THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY
THROUGH THE PRESENTATION OF SELF:
BLACK WOMEN CANDIDATES INTERVIEWING
FOR ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS
AT A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

DISSERTATION
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
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School of the Ohio State University

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To my parents

Margaret Roche Wood
1914 – 1974

Albert Joseph Wood
1906 – 1963
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| DEDICATION | ................................................................. | ii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | .......................................................... | iii |
| VITA | ................................................................. | v |
| LIST OF FIGURES | ......................................................... | ix |
| PREFACE | .............................................................. | 1 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Background of the Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Static, Ever-Changing Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definition of Key Terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminist Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postmodernism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation of Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of the Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organization of the Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminist Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postmodernism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vi
Higher Education........................................48
    Affirmative Action and Higher Education........55

Black Women in Higher Education..................61
    Black Women and Identity Issues.................67
    Racism, Sexism, and Black Women...............74
    Black Women Administrators in Higher Education...77

White Woman Researcher - Black Women Participants....80

Identity Politics......................................85

Summary...............................................91

III METHODOLOGY......................................93

The Crisis of Understanding and the Postmodern Challenge....94
    Emergence of New Paradigm Inquiry..............99

Methodological Issues...............................102
    Paradigm Fit in the Context of this Study......102
    Reciprocity.......................................104
    Research Design..................................107
    Pilot Study......................................108
    Sample Selection................................111
    Methods..........................................112
    Establishing Trustworthiness....................117
        Credibility..................................117
        Transferability..............................124
        Confirmability..............................126
        Dependability...............................127

Data Analysis.......................................128

Summary..............................................135

IV THE DATA SPEAK/SPEAKING DATA..........................137

Emerging Themes ....................................141
    Assertiveness: A Matter of Survival............141
    Reading 1: The Realist Tale......................141
    Reading 2: The Critical Tale....................149
    Reading 3: The Deconstructive Tale..............153
C. Consent For Participation.......................242
D. Follow Up Questions..............................245
BIBLIOGRAPHY......................................247
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. System for Data Analysis</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Process of Analyzing Data</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I am a white feminist from rural New England, who was raised within a home inhabited exclusively by women. I experienced the richness of sisterhood at a very young age, and that experience has carried me through my adult years. My biological sisters have profoundly shaped my world view, and other sisters I have come to know have greatly blessed my life.

My decision to focus my research on black women was primarily influenced by two personal experiences. First, as I began to explore research about women in higher education, I became increasingly frustrated with the missing presence of black women. I was uncomfortable with the nebulous categorization of "women administrators" or "black administrators" since it failed to clarify a category for black women. The small but insightful amount of literature that specifically addressed black women in higher education convinced me that I could expand my own understanding if I designed a study that focused on their narratives.
Secondly, I was influenced by the works of Barbara Smith, Black feminist writer and Dr. Johnnetta Cole, president of Spelman College. I was inspired by the words of Barbara Smith who wrote, "I want to encourage in white women, as a first step, a sane accountability to all the women who write and live on this soil" (Smith, 1985: 183). When writing about the need for American feminists to acknowledge that race is a factor in how women experience life Johnnetta Cole wrote, "We are bound by our similarities and divided by our differences" (1986: 1). It is the complexity and the importance of that connection between white women and black women that warrants exploration to promote a more inclusive sisterhood.

I chose to focus on identity because of its complexity. In its formation, identity pulls together a cast of characters who serve to shape and influence its construction - friends, relatives, lovers, and others. In other ways, identity is the manifestation of an ascribed culture. These cultural components are not easily separated from self. They represent much of the culture into which we are born, the taken-for-granted. We are less aware, therefore, of what those components are and what role(s) they play in identity formation.

This study is an attempt to understand how a particular group of black women construct identity in a
commonly-shared setting, an interview for an administrative position in higher education. My project is to provide some theoretical contributions to both the feminist and higher education literatures as they relate to identity construction. Diversity is often perceived as the visible racial or ethnic differences, but the focus on identity positions diversity as a more complex issue than skin color. My intention is to encourage a further understanding of one component of cultural diversity in the hope that it serves to inform and educate hiring officials and search committees. Job interview and selection processes have the potential to attract and recruit highly qualified women and minorities, and serve as a way to enhance cultural diversity on college and university campuses. A list of practical recommendations will be gleaned from this study to be used as a resource for hiring officials and search committees. These recommendations will be based on the perspectives of six black women administrators who have participated as candidates in a job selection process at a large research university. Thus, this study unfolds.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study involves the construction of identity through the presentation of self for six black women administrators in higher education. The site of the construction of identity is the job interview for an administrative position. Each of the research participants has interviewed for a senior position at the same research university. The purpose of the study is not only to raise conscious issues such as race and gender in that construction, but also to explore the influences on identity of which they are less aware.

To better understand the influencing factors of identity construction, I have incorporated a method of data gathering and data analysis that is participant-focused. The purpose of this approach was three fold: First my intention was to put the perceptions of black

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1Identity is "constructed" in that it is influenced by many components and experiences. Identity is not static and therefore not part of a "found" world, rather it is part of a world that experiences shifts and changes (Lather, 1990). As a central concept to this study, identity will be elaborated upon further.
women administrators at the center of the study. There are few, if any, studies where black professional women speak about their own experiences and share in the analyses of those experiences. Second, my intention was to explore some of the influencing factors of identity construction that are recognized and are manifested in the participants' job interviews. Third, my intention was to stimulate some new thinking about identity construction on the part of the participants by deconstructing the presentation of self during the job interview. My goal was for both the participants and me to better understand what is involved in this process of identity construction. The participatory process throughout this study encourages the researched and the researcher to share in this process of learning and discovery so that we are all better informed.

Much of the research addressing the special concerns of black women administrators use terms such as "double jeopardy" or "double bind" to describe the obstacles related to race and gender that they face in gaining entry to senior level positions in higher education settings.

\footnote{Deconstruction is a term first used by French poststructuralists, Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man. Deconstruction "foregrounds the lack of innocence in any discourse by looking at the textual staging of knowledge" and how the text is influenced by the author's personal desires or beliefs (Lather, 1991b: 13).}
(Williams, 1985; Yeakey, 1986). Black feminist writers such as Barbara Smith and bell hooks take issue with this approach in describing the unique challenges that black women experience. They contend that it is not simply a matter of piling one oppression upon another — sometimes referred to as an "additive analysis." In other words, the identity of black women cannot be described in an analysis that isolates one burden from another. Such a formulation erases the specificity of black women's experiences and inappropriately places the identity of black women at the point of intersection between black men's and white women's experiences. An additive analysis also tends to focus on the negative experiences of racism and sexism in detailing identity issues for black women, and dismisses the plurality of other more positive influences such as family, mentors, and the source of pride that pervades Black History. Smith and hooks maintain that this kind of analysis treats the oppression of black women in a sexist and racist society as if they have a further (linear) burden than white women when in fact, it is a different (multi-centered) burden (hooks, 1981; Smith, 1988).

