of African Americans. Specifically, the Black church is argued to maintain cohesion in African American community by acting as an agency of moral guidance and conservator of African American political leadership; and being the organizational center of African American community life (Taylor and Chatters 1991; Jaynes and Williams 1989; Levin 1984; Frazier 1963). Moreover, as the African American population became increasingly urbanized in the early part of the twentieth century, the church functioned as a key linkage between rural migrants and their new urban locales. Over time, in fact, the role of the church in the lives of large numbers of African Americans has become increasingly secular, as evidenced, for instance, by the church's importance in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s (Morris 1984).

The church continues to assume a leadership role in many sectors of the African American community today. The continuing significance of religion in the lives of many African Americans is clearly underscored by recent work that portrays religion as an important coping mechanism for negotiating life's stresses (Taylor and Chatters 1991; Krause and Tran 1989; Neighbors, Jackson, Bowman, and Gurin 1988). As Taylor and Chatters (1991: 106) note, the traditionally escapist and "other-worldly" emphasis of many Black churches, particularly in the rural south, was "Black religion's remedy for the deleterious effects of pervasive discrimination and racism, and the resulting psychological alienation and demoralization...." In similar fashion, the role of religion in the lives of many African Americans persists today, making the church the most important social institution in the African American community.

Despite continuing interest in the role of the Black church, few empirical studies have been conducted on the insulating effects of Black religious experience (Taylor and Chatters 1991), including studies of religion's role as a factor mitigating against maladaptive behavior such as problem drinking. There are several reasons to expect that involvement with and commitment to the precepts of Black religious life will decrease alcohol abuse. To begin, there is

evidence that reliance on prayer and other religious means of coping is related to lower alcohol consumption and suppresses the development of escapist reasons for drinking (Stone, Lennox, and Neal 1985; Timmer, Veroff, and Colten 1985). Moreover, Krause and Tran (1989) report that, although high levels of personal stress among African Americans lead to declines in self-esteem and in feelings of personal efficacy, involvement in organized religion mitigates against these outcomes. Similarly, Chatters and Taylor (1989) found that prayer is an important coping mechanism, particularly for older African-Americans, in dealing with a variety of personal problems. Moreover, participation in the Black church at an early age has been found to function as an important personal control that helps determine exposure to drinking environments (Donovan and Jessor 1978). Finally, Herd (1994a 1994b) documents a pattern where religious involvement generally, and involvement in conservative Protestant denominations in particular, significantly reduce the probability that African-Americans will report problems related to their drinking, and also influence African-Americans' attitudes toward drinking, presumably an outcome of access to protective networks and resources.

Thus, the church is a continuing source of spiritual sustenance for many African-Americans. Many in the African-American community look to the church as a source of guidelines for moral behavior, and recent literature suggests the importance of locating change strategies within the religious sphere (Knox 1985; Levin 1984). We expect, then, that commitment to religious life will protect against or suppress African-Americans' instrumental drinking as a mechanism for coping with stress. We also expect that in the face of stresses associated with marginality and discrimination, the endorsement of escapist reasons for drinking will be lower when the individual is involved in the Black church.

Individual Attributes. The discussion to this point has sought to justify a perspective that examines the influences of various risk and protective processes on the problem drinking patterns of African American workers. It is important to note, however, this perspective does not assume that these influences operate completely independent of the background attributes of individual workers. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that several individual

attributes have important effects on problem drinking behaviors. For example, national data indicate that problem drinking patterns and outcomes are inversely related to education and age (Clark and Hilton 1991). Similarly, alcohol problems are known to be less common among married persons and rural residents (Clark and Hilton 1991). Thus, we will also examine the dispositional effects of schooling, age, marital status and place of residence on the drinking patterns of African-American workers.

To sum up, the current study of African American problem drinking seeks to account for intra-group variation in Black workers' drinking patterns by examining the influences of both alcohol-related risk and protective factors. Examining these relationships will provide a broad data base on the sources of, and protections against, alcohol problems among African Americans, and will fill a gap in our knowledge of the impact of African Americans' employment experiences on drinking behaviors. However, since we focus on these patterns in the 62 percent of the population of all African American adults who are currently employed, patterns identified here do not necessarily apply to the entire population of adult African Americans. Specifically, our analyses do not include African Americans not currently in the labor force (i.e., those individuals who have never worked, or who may have worked in the past but have been out of work for a year or more). Since work is a major integrating force in American society, the hypothesized links among risks, protective factors and alcohol problems may operate differently among African Americans who are out of the labor force.

DATA AND METHODS

Sampling. The current study of African American workers' drinking reports data from the male subsample ($n=826$) drawn from the first-wave of the 1998-2000 National Survey of Black Workers (NSBW). The NSBW reports data from a nationally representative cross-section of 2,638 employed African Americans. Eligible respondents are currently employed adults (eighteen years or older) drawn from the continental United States, and who reside in households with telephone access. Individuals who reside in institutional settings such as prisons and hospitals, those who are

not English-speaking and residents of households without telephone availability are not included in this survey. Data for wave 1 of the NSBW were collected by telephone interviews approximately 20-25 minutes in length conducted by the survey research centers at the University of Georgia, Kent State University and Indiana University. The overall response rate for this survey was 69.4 percent.

Sample elements for the cross-section of employed African American workers were selected by means of a race-targeted single-stage Random Digit Dial (RDD) technique. Single-stage RDDs permit a natural stratification of the sample by state, county, and area code (Frey 1989; Groves and Kahn 1979) and theoretically provide an equal probability of reaching all households in the nation with a telephone access line (i.e., a unique telephone number that rings in that household only), regardless of whether that phone number is published or unlisted (Lavrakas 1993). The current sampling design differs from traditional single-stage procedures in a major regard. Specifically, since African Americans represent only 10.9 percent, a relatively small proportion of the total population of households in the U.S. (U.S. Census 1991), it is inefficient to rely on a simple random sampling design. Instead the current sampling design for the African American cross-section utilized an RDD design that first correlates the probability of ethnic densities within census tracts to Central Office Codes (i.e., three digit dialing prefixes, COC). Utilizing this approach the current sample selected respondents from the 2,996 COCs where the proportion of African-American households was 30 percent or higher — approximately 60 percent of all directory listed African American households in the U.S. (Survey Sampling Incorporated 1993).

