

ABSTRACT

It is known that gender and race discrimination are prominent problems in our society. Additionally, they are heavily intertwined, and studying the intersection of these two types of discrimination will help in understanding the complexity of the prejudices that individuals face. Gender refers to the symbolism of masculinity and femininity in the context of cultural and social differences rather than biological sex differences. This term can also be applied when describing a range of identities that are not limited to male and female, such as cisgender, intersex, or genderqueer. Race is a concept that groups people into categories based on distinguishing social and physical characteristics and qualities. These are both social constructs in which our society gives us identity but, unfortunately, these identities make way for labeling and stereotyping. This research will be examining the intersectionality of gender and race and how each of these interact to disadvantage individuals. This study will focus on the gender roles within African American, Asian American, and Latin American males and females and will compare and contrast the different obstacles they face. Ultimately, the goal of this research is to shed light on the oppression that these minority groups face due to their complex combination of race and gender.

Keywords: *intersectionality*, *race*, *gender*

INTRODUCTION

Every individual is defined by multiple social structures (Goertz & Mazur, 2008). Social structures such as race/ethnicity, gender, class, religion, and sexual orientation, shape the way in which people experience the world (Brooks & Redlin, 2009). Intersectionality, coined by Black Feminist, legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in her critique of how Black women's experiences were inaccurately addressed, aids in understanding the personal experiences of individuals (Keum, Brady, Sharma, et al., 2018). The idea behind this term contributes to the explanation of how these structures work together to create social categories that produce unique experiences of oppression. Furthermore, it argues that social structures are capable of layering on top of one another, constructing a double or triple burden or exploitation (Goertz & Mazur, 2008). So rather than looking at these systems of oppression separately as many studies have done in the past, intersectionality suggests that it is impossible to separate these identities when individuals can only experience them simultaneously (Smith, Watkins, Ladge, & Carlton, 2019). Not only do these identities lack independence of each other, but they are also intertwined and multiplicative, therefore reinforcing the individual's numerous disadvantages (Lee, 2016; Smith, Watkins, Ladge, & Carlton, 2019). This does not mean that intersectionality is "the opposite of privilege or advantage: it is possible to be intersectionally advantaged or privileged as well as intersectionally marginalized, dominated or oppressed" (Goertz & Mazur, 2008, p. 196). For this project, the research will examine the coexistence of systems of oppression based on gender and race which intertwine to create interactive inequities and disparities (Smith, Watkins, Ladge, & Carlton, 2019).

AFRICAN AMERICANS

African American Women

When examining the intersection between race and gender, it is vital to note first that there is no gender apart from race and there is no raceless human (Goertz & Mazur, 2008, p. 195). The dominant cultural ideology of androcentrism tends to elect men to be the hegemonic normative standard and ethnocentrism selects Whites to represent this same standard. Because of this, in the U.S., women of color are not "readily categorized into their respective identity groups" (p. 1709); therefore, they are often overlooked or disregarded (Smith, Watkins, Ladge, & Carlton, 2019).

As we take a closer look at the particular difficulties of African American women, it is important to note that these adversities most often stem from the "tensions between being black and being a woman" (Settles, 2006, p. 590). Black women are often labeled with a number of negative stereotypes, including loud, nagging and offensive; breeders; and overly sexual individuals (Settles, 2006). Furthermore, African American women are typically seen as unfeminine, instead of as "physically frail, emotionally delicate, and sexually pure, as white women" (Wade & Ferree, 2019, p. 102). This began the stereotype of the Angry Black Women, indicating that African American women are "louder, pushier, and more demanding than other women" (Wade & Ferree, 2019, p. 102). Black mothers who work low paying and often degrading jobs in order to support their family are "denigrated as 'welfare queens'" (Wade & Ferree, 2019, p. 102). Instead of being honored as hard-working moms, many Black women are "assumed to be promiscuous single mothers" (p. 1708) and as a result, they experience more racialized sexual harassment in comparison to women of other races (Smith et al., 2019).