This study is grounded in feminist theory and guided by feminist principles. A more in-depth discussion of feminist theory is presented in Chapter II, but the
undergirding theme of feminist research involves the centrality of women's experiences. Linked to the focus on women is the commitment to the empowerment of women in a world where they are subjugated (Richards, 1988). Black feminism serves as one of the many strands within feminism, and is a prominent theoretical underpinning of this study. In its agenda to "enhance the black experience and gender," black feminism serves as a central link to the lived experiences of the research participants (hooks, 1989: 182). More specifically the contributions of black feminist writers Barbara Smith and bell hooks will contribute to the theoretical framework.

Finally this study comes alive within a postmodern perspective whereby the role of the researcher as well as the participants is recognized as an on-going influence within the study. Postmodern research also seeks to continually question assumed "truths" by disrupting their source, power, and knowledge base (Lather, 1991b).

This study holds significance for me as a white feminist researcher. The interactive relation between researcher and participants has enabled me to enrich my understanding of black feminism and black women's identity. The study also contributes to the emerging body of literature that addresses the concerns of black women administrators, such as a double jeopardy, cultural
diversity, and organizational fit. Moving beyond the existing research, this study explores the construction of identity through self-presentation in the interview process. By uncovering patterns and uniquenesses of identity construction among the participants, this study has the potential for educating the majority culture. In addition, this study provides an introspective opportunity for the research participants to learn more about their own identity construction. Central to this study is the goal to address some of the barriers of cross-cultural understanding, and therefore, expanding the defined shape and scope of job search and screening processes within higher education.

Statement of the Problem

A number of studies on recruitment and selection processes in higher education focus specifically on minority recruitment (ACE, 1989; Fulton, 1983; Chamberlain, 1988; and 1983; Williams, 1985). Institutional responsibilities, such as the role of the search committees, methods of advertising, and job qualifications, are addressed. Despite the attention to attract and hire more minorities, very little attention is paid to participation of the candidate in the selection process. The focus on the selection and interview process
offers an opportunity to capture some of the earliest interactions between the candidate and administrators within an institution. These interactions often determine whether or not the candidate becomes a member of the organization. The decision to become or not to become a member involves the input of both the search committee and the candidate. This study highlights the complexities of that decision from the perspective of a group of black women candidates. Given the trans-disciplinary debate involved with black female identity, the central problem involves explaining how identity is constructed during the candidacy experience and how the identity of black women is constructed through the presentation of self during the interview process.

Although the bounded site of this study is the on-campus interview, candidates’ experiences that led to the on-campus interview will also be explored to provide more breadth and background for the study. Some of these experiences include informal and formal conversations between the candidates and the hiring officials,

Up until the mid 1970s, the identity of black women had been linked to such negative stereotypes as promiscuous or lazy (Moynihan, 1970). Other research began to surface that challenged the negative stereotypes (Ladner, 1970; Stack, 1970) but resulted in a conflict in whether race or sex was the prevailing factor in black women’s identity or whether black women identified with disparate categorization of race and sex at all (Jaggar, 1984; Simon, 1979; Smith, 1983, 1988; Spelman, 1985, 1988; hooks, 1981, 1989, 1990).
participants' conversations with others regarding the job opening, and those experiences that the participants perceive as having a meaningful connection to the process.

From the vantage point of feminism and postmodernism, the application and selection process provides the opportunity for what Michel Foucault describes as "the interaction of tangible things and the minds that respond to those things (1971: 35)." Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (1986) takes this notion even further in her Foucauldian analysis. She says, "Words are cultural constructs, and we construct our sense of self out of those words" (p.35).

Background of the Study

Diversity.

While earlier new groups to higher education willingly accepted assimilation on the traditional academic culture's terms, the new groups have refused to do so. Instead, they have argued for the right to contribute to the redefining of tradition. (Wong, 1991: 52)

The term "diversity" is commonly used in many predominantly white higher education institutions when referring to a desire to increase the number of minority faculty and administrators. The term diversity is interpreted in varying ways. For example, one perspective of diversity may be exist at a very quantified level. The focus at this level is on the number of minorities that
are hired within the overall organization. This **superficial commitment** to diversity involves an illusion of inclusion. A deceptive mechanism operates within this structure that excludes minorities and women from participating in power and authority channels of the formal administrative structure. Black women administrators in particular are victims of this deceptive mechanism as the majority of black women administrators in higher education work in jobs which have little or no input into institutional decision-making (Epstein, 1973; Moore & Wagstaff, 1974; Van Alstyne & Withers, 1977; Wilson, 1989).

To demonstrate a **substantial commitment** to diversity, differing cultural perspectives need to be actively sought among black senior administrators in decision-making roles. Within the context of a substantial commitment, diversity is not a problem to be reckoned with rather, it is a resource to be celebrated (Hill, 1991). A substantial commitment to diversity in higher education encourages and promotes conversations of respect with diverse others "for the sake of their making public policy together, of forging over and over a sense of a shared future (Ibid: 42)." Those who support a substantial commitment to diversity actively seek to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives throughout the institution.
This approach to diversity manifests itself in central organizational concerns such as curricular changes, funding priorities, and policy changes.

In this study, I focus on another component of incorporating diversity – the recruitment and selection process, especially the on campus interview. More specifically, I focus on how black women candidates construct identity through the presentation of self. An important assumption undergirding this study is that the concept of diversity can be better understood through an analysis that moves beyond the limited scope of the researcher’s perspective. That is, this study is grounded in a multiplicity of interpretations and analyses which provide a kind of "dialogical dynamism" where voices are juxtaposed to generate new meaning (Lather, 1991b: 134). Non-static, ever-changing identity.

Dare I speak to oppressed and oppressor in the same voice? (hooks, 1990: 146)

We have learned from the scholarly interests of black women over the past twenty year period that black women’s identity is based on a unique combination of a rich cultural history and everyday life experiences. Black women writers such as Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker have given us some insight into black women’s identity as they "shape[d] and define[d]". (McKay, 1987:
174). However, I would offer that other influencing factors of identity serve to shape and define the person as well, not that we are always fully cognizant of what those values are and how they influence our thinking. To assume full agency on our part to shape and define identity does not account for the role that economic class, individual experiences, parenting, race, gender, and other components play in the construction of identity.

The term identity has a philosophical and intellectual history (Fuss, 1989). There are both personal components that take on individual meaning, as well as shared components that involve the commonalities between and among groups of people. For these reasons, identity is a complex concept. Class and gender enter into the concept of identity as terms to describe social characteristics and provide certain "codes of behavior by which people are expected to structure their lives" (Smith-Rosenberg, 1986: 33). The combination of experiences and perceptions unique to an individual along with the legacy characterized by one's specific sex and culture contribute to a complex interplay of variables.

bell hooks (1990) describes an interplay of "multiple voices" in the various "texts" that we create (p. 146). Some of those voices are easily recognized and others are not. For example some of the more common influences on
identity are race, gender, and class issues. Other factors are characterized by more muffled voices that do not resonate without probing. In other words, identity is constructed by interactions in everyday life, some of which we are aware and others which we are less aware. Within the context of the interview process, this study attempts to explicate identity by "prob[ing] the lived-realities" of the participants and the "conditions informing both the construction and possible transformation of those realities" (Dilorio, quoted in Anderson, 1989: 252). This study supports the concept that research participants have a greater potential for changing social reality when the factors that influence the reality are more clearly recognized.