Measures of Drinking Patterns. The majority of drinking-related research has viewed the overall level of alcohol use as an indicator of the presence of alcohol problems (Martin, et al. 1992). The justification for this emphasis is straight forward; excessive levels of consumption place individuals at risk for events of impaired role performance, deviant acts, and/or the development of other alcohol-related problems. In the current study, overall consumption of alcohol is assessed by frequency and quantity of consumption (FQ), two standard items. First, respondents were asked how frequently they had a drink of beer, wine, or liquor in the past month (range: zero

days to daily), and second, respondents were asked how many drinks they consume in a typical drinking episode. The combination of responses to these two questions form the basis of the measure of overall monthly consumption.

Cross-sectional survey based measures of alcohol problems have also developed a number of disaggregate measures of problem drinking outcomes (American Psychological Association 1987; Clark and Hilton 1991; Grant, Harford, Hasin, Chou, and Pickering 1992; Smart, Adlaf, and Knoke 1991). The current analyses adopts four commonly employed measures/scales of alcohol problems: 1) a single-item maximum consumption (**MAX**) as a measure of heavier drinking; 2) the **CAGE** alcoholism screen for problem drinkers (**CAGE**); 3) a measure of job escape drinking (**JOB-RELATED**); and 4) a measure of more general personal effects drinking (**PERSONAL EFFECTS**).

We use a single-item, the maximum number of drinks consumed in a drinking episode in the last year (**MAX**) as an indicator of heavier drinking. The **CAGE** Alcoholism Screen is a commonly employed alcoholism screening instrument comprised of responses to four items: (1) have you ever felt that you should cut down on your drinking?; (2) have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?; (3) have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking?; and (4) have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover? Recent applications have found the **CAGE** to be a useful measure of the prevalence of alcohol problems in general population, correlating significantly with the frequency of drinking and the frequency of consuming five or more drinks (Smart et al. 1991: 595). Responses on each item are coded yes-no with respect to occurrence and summed to produce a composite measure of problem drinking with a score of two or more taken as an indication of potential problems with alcohol.

We include two measures of escapist drinking motives in our analyses of problem drinking. Job-related escape drinking is scaled as responses to items that ask if the respondent drinks to (1) relax after work; (2) relieve job tension; (3) forget problems at work; and (4) when there is pressure at work. A more general measure of personal effects drinking is measured by three items asking whether the respondent drinks to (1) feel more comfortable; (2) relax or "unwind" on the weekend; or (3) cheer up when depressed or sad.

Measures of Risk and Protective Factors. We examine the influences of several risk and protective factors on drinking patterns. Perceptions of *economic insecurity*, is scaled as responses to a series of items asking for the respondent's overall assessment of (1) household income and financial security; (2) whether household income is sufficient to meet monthly family expenses and needs; and (3) whether family income is sufficient to provide comfort. A second component of marginality is assessed with a series of items tapping perceptions of *job insecurity*, including (1) the likelihood that the respondent will lose his/her job in the near future; (2) how easily the respondent's employer could replace her/him; and (3) a direct question regarding the degree of security the respondent perceives in his/her current job.

The respondent's job-reward characteristics are measured with four scales tapping autonomy, complexity, and pressure. Job *autonomy* is scaled as responses to four items: (1) freedom to decide how job tasks are accomplished; (2) ability to make independent decisions; (3) ability to take part in decisions affecting the respondent; and (4) having "say" over what happens on the job. Job *complexity* is measured also by four items: (1) respondent's job requires a high degree of skill; (2) requires that she/he keeps learning new things; (3) requires him/her to be creative; and (4) requires the respondent to perform repetitive tasks (reverse coded). Job *pressure* is scaled as responses to five items: (1) respondent's job requires her/him to work fast; (2) respondent's job requires her/him to work hard; (3) respondent's job requires her/him to do excessive amounts of work; (4) respondent doesn't have enough time to complete tasks; and (5) respondent experiences conflicting demands at work. Overall *job satisfaction* is scaled as the composite of responses to five items: (1) how satisfied workers are at the present; (2) how well the respondent's job measures up to initial expectations; (3) whether the respondent anticipates looking for a new job within the next year; (4) whether the respondent would take the same job again; and (5) whether the respondent would recommend his/her job. Finally, a single-item ordinal measure of *income* is include as a measure of financial rewards.

Perceptions of Prejudice and Discrimination. While social researchers have a longstanding history of studies of racial discrimination and prejudice, surprisingly few studies have directly

assessed African-Americans' perceptions of, and experience with, discrimination. Therefore, there are only a few previously developed items tapping African-Americans' perceptions and experiences with discrimination, and even fewer to assess perception of race-based prejudices.

Studies that have addressed African-Americans perceptions and experience with discrimination typically focus on whether respondents report having been discriminated against in either hiring or employment conditions. Less frequently respondents are also asked about the extent of discrimination in housing and schooling. Using items such as these drawn from the General Social Surveys (GSS) and Quality of Employment Surveys (QES) we scale discrimination in two realms. Current **job discrimination** is scaled as the composite of responses to 4 items, and includes whether the respondent believes that on his/her current job: 1) blacks are treated badly at his/her job; 2) that she/he has been denied a promotion because of race; 3) that he/she was ever discriminated against in hiring; and 4) that he/she personally experienced discriminatory behaviors. Perceptions of more **general discrimination** and experiences are taken as the composite of responses to five items assessing whether the respondent has ever experienced discriminatory behaviors in: 1) school; 2) housing; 3) hiring; 4) promotions; or 5) firing. We also scale Black workers' perceptions of the extent of race-based **prejudice** in the U.S with three standard items that assess whether the respondent thinks: 1) that prejudice against African-Americans is widespread; 2) that prejudice against African-Americans has increased in recent years; and 3) that prejudice against African-Americans is likely to increase in the future.

Racial identification. Earlier treatments of racial identification have embodied a range of dimensions, the most common being a sense of connectedness or closeness to other African-Americans. Drawing on the work of Allen, Dawson and Brown (1989) and Herd and Grube (1996), we use four items to tap **racial identification**: 1) preference for African-American political candidates; 2) preference for African-American merchants; 3) how important is it to read African-American print media; and 4) how important is it for the respondent to participate in African American organizations. We also include a single item that assesses the overall *importance of Black*

culture in the respondent's life.