THE INTERSECTIONALITY OF RACE AND GENDER

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AFRICAN AMERICANS

African American Men

Typically, men's gender is associated with many privileges, but, when applying the intersectionality theory, men's gender privilege often decreases when it bisects with the Black race. (Bowleg, 2012; Rogers et al., 2015). Bowleg's (2012) study found that "Black men experience disproportionately higher rates of poverty, unemployment, incarceration, and mortality and morbidity" (p. 755) when compared to their White male counterparts. When considering masculinity in light of intersectionality, one study states that "African American men view their masculinity as a reflection of traditional Western masculine norms" (Rogers et al., 2015, p. 416). This racism originates from the "jolly buffoons" (Wade & Ferree, p. 100) image in enslavement created by White supremacists, which then shifted to the stereotype of sexual and aggressive following emancipation (Wade & Ferree, 2019). Black men are often seen as possessing greater physical, athletic, and sexual strength than other races (Carnaghi et al., 2020), demonstrating, through intersectionality, that their race increases what is expected of them as men (Bowleg, 2012). As a result of this intersection, many studies explain how these men are forced to overcompensate for these stereotypes early on. White boys' misbehavior is often seen by teachers as free of malice, and, meanwhile, Black boys' misbehavior is denied any element of childish naiveness, resulting in more suspension for these Black boys (Wade & Ferree, 2019). This follows them into adulthood as well. The #BlackLivesMatter movement comes from the statistical facts that "young black men...are twenty-one times more likely to die at the hands of police than their white counterparts, despite the fact they are less likely than young white men to be engaged in criminal activity" (Wade & Ferree, 2019, p. 101). Black men must be hyperaware of the prejudice of the people around them in order to avoid being stereotyped as a "Dangerous Black Man" (Wade & Ferree, 2019, p. 101).

ASIAN AMERICANS

Asian Men

The stereotyping stemming from the intersection of race and gender of Asian men results in an image of a masculine deficiency and feminine qualities (Wade, & Ferree, 2019). Even though Asian Americans have been a part of this nation since the 1700s, they relentlessly "remain invisible and silent" (Lee, 2016, p. 23). Given that sports in the U.S. reinforces dominant ideals of masculinity, the underrepresentation of Asian Americans in sports further reaffirms the idea that Asian American men are "weak, asexual and effeminate individuals who lack strong masculine characteristics" (Lee, 2016, p. 23). This perception of the unassertive and patient Asian male is set up as a stark contrast to the idyllic White male who embodies masculinity, strength, and aggression (Lee, 2016).

Through the concept of "model minority" (p. 24) Asian Americans are assigned geeky characteristics and thought of as exceedingly intelligent, gifted, and diligent (Lee, 2016). This idea specifically hinders Asian men and their strive towards manliness because of the fact that nerdiness is associated with frail and soft feminine qualities. Therefore, this takes away their chance to be perceived as strong, powerful, and masculine, "the most honored and privileged way of being men in the United States" (Lee, 2016, p. 25). Consequently, Asian men are forced to counter these stereotypes to attempt to conform to cultural gender expectations (Wade & Ferree, 2019). These men's counter behavior is played out by acting overly aggressive, excelling in sports, and dating often in order to outwardly display masculine characteristics. Essentially, each day Asian men must often work to prove to and convince those around them that they are capable of strong behavior and worthy to be seen and heard (Wade & Ferree, 2019).

Asian Women

Like Asian men, Asian American women are racially feminized due their combination of race and gender (Wade & Ferree, 2019). Mukkamala and Suyemoto (2018) claim that the lack of attention to the intersectional experience of Asian women results in an "oversimplification of their experience as targets of racism and sexism by assuming that they share the experiences of Asian American men and White women (respectively)" (p. 32). This further enables discriminations and oppression from dominant groups due to their ignored unique experiences. It is vital to be aware that Asian women do not obtain privilege in one area but discrimination in another as do Asian men and White women (Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018).

Beginning in the mid 1800s, young women from China and Japan were sold as sex slaves in the U.S (Wade & Ferree, 2019). This is where the assumption that Asian women are exotic geishas or timid, sexually available objects (Keum et al., 2018). Mass media and dating websites often aid in objectifying Asian American women as White men's possessions and accessories, reducing them to sexual servants who are both compliant and exotic (Keum et al., 2018). As a result, many Asian American women today endure "direct sexualization through name calling, touching, or comments related to their appearance and body" (Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018, p. 42).

When taking a deeper look at the stereotype that American Asian women are submissive and passive, it can be suggested that these women are often deemed as invisible and incapable of being a leader. Participants in a study reported often being talked over in groups, bypassed for job promotions, questioned in regard to their authority and knowledge, and expected to agree with decisions of others (Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018). In order to combat this, many Asian women try to appear harsher in order to prove themselves and fight against these degrading assumptions (Wade & Ferree, 2019).