Identity is influenced by many factors which include societal relations, personal histories, and everyday life experiences (Smith, 1987). The works of black women writers demonstrate the rich and complex history of black American women as a people. Their history witnessed dramatic shifts and changes in black women’s lives. For example, black women were robbed of their African homeland and persecuted through slavery, forced to fight for human dignity and legal support through Civil Rights, and challenged to confront sexism through the Women’s Movement (Simons, 1979; Stetson, 1981; and Giddings, 1984). These
writers have discovered diaries and poetry dating back from the mid 1700s to the mid 1960s that reveal many of the thoughts, feelings, and desires related to the personal identity of black women. Race, gender, and class issues were and continue to be integrally involved with the construction of identity for black women, but personal relationships and individual experiences also influence identity construction.

There is no single way to categorize black woman’s identity. All of the influencing factors that black women experience, consciously or otherwise, make the notion of identity construction "fluid" (hooks, 1990: 20). As a means of illustrating the fluidity, this study works at "de-centering the subject[s]" which encourages the participants to reflect upon what or who is informing their words (Lather, 1991b). This does not suggest that the participants’ perspectives are dismissed; rather that the subject as a "unified and coherent bearer of consciousness" is challenged (Smith, 1989: xxx).

This study explores the influences of identity construction through several stages of interactive discussion between the participants and me. The first stage includes a broadly defined description or "hunch" about identity construction developed as a result of interviewing the participants. Stages to follow include a
more in depth analysis of the meaning making demonstrated in the participants’ narratives via one-on-one discussions between each participant and me. The analysis process attempts to explore the more easily identified factors that influence identity construction as well as those factors that are more deeply embedded in the discourse.

Research Question

How does the presentation of self during the recruitment and selection process for senior higher education administrators contribute to the construction of identity as experienced by black women?

Definition of Key Terms

The meaning and usage of key terms that appear in this study are frequently the subject of literary and theoretical and material debate. This section clarifies the meaning of these terms within the context of this study.

Feminist theory.

For nearly two decades (mid 1960s to mid 1980s) feminist scholarly attention focused on naming the sources of women’s oppression. This attention encouraged different feminisms to emerge. Recent feminist theory or "second-wave feminism" has come to recognize that there
are multiple sources of oppression being played out at various times and in diverse situations (de Lauretis, 1989). This more fluid theoretical perspective is particularly useful in the discussion of and about black women given the multi-sited interplay of race and gender issues (Smith, 1988).

Feminist theorizing is continually recreating itself. Early second wave feminist theorizing was mostly concerned with emancipation on the individual level. Later, categorized groups were valorized and a plethora of kinds of feminisms related to oppression emerged. Within the last decade, feminism has been strongly critiqued by black women for its theoretical use of narrow categories that has not included race relations (Dill, 1887; hooks, 1984; Smith, 1988; Spelman, 1988).

For the purpose of this study, categories are comfortably blurred. For example, I cannot call myself a black feminist because I am white, yet this study is strongly influenced by the work of black feminist writers. Recognizing that feminist theory is gender-centered, other relations such as race and class warrant focused attention. De Lauretis (1989) describes this tendency to move away from categories of feminism as a "non-denominational" approach to feminism.
Postmodernism.

Postmodernism is an openly ever-changing theoretical structure that is "fundamentally contradictory" and "resolutely historical" (Hutcheon, 1988: 4). Within the material base of the information age and the global spread of capitalism, postmodernism is a constant state of struggle where truth is never assumed and new perspectives emerge, often through a critical revisiting of our pasts.

Postmodernism shuns the notion of value-free, apolitical, and universalistic assumptions. Linear accounts of history are replaced by disruptive shifts that are multi-sited and multi-directional. Postmodernism is perceived by some as an inheritance from the 1960s where challenging and questioning were perceived as positive values. "Even if solutions were not offered, knowledge derived from such inquiry may be the only possible condition of change" (Hutcheon, 1988: 8).

The postmodern condition marks the most recent stage of the "legitimation crisis" (Habermas, 1971) where the limits of subjectivity are pushed and interrogated. The perceiving subject is not reified as the all-knowing, fully coherent entity of meaning-making. In this manner the subject is de-centered (Hutcheon, 1988; Lather, 1991b). Postmodernism moves beyond ethnography which depends on the subject to describe a reality by pursuing
the conditions that define the reality. We are not always fully conscious of the power relations in society that guide our social constructions of reality, and a postmodern perspective attempts to bring to the surface those relations.

In this study I am looking at specific power relations and how they influence the construction of identity. The narratives of the participants are the starting point of this postmodern inquiry. Discourse is both an instrument and an effect of power (Hutcheon, 1988). Foucault’s description of discourse best describes its use in this study:

Discourse is not a stable, continuous entity that can be discussed like a fixed formal text; because it is the site of conjunction of power and knowledge, it will alter its form and significance depending on who is speaking, her/his position of power, and significance depending on who is speaking, his/her position of power, and the institutional context in which the speaker happens to be situated. (Foucault, 1980: 100)

Participants and their narratives in postmodern research are not "naively enthroned" but systematically and "critically unveiled" (Thompson quoted in Anderson, 1989: 253). While critical theory has problematized the concept of the fully aware subject, postmodernism’s focus on language as constitutive rather than reflecting raises even more severe problems for understanding the participants’ narratives. Discourse is viewed as both a
"stumbling-block" and "a starting point for an opposing strategy" within a postmodern framework (Foucault, 1980: 101).

"Postmodernism offers feminists ways to work within yet challenge dominant discourses" (Lather, 1991b: 39). Rooted in a philosophy that "dualisms are inadequate for understanding a world of multiple causes and effects," postmodernism provides a limit-breaking scope for feminists to work within (p. 21). However, while postmodernism introduces a range of perspectives, it remains politically ambivalent. Feminism interrupts that ambivalence by introducing a political agenda that focuses on the empowerment of women.

Identity.

Identity is a highly contested term among feminist theorists. Psychoanalytic theorists argue that personality differences between men and women are central to identity (Ferguson, 1989: 96). The differences, they conclude, are not explained by biological factors. Identity is socially produced and strongly influenced by gender-defined roles such as parenting and sexual division of labor. These gender-specific societal roles create a sense of self in women where identity relies on relationships (Benhabib, 1987; Gilligan, 1982). Men, however, are encouraged from their early years to be
autonomous and competitive, hence develop an identity that is based on self-interest (Ibid).

Positioned in the biological school of feminism, Mary Daly (1984) supports the notion that women need to isolate from men in order to develop any sense of self-worth and positive identity. She seeks a separatist solution for women in developing their sense of identity. Daly contends that women should learn to value each others’ authentic self and relate only to women as friends and lovers. In this manner she challenges the dominant patriarchal culture in its negative influence on women’s identity.