Participation in the Black Church. The measure of *religiosity* used in this study is a composite of six standard items: (1) how often the respondent reads religious materials; (2) how often the respondent watches religious programs on television; (3) how often the respondent prays; (4) how often the respondent asks others to pray for him/her; (5) how important the respondent believes it is for African-Americans to take their children to church; and (6) the respondent's self-reported religiosity. We also include a single item assessing the frequency of *church attendance*.

Control Variables. Finally we include measures of several background attributes found to have nontrivial effects on alcohol consumption. These include *age* (in years); *schooling* (in years); *gender*; *marital status*; and *place* of residence.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Analyses. Table 1 reports means, standard deviations, and ranges on all single and multi-item indicators. Internal consistency reliability coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) are displayed for all cumulative scales. These data indicate that our subsample of African American men are on average 37 years of age with a majority of respondents (64 percent) being unmarried, with a majority (62.5 percent) residing in urban or suburban places. More than 60 percent report having completed schooling beyond a high school diploma (data not shown) but 4 in 10 respondents (40.1 percent) report annual incomes of less than \$25,000. The sample also indicates relatively low monthly alcohol consumption, reporting having on average approximately seven drinks per month, with the greatest number of drinks consumed at any time in the past year being approximately 2 drinks.

Correlational Analyses. To explore the influences of various social structural and cultural risk and protective factors on the drinking patterns of African American workers we conducted a series of zero-order correlational analyses. These data are reported in Tables 2 thru 5 below.

Previous research has found that workers are at heightened risk for problem drinking behaviors when they perceive their jobs to

TABLE 1:
Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges and Internal Consistency
Reliabilities(Cronbach's Alpha) on items and scales for
Employed African American Men, 2000 NSBW (n=826)

	Mean	Std. Dev	Range	Alpha
Sociodemographics				
Age	37.09	12.82	18-96	
Schooling	3.86	1.22	0-7	
Married (1=yes)	0.36	0.48	0-1	
Rural (1=yes)	0.12	0.32	0-1	
Drinking Outcomes				
Frequency/Quantity (FQ)	6.96	26.23	0-483	
Maximum Quantity (MAX)	1.91	4.18	0-50	
Personal Effects	0.09	0.33	0-2	.69
Job-Related	0.15	0.57	0-4	.81
CAGE	0.40	0.77	0-4	.79
Job Rewards				
Autonomy	11.89	3.24	4-16	.74
Complexity	11.16	2.75	4-16	.65
Job Pressure	12.42	3.44	5-20	.75
Income	6.24	1.97	1-9	
Job Satisfaction	11.98	2.27	5-15	.74
Risk Factors				
Economic Insecurity	5.92	1.36	4-8	.67
Job Insecurity	5.73	2.36	3-12	.67
Perceptions of Prejudice	5.83	1.56	3-9	.68
General Discrimination	6.54	1.51	5-10	.67
Job Discrimination	4.82	1.13	4-8	.68
Protective Factors				
Racial Identification	10.08	2.87	4-16	.70
Imp. Of Black Culture	2.72	0.53	1-3	
Church Attendance	3.03	1.20	0-5	
Religiosity	19.29	2.91	6-24	.77

be unrewarding, unchallenging, and/or stressful. Table 2 provides estimates of the impact of these job-reward characteristics on the drinking patterns of African American workers. According to these

TABLE 2
Association of Job-Reward Factors with Drinking Outcomes for
Employed African American Men, 2000 NSBW (n=826)

Autonomy	-.001	-.038	-.021	-.075*	-.041
Complexity	.020	-.033	-.022	-.033	-.032
Job Pressure	.025	.043	.122**	.176**	.140**
Income	.009	-.025	-.027	-.031	-.152***
Job Satisfaction	-.063*	-.116***	-.115**	-.160***	-.133**

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .010$; * $p < .050$ (one-tailed tests)

data, taken alone only job satisfaction significantly impacts monthly consumption, and none of the job rewards emerge as significant correlates of maximum consumption. With regard to the three more problematic outcomes, however, a somewhat more complex pattern is evidenced. Specifically, as expected, personal effects drinking, job escape drinking, and problem drinking as assessed by the CAGE, are significantly higher at greater levels of reported job pressure and lower levels of job satisfaction. It should also be noted that higher levels of job autonomy and income have important negative influences on job-related and CAGE consumption drinking, respectively.

The exploratory model examined in the current study argues that African American workers are at heightened risk for the development of alcohol problems that result from race-based prejudices, biases and discriminatory practices that increase stress levels and that have relegated large numbers of these workers to segregated and marginal positions in the economy and the larger social structure. In Table 3 we assess the association of five race-specific risk factors with the alcohol outcomes. These data suggest several interesting findings. While unrelated to either monthly or maximum consumption, respondents who report higher levels of economic insecurity also score significantly higher on the measures indexing personal effects drinking, job-related

TABLE 3
Association of Risk Factors with Drinking Outcomes for Employed
African American Men, 2000 NSBW (n=826)

	FB	MAX	Personal Effects	Job Related	CAGE
Economic Insecurity	.018	.034	.136**	.158**	.166**
Job Insecurity	.087*	.093**	.004	.051	.075*
Perceptions of Prejudice	.049	.043	.064*	.115**	.170**
General Discrimination	.004	.010	.045	.125***	.065
Job Discrimination	-.010	.012	.010	.092**	.005

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .010$; * $p < .050$ (one-tailed tests)

drinking and problem drinking (CAGE), a pattern that is also evidenced among respondents who perceive higher levels of prejudice against African Americans. Respondents reporting higher job insecurity, on the other hand, do emerge as drinking significantly more per month and consuming significantly more drinks in their maximum drinking episode in the previous month. Job insecurity is also significantly related to problem drinking as assessed by the CAGE. It is also interesting to note that contrary to expectations, personal experiences with either general or job-related discriminatory behavior are significant correlates of only one of the five drinking outcomes — job-related escapist drinking.

The correlational analyses reported in Tables 2 and 3 broadly support the relationships between the risk factors outlined in our exploratory model of Black workers' drinking patterns. That model, however, also posits that there are unique protections available in the African American community that can reduce the likelihood of developing drinking problems. In particular, having a strong sense of racial group identification, and/or involvement in African American religious life, are two protective factors that are expected to reduce

the likelihood of problem drinking and make the development of instrumental drinking motivations less likely. We assess this possibility in Table 4.