LATIN AMERICANS

Latino Men

Naturally, Latino men are no exception to the inequalities of intersectionality. It is important to note the cultural strains these men face in the United States (Walters & Valenzuela, 2019). In a study analyzing the discrimination of Latino men, a participant with Mexican parents living in the United States admits to feeling unaccepted by both his Mexican relatives and American peers, therefore, never finding a home to fit in (Walters & Valenzuela, 2019). This challenge of the dueling identities of both race and culture is one frequently faced by Latinos in the United States, who are set to face acculturative stress as they navigate their two cultures (Lianget et al., 2017). *Machismo*, a Latino gender role term, supports hypermasculinity and perceives men as "strong, virile, courageous, emotionally stoic but sexually adventuresome, brave, [and] self-sufficient" (Walters & Valenzuela, 2019, p. 1026). When adopted by the United States' media, *machismo* became "a physically muscular physique, an irresistible magnet to women, and the ability to seduce women without effort or consequence" (Walters & Valenzuela, 2019, p. 1027). This leads to the perception where Latino men are sexually skilled seducers (especially when compared to White men), players who were unfaithful to women, and sexually dangerous (Wade & Ferree, 2019; Walters & Valenzuela, 2019). Young Latino men have felt misrepresented in the media because they valued showing women respect (Walters & Valenzuela, 2019). In reality, the Latino culture welcomes its men's expression of emotions and sensitivities, and this serves as a contrast to the stereotypical expectation for Latino men to hide their emotions behind a tough and stony exterior (Cabrera et al., 2016). Latina Women

Latinas also experience the tension between their heritage cultural values and the cultural expectations as women in the United States (Liang et al., 2017). Contrasting to the male machismo, the marianismo standard expects domestic commitment from Latina women (Liang et al., 2017), as well as altruistic and compliant attitudes (Scott, 2018). Despite this image, Latina women are contrastingly depicted in pop culture and media to be unsuitable as mothers, using their children to obtain a green card, or as promiscuous and exotic. These stereotypes often invade Latina girls' and women's interactions with professionals in the medical, education, and justice systems (Scott, 2018).

The gender role *hembrismo*, meaning superwomen, infers that Latina women are strong, confident, and resilient. Although this can have a positive effect on Latinas, it also opens the door for Latina women to attempt to carry out a variety of responsibilities with intense pressure on their ability to handle them (Liang et al., 2017). When comparing the intersectionality of race and gender, Latinas may be expected to be submissive, virtuous, or pure (Liang et al., 2017; Scott, 2018). However, "when Latinas fail to live up to the expectations of the 'good girl', they are" labeled as "bad girls' who are...gang involved, and untrustworthy" (Scott, 2018, p. 50) All of these revelations serve to show it is impactful to develop a comprehension of the often stressful and unjust experiences of Latina girls and women (Scott, 2018).

The idea of intersectionality takes individuals' varying identities and examines how they work together to leave many people with a range of disadvantages when living out daily life in society. If one desires to fully grasp the unique experiences of members of society, they must examine the way their identities intersect to multiply systems of oppression (Khan, 2016). This study focuses on the intersection of race and gender and analyzes the effect this has on individuals. For example, when studying women of color, it was shown that not only does their ethnicity open doors for discrimination in many areas, but also their gender, leaving them doubling disadvantaged (Goertz & Mazur, 2008). Moreover, when examining the intersection of race and gender for men with color, studies have shown that when their race interacts with their gender, it often takes away their previous advantages of being a male in American society (Bowleg, 2012; Rogers, Sperry, & Levant, 2015). The purpose of this study was to bring light to the way the intersection of race and gender produce inequalities for Asian, Latin, and African American men and women.

Limitations and Implications

It is important to acknowledge that only the surface is scratched because there are a myriad of other combinations of gender identities and race-ethnicities whose intersectionality is left unstudied in this research. However, the important information brought to light in this review of the current research on the intersectionality of race and gender makes it abundantly clear that this topic is a meaningful one, and an awareness of the challenges faced by these groups urges further inquiry from the leaders of this field. Ultimately, this study doesn't just outline the reasons for a change, it demands it.

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DISCUSSION

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