The implicit message behind the psychoanalytic and biological determinist feminist theories is that identity is based on a set of fixed qualities, although they disagree about what those fixed qualities are. Those qualities are static and essentialist. Identity is a product, a given unity with atomistic qualities. Whether identity is defined by societal roles or biological determinism, it is still the result of an essence fixed by early childhood or human nature.

In contrast to both psychoanalytic and biologically essentialist theories, I offer an alternative view of identity to anchor this study. My theory rejects the concept of identity as an unchanging, unified
consciousness. Identity is influenced by participating in social practices that shape certain skills and values. One's identity may change at different times and in different contexts. For example, Ferguson (1989) points out that women in higher education may experience participation in social practices that are in conflict. Women who hold positions related to student services and teaching must develop the ability to empathize with others in order to perform well in the job. However, the "rules of the game" that relate to job hiring, promotions, and allocations, require that women develop a more competitive, impersonal set of values in "self defense" (p. 102). Ferguson notes that this juxtaposition of identity is not only prevalent in women in higher education and the helping professions; some women who work in male-dominated fields such as business or politics also face conflicting identity in social practices when paid work is juxtaposed with their "second-shift" as working mothers (p. 103).

Black women may develop an identity that resembles Gilligan's (1982) rights/justice orientation response to a self-defense mechanism against the social opposition of whites. In other settings black women may relate to a more nurturing/caring orientation influenced by strong
family relations (hooks, 1989). The point is that identity cannot be solely defined by gender, race, or the work setting. The psychoanalytic definitions are limiting in that they rely solely on gender issues within social roles and do not allow for multiple societal relations and changes that occur within those relations. The biological determinist theory proposes an extremely narrow view. It theorizes that men are "universally" motivated to dominate women and women's reproductive biology "makes women more nurturant and altruistic in relations with others" (Ferguson, 1989: 97).

Given the contestation over the term identity in the feminist and psychoanalytic literatures, it is necessary to provide a definition for the context of this study. For this study, identity is defined as an ongoing process of self-perception constructed and defined through any combination of conscious and less conscious influences. These influences include particular experiences, aspects of the social climate (i.e., race and gender relations), and components of one's ascribed culture. Identity is

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'Carol Gilligan's work challenged Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development in its inadequate explanation regarding the concerns of women. Her research supports a "feminine voice" of care and nurturing that surfaced as she interviewed 29 women ranging from age fifteen to thirty-three. This voice, of nurturing/caring is related to the need for interpersonal relationships. The rights/justice voice is related to a preference for logic and reason as they apply to principles and rules that govern society.
characterized by shifts in changing societal roles, relationships, experiences, and cultural disruptions.

This study is looking at a particular window of time where identity is constructed. The presentation of self that occurs within an on-campus interview provides fertile ground to explore identity construction within a specific context.

Presentation of self.

The presentation of self is the manifestation of identity; that is, the extent to which one purposefully or inadvertently reveals him/herself. Goffman (1973) was one of the first social scientists to write about the presentation of self. He notes that when an individual enters the presence of others, particular information gets transferred from individual to observers. That information, or the presentation of self "helps define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he [sic] will expect of them and what they may expect of him [sic] (p. 1)."

For the context of this study, the presentation of self takes place throughout the job selection process in varying degrees. The candidates initially present themselves through written communication (i.e. resumes and cover letters). The presentation continues through telephone conversations between themselves and hiring
officials, culminating with the on-campus interview, and with some candidates, follow-up conversations. The on-campus interview is the main focus of this study, although the other aspects are included.

The presentation of self is explored from the perspective of the black women candidates. Candidates are asked to reconstruct how they presented themselves in the on-campus interview. Those responses are explored to seek connections between how identity is constructed and the presentation of self in the particular situation of a job selection process.

Importance of the Study

If higher education institutions wish to recruit "qualified minorities," they need to revisit the concept of organizational fit.¹ Formal mission statements and institutional goals often purport to actively promote a culturally diverse educational environment, yet there is an elitism that operates within the concept of organizational fit that excludes women and minorities. For example, a common excuse from many hiring officials defending their decision to hire white men is, "We can’t

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¹ Organizational fit is the extent to which the faculty and administrators’ professional qualifications, personal attributes, and communicative style mesh with the espoused goals and philosophies of the institution.
find any qualified black women to fill the position" (Washington & Harvey, 1989: 21). In actuality the definition of "qualified" excludes women and minorities in that it is limited to the traditional white male experiential profile. This profile reflects a wealth of career opportunities that have not been made available to black women through racist and sexist societal relations. In addition, minority administrators and faculty are also "typecast" as specialists in ethnic issues rather than as "qualified" candidates in other disciplines (p. 27).

Most recruitment and hiring practices in higher education institutions are conducted under the auspices of hiring administrators who do not threaten the status quo of the existing institution (Thornberry, 1981). The potential for creating a culturally diverse environment under these conditions is minimal. To maximize the potential for diversity, decision makers in higher education institutions need to look beyond the status quo. This vision includes a willingness to disrupt the disproportion of sex and race composition of faculty, staff and students. The long term goal would be to construct an organizational climate that parallels the espoused philosophy of higher education, a climate that is openly hospitable to women and men from diverse races and ethnic groups.
Hiring officials may be committed to increasing cultural diversity yet may have little or no understanding of how differing cultural perspectives are manifested in the interview process. There may be a tendency to see differentness as an inappropriate organizational fit. This study will attempt to make a dimension of this differentness more understandable. The job interview provides an opportune means to explore one aspect of cultural diversity by focusing on the construction of identity and to further the understanding of how identity manifests itself in the self-presentation of six black highly educated women.

The importance of this study is related to process as well as content. The process involves linking the individual perspectives of the participants to a more collective political agenda that promotes social change. The politics of identity construction will become clearer as the researcher probes some of the more deeply embedded assumptions in the narratives of the researched. This study provides the opportunity to explore some of the complexities of race and gender within the context of identity construction and through the lived realities of six black higher education women administrators.
Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter has provided an introduction to this study. Chapter II provides a review of the literature related to the subject of this study and to the theoretical underpinnings. Chapter III describes the methodology of the study, emphasizing the emergence of new paradigm inquiry. The focus of Chapter IV is on the analysis of the data including the participatory component of the analysis. Chapter V ties the study together with a list of practical recommendations, a postmodern discussion of the results of the study, and directions for future research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter I present my interaction with the literature associated with this study. Each section includes an area-specific overview. There is a pattern to this literature review that is repeated in each section. Components of this pattern include: an overview of the major contributions; a description of how the scholarship has influenced my thinking; and what I perceive as the contributions in the literature and what needs to be further explored as it relates to my study.