Examination of the data in Table 4 indicates that each of the four hypothesized protective factors has at least some expected relationships with the alcohol outcomes. Most notable in this regard

TABLE 4
Association of Protective Factors with Drinking Outcomes for
Employed African American Men, 2000 NSBW (n=826)

	FB	MAX	Personal Effects	Job Related	CAGE
Racial Identification	-.089**	-.005	.051	-.007	-.010
Impact of Black Culture	-.111***	-.070*	-.042	-.085**	-.167**
Church Attendance	-.226***	-.169***	-.109***	-.123**	-.193***
Religiosity	-.239***	-.109**	-.144***	-.160***	-.015

***p<.001; **p<.010; *p<.050 (one-tailed tests)

are the negative influences of the church-related protections where 9 of 10 possible relationships are statistically significant. Also, respondents reporting more frequent church attendance reported significantly lower levels of monthly consumption, maximum consumption, personal effects drinking, job-related drinking and problem drinking behaviors. Similarly, respondents who score higher on the measure of religiosity report significantly lower monthly consumption, maximum consumption, personal effects drinking and job-related drinking.

A somewhat more complex pattern is evidenced in the relationships of the two measures of racial identification to the alcohol outcomes. To begin, both overall racial identification and the respondent's report of the importance of Black culture have a statistically significant negative association with total monthly consumption. Respondents who report a greater importance of Black

culture in their lives also report significantly lower levels of maximum consumption, job-related drinking, and problem drinking as indexed by the CAGE.

The final set of associations explored in this research, the relationships between sociodemographic attributes and alcohol outcomes are displayed in Table 5. According to these data, with the

TABLE 5
Association of Sociodemographic Attributes with Drinking Outcomes for
Employed African American Men, 2000 NSBW (n=826)

	FR	MAX	Personal Effects	Job Related	CAGE
Age	.085**	-.088**	-.040	.027	-.036
Schooling	-.139**	-.008	-.102**	-.081**	-.148***
Married (1=yes)	-.068**	-.088**	-.036	-.029	-.100***
Rural (1=yes)	.040	-.012	.024	.050	.056

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .010$; * $p < .050$ (one-tailed tests)

exception of rural residence, each of these background variables is associated with the various alcohol outcomes. Consistent with previous research, respondents with greater educational attainment emerge as drinking less per month, and as less likely to endorse personal effects and job-related reasons for their drinking or to engage in CAGE problem drinking behaviors. A similar pattern is observed among married respondents who drink significantly less per month or per drinking episode and who are also less likely to engage in CAGE problem drinking. Finally, total monthly consumption of alcohol increases significantly with the age of the respondent although older respondents report a significantly lower number of drinks per episode.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study we derived a preliminary theoretical modeling of African American drinking that incorporated a series of social structural and cultural risk and protective factors that were expected to account for intra-group variations in the drinking patterns of Black workers. Exploratory correlational analyses broadly verified the relationships implied this model.

Turning first to the influences of Blacks' placement in non-rewarding or stressful jobs, we found only modest evidence that these characteristics of jobs directly impact drinking patterns. Only perceptions of job pressure and levels of satisfaction with work emerged as consistent correlates. This pattern is not unlike that reported in previous studies of these relationships (Martin et al 1992; Martin and Roman, 1996) where the influences of job characteristics on drinking were mediated by levels of job satisfaction. Subsequent analyses of these data will incorporate this more complex modeling of the influences of jobs on drinking behaviors. It is also important to note that in these data, Black workers respond to stressful or non-rewarding aspects of their jobs in ways that are quite similar to their White counterparts, a pattern also established in previous analyses (Tuch and Martin, 1991).

The exploratory model examined in the study suggests that African American workers are exposed to unique stressors that are the result of race-based prejudices, biases and discriminatory behaviors that elevate the risk for alcohol problems. Here our analyses found evidence in support of the expected relationships. In particular we have clear evidence that African American workers who report high levels of economic distress, and who perceive widespread racial animus are significantly more likely to engage in instrumental and problem drinking behaviors. Unexpectedly, however, reports of general and current job discrimination did not emerge as consistent correlates of drinking behaviors, with only one drinking outcome — job-related drinking — significantly related to experiences with discrimination. This finding is perhaps partially explained by a tendency noted in earlier research for Blacks to report experiencing significantly fewer discriminatory actions in their personal lives than they see occurring in the larger social structure. Nevertheless, these preliminary analyses provide sufficient justification for the inclusion

of variables that tap the deleterious impact of various stressors related to anti-Black affect, discrimination and economic insecurity on problem drinking outcomes.

Perhaps the most consistent findings of the current analyses were found in the examination of the associations between drinking outcomes and participation in the Black church and racial identity. Both were believed to offer unique protections that would reduce the risk that Black workers will develop alcohol problems. As expected, both racial identity and church participation have important influences on the drinking outcomes and subsequent tests of the model should include estimates for these direct effects. What remains unclear, however, is whether racial identity and involvement in African American religious life provide coping resources that are additional protective "buffering" or moderating influences, and thus reduce the direct impact of the previously described race-based risks for instrumental drinking. Subsequent tests of the model will address this possibility by fitting a series of non-additive terms that interact the risk and protective factors.

On the basis of these preliminary analyses, we have broadly established the theoretical utility of a model of drinking behaviors that focuses on a series of empirically verified race-specific risks and protections that may at least partially account for African Americans' intra-group variation in drinking patterns and outcomes. Thus, the proposed model rejects the assumption that African Americans' drinking patterns are uniform. Equally important, this model provides a much-needed alternative to the 'Social Disorganization Paradigm' that has too long dominated the sociological discourse on race.

Methodological Note

To create all multi-item scales we first conducted a series of principal components factor analyses to establish the unidimensionality of the measure. Subsequent scale scores are taken as the simple sum of the re-coded component items and range from low to high.

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Malt Liquor Beer Related Knowledge, Influences, and Drinking Styles Among an Inner City Sample of African American Men¹

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ABSTRACT

African Americans are only 14 percent of the U.S. population but consume 30 percent of all malt liquor beer (MLB). MLB typically has 1.5 times the alcohol content of regular beer and is disproportionately marketed to African Americans. Despite this fact, patterns of high alcohol content beverage consumption among African Americans have had little empirical investigation. This study seeks to determine the frequency of MLB drinking, influences associated with MLB use, and MLB knowledge among 150 African American men chosen from randomly selected barbershops. Results of this study support the hypothesis that infrequent heavier drinkers prefer the larger container sizes although they are unclear about the intoxication power of MLB. Factors influencing MLB consumption also varied by drinking style. Moderate MLB drinkers were more influenced by billboard ads than both heavy and very heavy MLB drinkers.

