THE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ENDORSEMENT WITH RACE-RELATED EXPERIENCES, RACIAL ATTITUDES, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTCOMES AMONG BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS

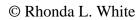
by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Psychology) in The University of Michigan 2008

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Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have happened without the support, mentorship, and assistance of so many wonderful people.

- First and foremost, I thank God for placing opportunities before me that I
 could have never imagined. I thank God for the strength He has given me and
 the favor He has shown me. I could not have gotten to this point without His
 help and guidance.
- Dr. Robert Sellers. Your mentorship has been absolutely invaluable. Words cannot express the gratitude that I extend to you. You have been more than a mentor and advisor; you have been a role model. I thank you for everything you have provided along the way. I hope that I can be half of the mentor and scholar that you are. Thank you.
- Dr. Cleopatra Caldwell. You have been there since the beginning of my journey and served as a role model in so many ways. You have challenged my thinking, but also supported my vision. You have served as a clear example of how interdisciplinary perspectives strengthen social science research, particularly with Black populations. I admire your work and how you use your work to address issues confronting African Americans. Thank you.
- Dr. Tabbye Chavous. Your support and encouragement have been invaluable. You have played an instrumental role in my development as a scholar and set a clear example of how to do it "right." Your work speaks for itself and has helped shape my thoughts about issues affecting African American adolescents and college students; but it pales in comparison to how you have influenced my professional development. For that I sincerely thank you.

- Dr. Elizabeth Cole. I thank you for challenging me to think about my work from a broader perspective. Your feedback was absolutely invaluable and will undoubtedly influence how I continue down this path of research.
- Dr. Lorrain Gutierrez. Thank you for challenging me to think about the
 practical implications of this work. I appreciate your guidance with measure
 development and data collection. Your assistance in these areas is greatly
 appreciated.
- To my parents, Sandra and Ronald White, Mommy and Daddy, I thank you for everything you have done. I could write another dissertation on how much you have sacrificed for me! There are not enough words to express how fortunate I am to have had you for parents. Thank you for sowing the seed of education and achievement early in my life and providing me with the emotional and financial support to get to this point. I could not have made it without you. I love you more than you know.
- To my future husband, Dominic, I thank you for ALWAYS supporting me, for never holding me back, and encouraging me through it all. You have been my rock, the one constant I knew I could count on. Your friendship, your support, and your love have helped me more than you know. Even though we were a thousand miles apart during this process, I always felt you there by my side, cheering me on. Know that I will love you always.
- To my sister, Kimmy, you are the ying to my yang, but I could not ask for a better sister! I respect you, admire you, and love you. I will always be your baby sister, no matter what!
- Besangie Sellars. We have finally made it through this long journey together. Along the way we have become the closest of friends, but we have also become family...and you cannot get rid of family! I am in your life to stay! I'll miss seeing you everyday, but I know that you are just a cell phone call

away. Thank you for being a good friend.

- Sellers Racial Identity Lab. Thank you to the past and present members of the Sellers Lab – in particular Cheri Philip, Enrique Neblett, Ciara Smalls, Kahlil Ford, Christina Oney, and Leah Kokinakis. You are all special people and I am positive that you will all go on to do wonderful things. I look forward to continuing through this journey together.
- Members of the Black Student Psychological Association. You have become family over these past five years. As an organization and as people, you have so much to offer. I am positive that you will all create a legacy of achievement, just as you have at Michigan. Thank you for always being there.
- Terra Bowen-Reid. I thank you for your guidance and help getting me to this
 point. Your support and your faith in me only encouraged me to do my best.
 Your mentorship early in my career was invaluable. Thank you.
- Dr. Zaje Alem-Tsige Harrell, Dr. Kathy Burlew, and Dr. Meeshay Williams-Wheeler, thank you for assisting me with data collection at your respective institutions. I could not have completed this project without your knowledge and leadership. Thank you.

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Abstract

This study examines social responsibility to the African American community among African American college students. Particular attention is devoted to examining attitudes towards social responsibility and involvement in socially responsible behaviors. This study argues that while social responsibility endorsement is influenced by background and contextual factors, race-related variables are particularly influential among African American college students. Individual's experiences with race, the meaning and significance they attribute to their racial status, and their attitudes towards the racial group likely influence the extent to which individuals endorse social responsibility. As such, this work examines the relationship between social responsibility attitudes and behaviors with perceptions of societal racism, experiences with racial discrimination, and racial identity. The current study also explores the link between social responsibility endorsement and psychological outcomes.

African American college students from Historically Black and Predominantly White universities were surveyed about their attitudes towards social responsibility and their engagement in socially responsible behaviors. Differences in social responsibility endorsement emerged for religious service attendance, employment status, and university racial composition. Results also indicate that social responsibility attitudes were related to perceptions of societal oppression, Public Regard, and Nationalist Ideology. Involvement in social responsibility behaviors was related to experiences with racial discrimination and Racial Centrality. Racial identity attitudes and experiences with racial discrimination

did not moderate the relationship between social responsibility endorsement and perceptions of societal oppression. Results also suggest aspects of social responsibility endorsement are positively related to self-esteem, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction. Overall, these findings suggest endorsement of social responsibility attitudes is fairly common among African American college students, but that actual engagement in behaviors consistent with social responsibility is less frequent. This calls attention to the need to study both social responsibility attitudes and social responsibility behaviors, as levels of endorsement and the predictors of each dimension of social responsibility vary. Furthermore, this work provides more evidence to suggest that individual's race-related experiences and attitudes are critical to their social responsibility endorsement. Additional findings and implications of the work are discussed in greater depth.