This study is guided and prompted by the insights of feminist theory. I begin the literature review, therefore, by describing the progression of feminist theory in the United States. In this process I delineate my own feminist convictions and describe my theoretical location within feminism. Next, I focus on the emergence of postmodernism and how it frames this feminist study. I address the context of this study in the section on higher education and focus specifically on the role of
Affirmative Action. In the sections that follow, I introduce the participants in this study, and place them within the theoretical (feminism) and physical (higher education institution) context of the study. The chapter ends with a focus on a key component of second wave feminist theory - identity politics. In this section I present a range of perspectives on identity politics and how I envision its usefulness in this study.

Feminist Theory

From its initial conception in the late 1960s through the mid 1980’s, feminist theory has taken many different directions. For example, in the late 1970s Alison Jaggar presented five major categories of feminism spurred by the women’s movement. In Feminism and Philosophy, she based the distinctions on basic philosophical questions such as the functions of the state, and the notion of what constitutes human, especially female nature. Concrete dividing lines were implicit in this categorization (Jaggar, 1978; Kuhn & Wolpe, 1978). Liberal feminists focused on the legal system as the oppressor, Marxist feminists on the economy, radical feminists on biological reproduction, and Socialist feminists on the relations of patriarchal capitalism. Ultimately, this style of universal, totalizing theory-building held an implicit
danger of essentialism and tended to discount cultural differences.

The lack of attention to racism in discussions about feminist thinking prior to the 1980s produced a conspicuous gap. One may assume that the absence of racism as a fundamental claim of women's oppression accounts for the conspicuously paltry representation of women of color in the women's movement or feminist theory. Gurin and Pruitt (1975) observed that many black women from diverse socio-economic classes believed that the Women's Movement was a "trick-bag" and what was more important was "the solidarity of black men and women for the elimination of racism" . . . because their problems [were] different, they required[ed] a movement all their own" (p. 114-115).

In Feminism and Methodology, Sandra Harding (1987) has the following to say about the contributions of Bonnie Thornton Dill and Joyce Ladner who describe this inclination (of white women in particular) to assume that all women, regardless of color or culture, belong to the same reference group:

Dill, like Joyce Ladner, challenges the tendency of white women to generalize from the situation of white, Western women to that of all women. Black feminists criticize the value of imagining a racially and culturally homogeneous "woman" - one who is really a bourgeois, white, Western woman as the agent of a more progressive history and culture. They
insist that "knowers" (agents of knowledge) are racially and culturally specific, not just of specific genders as many white women have implied. (p. 97)

An increasingly visible theory in feminism that addresses the condition of black women in America is termed black feminism. Black feminism was built on a "tradition of leftist activism, adapting models of socialist reform" (Humm, 1989: 19). Early black feminism, emerged in its most visible form within the years following emancipation from slavery with the Women’s Club Movement for black women (Giddings, 1984). As hooks (1981) points out, the concept of black feminism in the 1960s was that black women suffered a double oppression of racism and sexism, racism being the primary concern. As the mainstream feminist movement emerged, black women built theory upon which issues of class became a fundamental focus as well.

There are differing opinions offered on how black feminist thinking should be defined, but there are no formal distinctions made in the literature within black feminist theory. For example, Valerie Smith (1989) describes a black feminist theory in a very general way as opposed to European feminism which has a history of naming specific theory sources of oppression in its theory of oppression (i.e., biological, economical, societal).
Smith describes black feminist theory as "proceeding from the assumption that black women experience a unique form of oppression in discursive and nondiscursive practices alike because they are victims at once of sexism, racism, and by extension classism" (p. 47).

Another example of black feminist thinking can be found in the writings of Alice Walker. She introduced the term "womanist" to describe the experiences and consciousness of black women in America. In her book entitled In Search of Our Mother's Garden: Womanist Prose, she writes:

**Womanist 1.** From womanish. (Opp. of "girlish," i.e., frivolous, irresponsible not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of color. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children, "You acting womanish," i.e., like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered "good" for one. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another folk expression: "You trying to be grown." Responsible. In charge. Serious (Walker, 1983: xi)

Walker also defines womanism as a consciousness that incorporates racial, cultural, sexual, national, economic, and political considerations.

Walker's use of the term womanist sparked some controversy within the Black community. Some members of the community embraced the term as a way of describing the oppression of black women first and foremost in terms of
race and secondly in terms of gender. This perspective, interestingly, interpreted the term "womanist" to include the plight of black men in the struggle to combat oppression (Brown, 1990). Some Black feminists, however, found the term womanist to be convoluted and distancing from the unique issues of black women (lecture by bell hooks, Ohio State University, November, 1990). bell hooks responds to the controversy in her book entitled Talking Back:

I hear women academics laying claim to the term "womanist" while rejecting "feminist." I do not think Alice Walker intended this term to deflect from feminist commitment, yet this is how it is evoked. Walker defines womanist as black feminist or feminist of color. When I hear black women using the term womanist, it is in opposition to the term feminist...If it is a term for black feminist, then why do those who embrace it reject the other? (hooks, 1989: 181-82)

Hooks is well aware of the process of renaming. She has changed her own name (previously, Gloria Watkins) to the name of her grandmother. She chose the name both out of a dislike for the name "Gloria" (she connected the name with dizziness and frivolity) and out of admiration for her grandmother. hooks' chose to use lower case letters to move away from a "narcissistic focus on self" that leads to what her grandmother called "soul loss" (hooks, 1989: 165). Naming is a "serious process about empowerment," says hooks as she describes the role it takes in ownership
(p. 166). She implies that the term womanist evokes less than serious connotations, when she asks, "What would a womanist politic look like" (p. 182)?

Recent feminist theory has not totally ignored white racism, even though white feminists have paid much less attention to it than have black feminists. Nor have white feminists focused much on explicitly enunciated and espoused positions of white superiority (Spelman, 1985). Much of feminist theory has contributed to what Adrienne Rich (1979) has called white solipsism - "to think, imagine, and speak as if whiteness described the world" (p. 229). Even more recently, feminists have become increasingly aware that the voices of race and social class have been silenced by universalizing the experience of women (Fraser and Nicholson, 1989; Harding, 1987; Nicholson, 1989; and Riley, 1988).

Attention to moving beyond biological determinism and categorical essentialism to the concept of gender as a process accomplished through social interaction has been evident in feminist writings since the mid 1980's (Connel, 1987; de Lauretis, 1989; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Binary oppositions of men and women are now being open to new concepts that acknowledge diversity among and within men and women. Sandra Harding in *Feminism and Methodology* writes:
Notice that it is "women’s experiences" in the plural which provide the new resources from research. This formulation stresses several ways in which the best feminist analyses differ from traditional ones. For one thing, once we realized that there is no universal man, but only culturally different men and women, then "man’s" eternal companion - "woman" - also disappeared. That is, women come only in different classes, races, and cultures; there is no "woman" and no "woman’s experience" . . . . Not only do our gender experiences vary across cultural categories; they also are often in conflict in any one individual’s experience. (Harding, 1987: 7)

In the review of the literature on feminism, one dimension has been made clear. There is no such thing as an all-purpose feminism. Prominent feminist writers have demonstrated through their multi-centered sources of oppression that ready made formulas do not exist. Feminist theory needs to continue to be built upon and remain "absolutely flexible and readjustable" [to accommodate] women’s own experience of difference from Woman and of the differences among women" (de Lauretis, 1986: 14). Race, class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality are only some of the more obvious factors that influence the identity of women.