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INTRODUCTION

Alcohol use continues to be one of the most serious and complex social and health-related problems affecting the African American community (Powell 2000). Overall, African Americans tend to drink less than other ethnic groups (Caetano and Clark 1998; Caetano and Kaskutas 1995), yet suffer more negative consequences from their drinking (Greenfield and Brown Taylor 2001; Brown Taylor and Bluthenthal 2000; Herd 1994; Jones-Webb, Snowden, Herd, and Short 1997; Caetano and Kaskutas 1996; Smart 1996). Although African Americans are only 14 percent of the population (U.S. Census Bureau 1998), they drink approximately 30 percent of all malt liquor beer (MLB) consumed in the United States (Alaniz and Wilkes 1998; Lusane 1991). This study investigates demographic characteristics and drinking styles of a community sample of male African American MLB drinkers.

The alcohol content of regular beers ranges from 3 percent to 4.5 percent by volume (Case, Distefano and Logan 2000; Logan, Case and Distefano 1999; Papazian 1997; Powell 1996; LaFrance 1996; Smith 1995; Delos 1994; Forget 1988). In contrast, most MLBs have nearly twice that amount, ranging from 6 percent to 12 percent, depending on the brand and state where sold (Powell 1996 and 2000; Martin and Nirenberg 1991). At 4 percent alcohol, a standard drink of regular beers such as Budweiser, Miller, or Coors is 12 ounces, approximately 12 grams of pure alcohol (Miller, Heather, and Hall 1991). At a conservative 6.25 percent alcohol by volume, a standard drink of MLB, such as Olde English 800, Schlitz Malt Liquor, St. Ides or Colt 45, would be 8 ounces. Thus, MLB provides more alcohol per standard serving than regular beer.

However, MLB is commonly found in 40-ounce containers that are often sold in refrigerator at grocery and convenience stores and consumed as a single serving, primarily in African American communities (Powell 2000 1996; Lusane 1991). Such a container holds an alcohol equivalence of almost five 12-ounce cans of regular beer (4 percent alcohol), five 4-ounce glasses of wine (12 percent alcohol), or five 1.25-ounce servings of spirits (40 percent alcohol) (Brown 1996). Despite this, most surveys seeking to measure alcohol consumption patterns for African Americans include questions that either explicitly or implicitly define a "drink" or "standard drink" in

campaigns draw on symbols and images important to African American youth, for instance the use of rap stars whose lyrics glorify MLB use (Powell 1997 and 2000; Brown Taylor 2000). In addition to advertising aimed at young males in lower socioeconomic status (SES) communities, the alcohol industry has begun using marketing strategies to target more affluent and older African Americans. Examples include Anheuser-Busch's King Cobra malt liquor promotion, which uses African American actor and former football star Fred "The Hammer" Williamson, and Miller Brewing Company's advertising targeting more upwardly mobile viewers (Alaniz and Wilkes 1998). Given the efforts of the alcohol industry to saturate the African American community with its advertisements, this study seeks to determine what self-reported influence, if any, does advertising in the context of other influences seem to have on MLB consumption.

This study aimed to answer four key questions: (a) What are the demographic characteristics and drinking styles of MLB drinkers in this community sample? (b) Is it only the infrequent heavy drinkers who drink from the large MLB containers? (c) Are the heaviest drinkers less knowledgeable about the alcohol content of MLB? (d) What factors influence MLB consumption?

METHODS

Data Collection. One hundred fifty self-identified African American men were recruited from 10 randomly selected barbershops in South Central Los Angeles. Barbershops were a desirable recruitment location for this study because they are safe, easy to access, and provide a number of potential respondents. For many African American men, barbershops represent a centralized meeting place where a cross-section of the community routinely gathers (Anderson 1999). After churches and liquor outlets, barbershops and beauty shops are the most visible businesses in South Central Los Angeles (Crenshaw Chamber of Commerce 2000). Barbershops are also highly accessible, with many operating 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., six days a week. In addition to the ease of access, barbershops are ideal for sampling because the wait time allows a researcher to approach potential respondents, explain the study, and obtain consent.

terms of mainstream alcohol beverage types. In addition, many researchers use standard container sizes, (12-ounce can, mug, or bottle for regular beer equivalent to a small 4-ounce wine glass for table wine, and a 1-ounce shot glass for spirits and mixed drinks), which is not how MLB is consumed (Russell 1995). The current study reconceptualizes beverage type to include MLB as well as the "typical" container sizes to account for the larger containers purchased by this sample of current MLB drinkers. Furthermore, it seeks to determine if the "infrequent" (once a week or less) and "very heavy" MLB drinkers (8 or more standard drinks per occasion) are more likely to drink from larger MLB container sizes than other MLB drinkers.

The U.S. population has very little knowledge about alcohol beverage content in general and MLB in particular (Martin and Nirenberg 1991). The sample under study here is from California, where malt liquors can be called beer and an alcohol content above 5.7 percent for malt liquor beer must be indicated on the label (State of California Alcohol Beverage Control 2000). Thus, there are some strength cues available on the label for MLB products; although the extent to which they are noticed has not been studied. This study asks respondents about their perceptions of the alcohol content of regular beer and MLB, and reports on the association between knowledge of alcohol content and heavy MLB consumption.

In addition, this study sought to investigate factors influencing African Americans' consumption of MLB, including advertisements in movies and music, billboard ads, social norms and peer pressure. In relation to advertising, the alcohol beverage industry spends more than \$2 billion each year in the United States on advertising and promotion (Alaniz and Wilkes 1998), with increasing expenditures since the 1970s on minority markets (Powell 1997 and 2000). African Americans spend more than \$200 billion annually (Alaniz and Wilkes 1998). In a bid for this business, the alcohol industry uses an array of strategies: product endorsement by popular African American celebrities, donations to highly visible leadership organizations such as the NAACP and historically Black colleges and universities, advertisements in the Black media and Black communities, and sponsorship of traditional African American community cultural events and entertainment venues. The aggressive advertising

several times a week were combined to form the "frequent MLB drinker" category and once a week, several times a month and once a month or less responses were combined to form the "less frequent MLB drinker" category.

