

“AND THE PRESSURE IS FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE”: EXPLORING BLACK
MANHOOD

Lynette D. Nickleberry

Dr. Marilyn Coleman, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The present study relies on semi-structured interviews and focus groups to explore the processes through which Black men develop and enact their conception of manhood, what and who has been influential in shaping their concepts of manhood, how Black men express their understanding of manhood, perceptions of changed over time, and the importance of other social identities such as class, religious affiliations, and sexuality in influencing their definition and expressions of manhood. A grounded theoretical analysis exposes the centrality of an Ideology of Responsibility to conceptions of Black manhood. The role of stereotypical notions of Black manhood, agency, and context is also discussed. The study concludes that Black manhood is derived from experiences both inside and outside of Black communities and is conceptualized as a progressing, interaction-contingent accomplishment.

Keywords: African American, Black, men, manhood, masculinity, grounded theory