There is a sense of "empowerment and pleasure" in naming, particularly when it involves one’s convictions, theory, or frame of reference (hooks, 1989: 166). However, caution must be taken in forming hasty conclusions and pointing fingers at single-caused sources of oppression. This quick fix method has prompted much
criticism of feminism theory in the past.

The feminist theory that I support is one that is still under construction. I am a strong advocate of feminism, but I propose we move beyond the name game of developing essentialist categories, to developing "political paradigms and radical models of social change" (hooks, 1989: 182). For this change to occur, a model of feminism needs to be constructed that enhances the understanding of black experience and gender. hooks observes that "the most basic task confronting black feminists is to educate one another about sexism and about the ways resisting sexism can empower black women (Ibid)."

This means placing importance on not only individual concerns, but concerns that affect a greater social context as well by building political solidarity to "transform self, community, and society" (Ibid).

Feminist research has the social construction of gender at the center of inquiry (Lather, 1988). Black women may experience contextual shifts between race and gender as a central focus, therefore this study calls for an approach that "produces an awareness of the complexity, contingency and fragility of historical forms and events" (Smart quoted in Lather, 1988: 576).

De Lauretis (1989), although accepting the concept of gender as a social construction, challenges feminists to
look beyond the simple experience-based component of that construction. She notes that the valorization of experience as the overriding influence on identity is as over-generalized as the earlier "branding" which occurred with the separate categorization of early feminist theory (p. 4). "Identity is an active construction and a discursively mediated political interpretation of one’s history" (p. 12). The project of the most recent feminist theory is to interrogate the connections between experience and "social power, and resistance" (p. 9).

Over the past decade feminist theory has witnessed a shift in focus from the concerns of the individual to the intersection of the individual and the social structure. The vision has expanded. However, it should be acknowledged that liberal feminist thinking, with its focus on individual change, is alive and well among espoused contemporary feminists. It is naive and inaccurate to assume that at all times we practice feminism for the greater good of society. White middle class women like myself need to acknowledge our own biases and perspectives that are grounded in being a part of the "privileged" society. Within a feminist/postmodern context, an effort is made to explore the multiplicity of feminist sites that operate in our lives. My intention in this study is to explore those known connections and to
shed light on the less obvious connections. This exploration is guided by what de Lauretis calls "non-denominational" feminist theory; that is, I recognize that sources of oppression and empowerment shift among different combinations of people and experiences. This study connects the experience of identity construction with social power and resistance as a means to bring about organizational change.

Catharine Stimpson (1971) noted, with regard to women, there have been three kinds of problems in higher education: omission, distortions, and trivializations. Research in higher education that is grounded in feminist principles has great potential to combat those problems. Feminism is one of many educational values, and there is no such thing as a value-free education. Critics of feminist research in higher education maintain that the perspective is too "value laden," while not seeing the role of values in their own approaches (Makosky & Paludi, 1990: 7). Academics in higher education is rooted in a history of tradition. Scholarship is not a "disembodied intellectual exercise" (p. 8). The real issue is reluctance to recognize scholarship that is laden with values about women (McMillen, 1986).

Most academics are not aware of the extent to which their values influence their work as scholars. Most view
their work as objective, if not in fact, value-neutral. There is little recognition of how the values and beliefs of members in the academic community have shaped and created the intellectual and social climate. My posture is that values and beliefs are an integral part of self and they influence the academy through efforts of research, teaching, and service.

Feminism has provided illuminating responses to research questions that had not surfaced in traditional disciplines. These questions addressed provocative issues such as battered women, sexual harassment, sexism in psychotherapy. Feminist thinking is often enhanced by examining the disparities between individual perceptions and experiences and existing theories (Makosky & Paludi, 1990). The intent of this study is to generate further understanding of identity construction that is related to an understudied group in the higher education literature—highly educated black women. In addition, my goal is to enhance and expand my feminist thinking and engage in this process with the research participants.

Postmodernism represents a recent shift that rejects any aspect of universal claims and value-free knowledge. An emerging body of literature addresses the need to explore how the combination of feminism and postmodernism can promote social change for the betterment of women
(Lather, 1991b; Flax, 1990; Fraser & Nicholson, 1990). The interruptions in the discourse between feminism and postmodernism are beneficial in the struggle "to do cultural change work in a post-foundational context" (Lather, 1991b: 31). In the following section I will describe postmodernism and elaborate on how the paradoxical framework of postmodern feminism is best suited to this study.

Postmodernism

... the profound uncertainty about what constitutes an adequate depiction of social "reality. (Lather, 1991b: 21)

Postmodernism exhibits a "profound skepticism regarding universal claims about the existence, nature and powers of reason, progress, science, language, and the subject/self" (Harding, 1986: 28). In postmodern research or critique, the role of the researcher or writer is foregrounded. The gender, race, and class of the researcher/participants or writer/subject are acknowledged as influential elements in discourse. Theory is positioned within historical and cultural frameworks "less easily inviting the danger of false generalizations" (Nicholson, 1989: 9).

In Feminism/Postmodernism (1990), Nicholson describes some of the underpinnings of postmodernism:
The proponents of such analyses, linked under the label of "postmodernists," have argued that the academy's ideal of "a God's eye view" must be situated within the context of modernity, a period whose organizing principles they claim are on the decline. The postmodern critique of modernity is wideranging; it focuses on such diverse elements as the modern sense of the self and subjectivity, the idea of history as linear and evolutionary, and the modernist separation of art and mass culture. (p. 3)

An important component of postmodernism is the act of "deconstructing" that which we have come to know as truth and to question sources of truth. "Postmodern discourses are all deconstructive in that they seek to distance us from and make us skeptical about beliefs concerning truth, knowledge, power, the self, and language that are often taken for granted within and serve as legitimation for contemporary Western culture" (Flax, 1989:41). Procedures are set up to continuously demystify the realities we create and to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal (Caputo, in Lather, 1991b: 13).

"Postmodernism and feminism have emerged as two of the most important political-cultural currents of the last decade" (Fraser and Nicholson, 1990: 19). They have both influenced the development of new paradigms of inquiry and both questioned the "traditional philosophical underpinnings" of social criticism but with very different agendas (p. 19). While postmodernists have focused on the philosophical dimension, feminists have engaged in the
challenges of social politics and practices therein.

As noted earlier, first wave feminism has been much critiqued for its inattention to historical and cultural diversity among women. Postmodernism, on the other hand, has been criticized by feminists for its lack of political anchoring (Fraser and Nicholson, 1990). The combination of these two approaches to inquiry are in conflict, but they also serve to interrupt each other in a way that broadens the scope of what it means to do work in the human sciences. This approach illustrates that there is more than one way to tell a story. The postmodern feminist approach problematizes the researched regarding their assumptions of meaning-making, and problematizes the researcher in his/her position as "the grand interpreter." Ferguson (1991) refers to the "tension" within current feminist theory between "articulating women’s voice and deconstructing gender" (p. 322). The postmodern feminist perspective incorporates the participants’ perspectives in studying a phenomenon, but recognizes that "there is always more to know than the existing self-understanding makes available" (p. 328).