Preference for MLB container size was measured by asking, "What size malt liquor beer do you prefer?" The four response options were: 12-ounce can, 22-ounce wide mouth bottle, 40-ounce bottle, or 64-ounce bottle. Amount of MLB consumed in a sitting was assessed by asking, "How much malt liquor beer do you drink at one time?" (one 12-ounce can, one 22-ounce bottle, one 40-ounce bottle, one 64-ounce bottle, two or more 12-ounce cans, two or more 22-ounce bottles, two or more 40-ounce bottles, or two or more 64-ounce bottles). For analysis, drink size was dichotomized by combining 12-ounce and 22-ounce responses to form the "small" container size variable, versus 40-ounce and 64-ounce responses indicating the "large" container size.

A "standard drink" contains approximately 12 grams of ethanol. This is the equivalent of a 12-ounce container of regular beer having approximately the same alcohol content as an 8-ounce serving of MLB. To determine the number of standard drinks usually consumed, the preferred size of the MLB drink in ounces was multiplied by the number of self-reported "drinks" consumed at one time, and the product divided by 8 (ounces). Quantity was further operationalized (post-hoc) by creating an MLB "very heavy drinker" category (Knupfer 1984) indicating 8 or more *standard* MLB drinks per sitting, versus an MLB "heavy drinker" category (Greenfield, Rogers, and Midanik 1999; Greenfield and Kaskutas 1993), indicating five to seven *standard* MLB drinks per setting, versus an MLB "moderate drinker" category, indicating one to four MLB *standard* drinks per sitting.

Factors Influencing Malt Liquor Beer Consumption. Using a Likert response format, nine questions asked participants to report the degree to which they agreed with a series of questions aimed at measuring the individual factors that influenced them to drink MLB. For example, "Television ads have had a big influence on my drinking malt liquor beer." Respondents were also asked to report how often (always, often, sometimes, never) they were influenced to drink MLB by seeing a liquor store, television or radio advertisement. In the

Barbershops were selected from the *Black Directory*, a community-based yellow pages-type publication of African American businesses, which listed approximately 150 in current operation. At each barbershop, the interviewer approached each man who entered the establishment and sat in the waiting area. Prospective participants were asked to complete a 20-minute self-administered survey on African American men's knowledge, attitudes and MLB drinking patterns. Inclusion criteria included South Central Los Angeles area residency and at least 21 years of age. All of the men who were approached agreed to participate. Before proceeding with the questionnaire, volunteers were given a consent form and told that they would receive \$10.00 for their participation. Fifteen subjects were recruited at each of the 10 participating barber shops. The interviewer was matched with the respondents by ethnicity but not by gender.

Measures. The Brown Malt Liquor Beer Survey (BMLBS) is a self-completed instrument that contains original questions designed and pilot tested by the researcher specifically for this study (Brown 1996). It includes questions assessing demographic characteristics such as age, education, marital status and employment status. For analysis, respondents who reported being married or living with someone were categorized as married and all other responses were combined to form the unmarried category. The men in our sample were considered employed if they reported full-time employment. Less than full-time employment, retired, self-employed and laid-off responses were combined as the less than full-time employment category.

Malt Liquor Beer (MLB) Drinking Patterns. Using the BMLBS, men who reported current MLB drinking were asked to complete questions related to MLB drinking patterns (usual quantity, frequency and container size), influences to consume MLB, knowledge of alcohol content and brand names associated with regular beer and MLB brand names. To capture the frequency of MLB consumption, respondents were asked, "How frequently do you drink malt liquor beer?" Response options were: several times a day, once a day, several times a week, about once a week, a few times a month, about once a month, and less than once a month.

For analysis, two categories were created post-hoc. Daily and

final analysis, these response categories were dichotomized as never and sometimes or more often.

Knowledge of Alcohol Content and Beverage Brand Name Distinction. We used three closed-ended items to assess knowledge of alcohol content by volume. One item asked respondents to determine the average amount of alcohol by volume in a 12-ounce bottle or can of regular beer. Another item asked respondents to determine the average amount of alcohol in a 40-ounce bottle of malt liquor beer. We also asked participants how strongly they agreed that MLB and regular beer have the same alcohol content. Again, we combined the agree and strongly agree responses to create one category, with disagree as the second.

Brand name recognition was determined with two open-ended questions asking respondents to "name a brand of regular beer" and to "name a brand of malt liquor beer." The investigator recoded open-ended questions into a correct/incorrect dichotomous variable for each beverage based on correct identification of brand name in each category.

DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical analyses were performed using the chi square statistic and t-tests as appropriate. Statistical significance is reported at the $\alpha = .05$ (two-tailed) level. Fisher's exact test was applied to adjust chi-square when the expected values in some cells were less than five for tables of 4x3 and smaller; Yates' correction was used in larger tables.

RESULTS

Sample. Overall, subjects ranged in age from 21 to 89, with a mean age of 43 years. Over half (51 percent) of the respondents were married or living with a significant other. Forty-three percent had at least some college education. Slightly less than half (48 percent) were employed full-time. The sample consisted of 11 respondents who reported never drinking (taste or a sip) an alcoholic beverage (lifetime abstainer), 55 people who once drank alcohol in their lifetime but did not currently drink, and 84 current drinkers.

All but six of the 84 current drinkers consume MLB. Eligible for this analysis were those 78 self-identified current MLB drinkers of which more than a third were "moderate" MLB drinkers (one to four *standard* MLB drinks per sitting); 45 percent were "heavy" MLB drinkers (five to seven drinks) and 19 percent were "very heavy" MLB drinkers (8 or more drinks).

Demographic Characteristics of MLB Drinkers. The mean age of all MLB drinkers in this sample was 45 (SD=19). Although the mean age of MLB drinkers did not differ significantly, heavy and very heavy MLB drinkers were more likely to be older than moderate MLB drinkers. Of the respondents who were married, less than a quarter were very heavy MLB drinkers, 49 percent heavy MLB drinkers and 34 percent moderate MLB drinkers. The vast majority (83 percent) of the MLB drinkers in this sample had at least a high school education (73 percent of moderate MLB drinkers, 91 percent of heavy MLB drinkers and only 38 percent of very heavy MLB drinkers). With regards to employment status, less than half of the moderate and heavy MLB drinkers were employed on a full-time basis (39 percent and 41 percent, respectively) compared to only 20 percent of the very heavy MLB drinkers. Regardless of MLB drinking

Table 1
Usual Number of Standard MLB Drinks
for an MLB-Drinking Occasion
by Age, Marital Status, Education and Employment Status
in Percent

		Maximum Number of Standard MLB Drinks Usually Consumed per Occasion			
		Moderate: 1-4 (n=28)	Heavy: 5-7 (n=35)	Very Heavy: 8+ (n=15)	P value
	Overall Percent of Sample	36%	45%	19%	
Age	21-30	61%	33%	6%	.01*
	31-50	26%	39%	35%	
	51 and over	31%	59%	10%	
Mean Age		41	52	43	.06
Marital Status	Single	43%	29%	29%	.35
	Married	34%	49%	17%	
Education	Less than High School	31%	46%	23%	.87
	High School Graduate	35%	42%	23%	
	More Than High School	35%	49%	15%	
Employment	Full Time	39%	41%	20%	.79
	Less than Full Time	33%	49%	18%	

status, there were no significant differences regarding marital status, education or employment.