What does postmodernism mean for this study? bell hooks (1990) offers a critique of postmodernism that is particularly salient when research is focused on black women:
The failure to recognize a critical black presence in the culture and not in most scholarship and writing on postmodernism compels a black reader, particularly a black female reader, to interrogate her interest in a subject where those who discuss and write about it seem not to know black women exist or even to consider the possibility that we might be somewhere writing or saying something that should be listened to, or producing art that should be seen, heard, approached with intellectual seriousness. This is especially the case with works that go on and on about the way in which postmodernist discourse has opened up a theoretical terrain where "difference and Otherness" can be considered legitimate issues in the academy. (p. 24)

hooks illustrates the irony in the claims of postmodern thinkers to have opened up theoretical discussion of "difference and Otherness" when she asks, "How can they be considered legitimate issues in the academy, when references to works of black women are not within postmodern discourse" (p. 23)? However, hooks sees postmodernism as having the potential of "opening up new possibilities for the construction of self" allowing the "affirm[ing] of multiple black identities and varied black experience" (p. 28). Through the postmodern critique of essentialism, which challenges notions of universal identity within "mass culture and mass consciousness," it may open up new possibilities for the construction of self and the "assertion of agency" (p. 28).

hooks adds that there needs to be a meaningful
connection between postmodernism and the critical project\(^1\) when the discourse involves the black experience. This connection is even more necessary when the subject of the discourse is the black experience as told by black women and the interpreter of the discourse is made by a white woman. By juxtaposing feminist thinking with postmodern thinking, the position of privilege that I hold as the researcher and as a white woman in society is foregrounded in the process of gathering data and in its analysis. From a critical feminist lens the data are presented through a dialogue that focuses on gender inequities and how the participants have the ability to change their worlds when they learn a feminist strategy. Such a presentation positions the participants as having limited ability and the researcher as having all the answers. Postmodernism interrupts the critical feminist agenda by highlighting the context of the unequal distribution of power in the process of that interpretation, and how those issues influence how the story gets told.

Elizabeth Meese (1986) offers further insight into the value of this peculiar combination of postmodern and

\(^1\)The critical project refers to the effort to develop empirical research that advances emancipatory knowledge and seeks to empower the participants by recognizing their intellectual capacities to change aspects of their lived experience. Inherent in this process is the understanding that the lived experience in an unequal society includes the need to struggle against privilege and oppression (Lather, 1991: 55). The critical project in this study is grounded in feminist theory.
feminism. Meese asserts that deconstruction is "problematic" if it resists an ideological commitment or is unwilling to "support sociopolitical change" (p. 83). However, she notes that "the value of deconstruction to feminism rests in the power of its sociocultural critique of difference - a critique that exposes, among other things, the domination structuring relationships between man and woman, white and black . . ." (p. 82). In other words, deconstruction without a political agenda, leaves one asking, "So now what?!

Meese and hooks shed some light on a limitation of a postmodern approach to research. It is one thing to expose oppression, and quite another to become informed enough to develop strategies or recommendations for social change. What I am supporting is a postmodern feminist approach that takes place both within and against the critical paradigm. The project of deconstruction is to open up a central space for the participants' perspectives. The deconstructive project within a critical paradigm, however, moves beyond interpretation by further examining what and/or who has influenced the meaning-making. The goal is to provoke a better understanding of those influences for both the participant(s) and the researcher so that they may transfer that knowledge into strategic thoughtful action.
A postmodern feminist approach, in its theoretical grounding, supports a critical understanding of identity construction.

This study, in its attempt to present an informed theory of identity construction has the potential for promoting social change in two major areas, one that is theoretical and one that is practical. On a theoretical level, this study will contribute to the feminist literature related to black professional women. Most studies about black women tend to focus on women in the working class or women on welfare that form general conclusions about all black women (Dill, 1987). These studies perpetuate the myth of the monolithic homogenous construction of identity among black women (Helms, 1990; Ladner, 1987; Smith, 1989). This study with its focus on highly educated women, challenges that myth and recognizes the social class dimension among the black women participants as a significant factor in research about minority population.

On a practical level, it is my goal to provide insight related to the concept of diversity as it is used in higher education setting. Search committees and hiring officials are in a position to scrutinize candidates for administrative positions. Some of this scrutiny takes place in a formal interview setting through
the candidates' presentation of self. Judgments are made on the self-presentation that relate to desirable qualifications such as communication skills, work experience, professional aspirations - characteristics that are defined by the dominant culture and therefore permeated with implicit assumptions. This study will contribute to the understanding of the concept of diversity as it highlights the perspectives of black women who have participated in selection processes.

Higher Education

Educational institutions, particularly those within the post-secondary sector, strive to advance a better society. For example, the following quote is taken from the mission statement of the university that provides the setting for this study. It reads, "Through the dissemination of knowledge, the university serves not only the individual but acts as a force to shape society for the common good." The academy is commonly thought of a place where new ideas, approaches, and views are welcome (Kerr, 1982). Institutional values are espoused through mission statements, departmental goals, and written guidelines that determine the purpose of various committees and task forces.

Although educational institutions give lip service to
being more liberal than the larger society, the demographics illustrate a conservative viewpoint. For example, there are more women enrolled in colleges and universities than men, but women students are still concentrated in female sex-typed departments; 74 percent of the B.A.'s in Education are awarded to women, as are 81 percent of the B.A.'s in Social Work (Seager and Olson, 1986). In addition, faculty and university administrative positions remain male dominated, even in the traditionally female disciplines. Less than one-quarter of university faculty positions are filled by women with less than one quarter of those positions filled by minority women (Richardson, 1988).

Much of the literature on higher education refers to the academy's commitment to promote positive social change (Altbach & Berdahl, 1981; Kerr, 1982). This belief is built on the assumption that knowledge is one of the great moving forces in American society, and higher education institutions are sites where knowledge is acquired. A feminist critique of how knowledge is constructed includes how that knowledge is related to issues of truth and power (Meese, 1986). This feminist critique is linked to Foucault's philosophy that "truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power" (quoted in Gordon, 1980: 131).

Institutional Affirmative Action statements in the
post-secondary sector provide an illustration of not so much truth as the politics of truth. For example, many colleges and universities develop Affirmative Action statements that support the recruitment of women and minority faculty, administrators, and students. However, women and minorities are progressing very minimally among the top level administrative and faculty positions who are involved with primary responsibility in managing the institution (Wilson, 1989).