Patterns of malt liquor beer drinking. Over half of the current MLB drinkers (52 percent) drank MLB at least once a week. Sixty-four percent reported drinking five or more MLB drinks per sitting

Table 2
Conditional Probability of Container Size Given MLB-Drinking Status
(n=78)

Usual Container Size	Maximum Number of Standard MLB Drinks			P value
	Moderate: 1-4 (n=28)	Heavy: 5-7 (n=6)	Very Heavy: 8+ (n=15)	
12-ounce	64%	0%	0%	< .001
22-ounce	36%	49%	0%	
40-ounce	0%	51%	20%	
64-ounce	0%	0%	80%	

("heavy" to "very heavy drinking") and over two-fifths (42 percent) drank MLB from containers 40 oz. or larger (Table 1).

MLB Drinking Characteristics. Across all drinking patterns, more than half of the respondents (n=45) reported drinking from the smaller 12 oz. and 22 oz. containers. There was no significant relationship between preferred container size and frequency of drinking MLB ($p=.97$). With regard to drinking style, 100 percent of those who drank from large containers were very heavy MLB drinkers ($p<.001$, Table 2). Conversely, 64 percent of those who preferred the smallest container size were more likely to be moderate MLB drinkers ($p<.001$).

Influences to Consume MLB. Table 3 presents factors which influenced MLB drinkers to drink the product. With regard to drinking status, moderate MLB drinkers were 44 percent more likely to be influenced by billboard ads than both heavy and very heavy MLB drinkers ($p=.04$). Movies and seeing others drink appear to have a greater influence on heavy MLB drinkers.

Ethanol Content Knowledge. Regardless of MLB drinking pattern, less than half of the MLB drinkers knew the percentage of alcohol content in MLB or regular beer (Table 4). However, more than three quarters of all MLB drinkers knew the alcohol content

Table 3
Percentage Reporting Various Influences to Consume
Malt Liquor Beer by Usual Quantity of MLB Drinking
(n=78)

	Maximum Number of Standard MLB Drinks Usually Consumed per Session			P value
	Moderate: 1-4 (n=28)	Heavy: 5-7 (n=35)	Very Heavy: 8+ (n=15)	
Agree/Strongly Agree				
Radio Ads	36	47	17	.33
Feel More Respected	38	45	17	.25
Feel Powerful	35	48	17	.38
Music (Except Rap)	37	47	16	.29
Movies	32	52	16	.11
Rap Music	33	52	15	.15
Seeing Others in Community Drink	32	52	17	.06
Television Ads	33	49	18	.41*
Billboard Ads	44	36	19	.04
Seeing Other Men Drink	48	33	19	.29
Always/Often/Sometimes				
Seeing a TV Ad	38	31	31	.41
Seeing a Liquor Store	23	59	18	.51
Hearing a Radio Ad	18	46	36	.33

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

Table 4
Conditional Probabilities of Knowledge of
Alcohol Content and Beverage Distinction Given MLB Drinking
(n=78)

	Proportion Knowledgeable in Each Group			P value
	Moderate: 1-4 (n=28)	Heavy: 5-7 (n=35)	Very Heavy: 8+ (n=15)	
Knowledge of Percentage of Alcohol Content				
in Regular Beer	46	37	47	.70
in MLB	36	46	47	.68
Knowledge of Relative Strength MLB vs. Regular Beer	79	85	79	.75
Knowledge of Brand Names				
Named an MLB Brand When Asked to Name Regular Beer	48	68	64	.28
Named a Regular Beer When Asked to Name an MLB	37	37	36	.99

in MLB and regular beer was not the same. In addition, a large proportion of MLB drinkers are uncertain about which brands represent regular beer or malt liquor beer (Table 4). No significant differences exist between groups on knowledge of alcohol content and brand name recognition.

DISCUSSION

This study took an encompassing look at MLB consumption. Combining data on South Central Los Angeles demographics, MLB consumption styles and the influence of media advertising, it provides an initial indication of which factors influence MLB consumers to drink this product and factors that influence the extent of consumption. In addition, it investigated the association between various demographic characteristics and number of *standard* MLB drinks consumed, usual container size and MLB drinking status as well as knowledge of alcohol content and MLB drinking levels.

First, this study addresses the stereotype of the malt liquor beer drinker as an unemployed, under-educated African American teenager by gaining information on who consumes MLB. Our sample included men recruited at randomly selected barbershops in a large inner-city community and found large amounts of MLB consumption among an older, largely employed and educated African American sample. A larger proportion of respondents were heavy to very heavy MLB drinkers, with 64 percent typically drinking 5+ MLBs at a sitting, 42 percent doing so once a week. This may be explained, in part, by the fact that malt liquor beers contain addictive ingredients such as high amounts of sugar and ethanol (Powell 1996 and 2000), are easy to access (Alaniz 1998; Powell 1996 and 2000; Brown Taylor 1996), and are inexpensively priced (Powell 1997 and 2000; Herd 2000; Scribner 2000; Brown Taylor 2000; Greenfield and Brown Taylor 2001) all of which make this product very appealing. The finding that MLB is popular among at least some samples of older African American urban men is consistent with epidemiological reports that African American men start heavy drinking in their mid to late thirties (Caetano and Kaskutas 1996; Herd 1994). The consequence of this is that African Americans tend to drink for a longer period of time resulting in higher mortality rates due to cirrhosis of the liver and esophageal cancer (NIAAA 2000).

With respect to the questions about container size, a picture emerges of MLB consumption in which most MLB drinkers (75 percent) of the sample drank from larger containers (22 oz and 40 oz) frequently marketed in most inner-city communities (Greenfield, Brown Taylor 2001; Alaniz 1998; Powell 1996 and 1999; Brown Taylor 1996). However, a preference was not found for larger (22oz+)

servings to be limited to those who drank frequently (weekly or more often), nor only to those who drank the equivalent of five or more *standard* drinks of MLB at a time. Thirty-six percent of the MLB drinkers preferred large container sizes but drank MLB less than weekly, and 13 percent drank from large containers but drank less than 5+ at a sitting. Related, heavy drinking (5+ per sitting) was not restricted to the frequent drinkers: 29 percent of the MLB drinkers had high quantities, but only periodically.

As for knowledge about alcohol content and what constitutes a malt liquor beer, our findings are consistent with other literature that indicates many MLB consumers do not know the intoxication power of specific types of malt beverages (Martin and Nirenberg 1991). Only one in three of the malt liquor beer drinkers in this sample knew the alcohol content of that beverage and only two out of three could distinguish an MLB brand from regular beer. Many do not differentiate between malt liquor beer and regular beer, although the majority of respondents acknowledged that the alcohol content is not the same. The men surveyed may be responding more to the physical sensations (known as the "kick") experienced during malt liquor beer drinking, rather than actually knowing just how much the alcohol content differs from regular beer. Although, in California, manufacturers of malt liquor beer are legally bound to put the alcohol content on the label, neither the ingredients nor the alcohol content appear on most labels (Scribner 2000). It may not be surprising, then, that there was little knowledge regarding the amount of actual ethanol being consumed. Through aggressive advertising campaigns targeting the African American community, African American men have come to associate the word "beer" with malt liquor. The packaging of malt liquor beer resembles regular beer, they are often placed side-by-side in the refrigerator section of the store, and the contents look the same.

It should be noted that the regular beer brand question preceded the malt liquor beer question in the self-administered survey. It is possible that when many men read the word beer, they immediately associated it with malt liquor. These data suggest that the men surveyed may have had more exposure to malt liquor beer than regular beer. Compounded by the use of the word "beer" (i.e. malt liquor beer) these results suggest that advertisements and subliminal

messages may have affected the men at a subconscious level (Powell 1997 and 2000).

Our findings with regard to what influenced the men in our sample to consume MLB are consistent with the literature (Herd 2000). Mass media and advertising, intrapersonal influences (the need to feel powerful and respected) and interpersonal or social norms (seeing other men drink) most influenced respondents to drink MLB. This finding may be explained, in part, by the fact that the men in this sample are being inundated with MLB advertisements, suggesting that drinking MLB will make you feel powerful and respected (Powell 1997 and 2000).

There are some methodological issues that should be taken into consideration before generalizing the results of this study to other African American men. First, accurately determining drinking categories poses a unique challenge. When participants were asked for specific brand names (i.e., of regular beer) they often misclassified the beverage by naming a malt liquor beer brand. This and the reverse tended to occur regardless of drinking status. It is possible that the men were drinking more malt liquor beer than they indicated by self-report and that the participants' self-identified drinking behavior may therefore be underestimated. Respondents who self-identified as current alcohol drinkers (but did not report consuming malt liquor beer) may actually have consumed malt liquor beer (i.e., those who named a malt liquor beer brand for a regular beer brand). Because some of the men may be misclassified based on their responses, there is a heightened need for caution in interpreting the findings that compare drinking groups. Future studies could benefit from developing a data collection strategy to increase the likelihood of correct self-identification of malt liquor beer consumption. More specifically, instead of asking brand name in order to determine level of knowledge, asking respondents to name a brand name in the context of beverage specific quantity/frequency questions may provide a clearer reference point with which to determine consumption of high alcohol content products. In addition, statistical significance was attained in very few of the comparisons undertaken. Given the small sample size in this exploratory sample, power to detect differences was low. It might be that larger cell sizes within group comparisons would have yielded more significant, were a larger

sample size obtained.

In addition, the sample included in this study was limited to African American men who get their haircut in South Central Los Angeles area barbershops. This convenience sample of African American men may systematically differ from the general population of African American men. Almost all of the men surveyed were employed while the unemployment rate for African American men in South Central Los Angeles is as much as 30 percent (US Census 2000). Therefore, the ability to generalize to African American men is limited. However, few studies have been done of this important topic among African Americans and these findings are noteworthy.

According to Gary and Berry (1985) many cross cultural researchers have established that studies utilizing African American participants must be careful when generalizing their results due to the high heterogeneity within the same ethnic group. Therefore, although all of the participants are of African American descent, it cannot be assumed that those who participated are representative of all African Americans in general and African American men in particular. Further, generalization of any results that were obtained in this study to other African American men that are in any way different from this specific sample should be limited.

A primary suggestion for future research is to conduct a qualitative study (Shorter-Gooden 1995; Strunin 2001) of African American's experiences related to consumption of malt liquor beer and related drinking practices. One important aim of such a study might determine the various names associated with malt liquor beer and other high strength products. For example, malt liquor beer is commonly referred to "Old E," "brass monkey," "jungle juice" and "8-Ball" in rap music and many inner-city communities. If researchers do not have an understanding of the various "unscientific" or "street" terminology used to describe a non-mainstream drink, an entire segment of society's drinking patterns and practices may not be accounted for in an area where new alcohol products are frequently introduced. Thus, allowing MLB drinkers to elaborate about their drinking styles and experiences (in their own words) may help inform the field about which questions related to specific alcohol products should be asked during quantitative interviews. A small-scale qualitative study of this matter could substantially inform alcohol

researchers and provide in-depth ethnographic information on an often missed segment of the alcohol consuming population.

A large-scale beverage-specific epidemiological study, including men and women, is urgently needed to determine the extent of high alcohol content beverage consumption in inner-city communities such as the one under study here. In order to measure more accurately the drinking patterns of those who consume high alcohol content beverages, such studies must take into account the variations in container sizes, alcohol content and product classifications. In order to understand exactly how respondents define and consume MLB, researchers should provide a combination of both open-ended and closed-ended questions as well as vessel models or photos (Kaskutas 2000) to measure quantity, frequency, drink size and brand.

Given that African American men have been estimated to drink a third of all malt liquor beer, it is unsettling that so little is known about African American men's knowledge, attitudes and malt liquor beer drinking behavior. Future studies might focus on identifying resilience and protective factors to get a sense of why some men abstain from drinking, and what factors contribute to heavy drinking in older samples of African American men.

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