To further illustrate this point, the Affirmative Action statement published by the university in this study states, "Each of us shares the responsibility to recruit, support, assist, mentor, and thus retain the women and minorities who wish to pursue their academic dreams and career goals at ___ University." The relationship between the espoused philosophy of the affirmative action statement and the visible evidence of that philosophy may be described as the "politics of truth." For example, a closer examination reveals that minorities and women at this university are concentrated in positions that are functionally limited in regards to the decision-making body of the institution (Sagara and Johnsrud, 1987). Of the 34 vice-presidents, vice-provosts, and deans at this same university, there are three black men, four white women, and no minority women. From the 119 department
chairperson positions 107 are held by men and 12 by women. One of the men is black and eight are Asian (Data from the University Personnel Office). There are no minority women. These data provoke a skepticism regarding "the commitment to overcome past and present discrimination" (taken from the institutional Affirmative Action statement).

An alternative reading of these data suggests that women and minorities are marginally welcomed in the academic community, since the majority of women and black administrators hold positions in mid-level management and/or minority-specific student services (Sagara & Johnsrud, 1987). Yet another reading of these data may relate to the supply and demand or pipeline theory that explains the absence of qualified women and minorities (ACE, 1989; Carroll, 1982; Washington & Harvey, 1989 Wiley, 1991). These theories support the premise that past discrimination denied minorities and women the opportunities for acquiring terminal degrees and qualified work experiences. Therefore they do not presently possess the educational and/or experiential background for senior positions. However, even when administrative positions were on the increase in the late 1970s, black women and men with Ph.D.s were not hired in proportion to the available administrative openings (Washington & Harvey,
1989). As the positions became less available and the pool of black women with Ph.D.s increased, the hiring of black women decreased.  

A look at higher education in a historical context shows that its foundations are built on the exclusion of women. Women were excluded from entry until 1837, when the first women (white) students were admitted to Oberlin College in Ohio, 200 years after Harvard College was founded for men (Chamberlain, 1988). The first American black woman received her B.A. in 1862, also from Oberlin (Cooper, 1969).

The Federal Government responded to the minimal representation of minorities in public colleges and universities by the creation of Title VI, The Civil Rights Act, in 1964. It reads:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964

In the fall of 1970 the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF) filed a class action suit in the federal district court in Washington, D.C., on behalf of

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2Total number of Ph.D.s awarded to Black women in 1976 was 442 and in 1985 the number was 593, showing a 34.1% increase. In 1985 half of the doctorates earned by black men and women have been in education (National Research Council, quoted in Washington & Harvey, 1989: 23)
31 students. They filed the suit against the Department of Health Education and Welfare (HEW) and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) for failing to enforce Title VI against the state of North Carolina (Malaney, 1987). This case, Adams vs. Richardson, prompted cases to be filed against other states, for similar reasons. The Adams case, as it became known, launched a twenty year (thus far) Federal investigation that named nineteen states as Adams States because they were not operating within compliance to Title VI. Those states were mandated by Federal law to produce changes that ensured equity in higher education and to provide evidence of those changes (Pruitt, 1988).

Black women rarely held places of influence in the administration of higher education prior to the early 1970’s except at women’s colleges. A Carnegie Commission Report (1973) concluded the following:

If Black women are thinly represented on faculties, especially male fields, they are so rarely represented in top academic administrative positions as to be practically non existent in the upper echelons.

The federal government’s intervention, with the passing of Title IX in 1972, however, marked significant changes for women in higher education in the years that followed. The mandate states:

Sex discrimination in all educational programs receiving financial support from the federal government, including discrimination against
students as well as discrimination in employment. (Executive Order 11375)

Chamberlain (1988) notes that in mid-1970s the total number of those employed in full time executive, administrative, and managerial positions in higher education institutions was 102,465. Of this total 23.1 percent were women, including 2.8 percent minority women. By 1981 the total had increased to 116,557, of which 30.2 percent were women, including 3.4 percent minority women. During this time period there was also a 13.8% increase in administrative positions in colleges and universities around the country.

The decade of the 1980’s, however, was witness to a backlash of conservative views on issues pertinent to women. The election of Ronald Reagan and later George Bush heralded a new American patriotism that sought out ideals of capitalism and politics to uplift the mainstream European American male. The social climate marked an increase in racial violence, discrimination against women, and equity setbacks for minorities on college campuses.\(^3\) Not surprisingly, the decade of the 1980s was one where black women administrators made minimal advancement into

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\(^3\) Wiley (1991) states, "Reagan twanged the heartstrings against quotas and the civil rights establishment. Education issues often were at the core of debate as school desegregation suits filed by the federal government slowed during administration and he became a standard-bearer for schools and colleges with discriminatory policies" (p.21-22).
the circles of mainstream teaching or senior administrative posts (Wilson, 1989). Undoubtedly the influence of the Federal Government as well as the academic gatekeepers were instrumental in regard to the less than adequate representation of black women in the post-secondary sector.

Altbach and Berdahl (1981) contend that higher education institutions occupy a powerful space in the societal structure providing new ideas and theories upon which societal functioning is modeled (Altbach & Berdahl, 1981). However, those ideas and theories need further examination in regard to women and minorities, particularly black women, as they are constructed within systems of academic and administrative power that are dominated by white men.

**Affirmative action and higher education**

"Opposition to any oppression lightens the load on all of us." (Alice Walker, 1983: 354)

Gloria Hull and Barbara Smith present a chapter entitled "The Politics of Black Women's Studies" in All the Blacks are Men, All the Women are White, But Some of Us Are Brave. They state:

Higher education for Black women has always been of serious concern to the Black community. Recognition that education was a key mechanism for challenging racial and economic oppression created an ethic that defined education for women as important as education for men (1982: xxv)
Affirmative action plans within higher education can be the means to enhance education, economic, and social opportunities. The enactment of Title IX (Executive Order 11375) specifically prohibiting sex discrimination in education encouraged the general movement of affirmative action dialogues within colleges and universities. The Higher Education Guidelines (1972) had this to say about the meaning of affirmative action:

The premise of the affirmative action concept of the Executive Order is that unless positive action is undertaken to overcome the effects of systemic institutional forms of exclusion and discrimination, a benign neutrality in employment practices will tend to perpetuate the 'status quo' indefinitely.

The overall goal of affirmative action is to create mechanisms that ensure both entrance and promotions within universities for members of specific groups who have systematically been denied access and advancement. For black women, the purpose of affirmative action is not only to ensure fair and equitable treatment, but also to correct imbalances where preferential consideration for positions has historically been reserved for white men (McCombs, 1989).

Much has been written about affirmative action plans and the espoused commitment of higher education institutions to recruit and promote black faculty and administrators (Chamberlain, 1988: Fulton, 1983;
Sudarkasa, 1987; Thornberry, 1981; Washington & Harvey, 1989). However, the results of these efforts do not demonstrate success, with black women representing only 4.3 percent of the administrative positions in higher education in the United States. This figure represents a gain of less than a percent over a ten year period in which administrative positions have more than doubled (ACE, 1987). The majority of the positions held by black women are not within the mainstream of the organization and rarely are black women considered for job changes (Wilson, 1989).

The dynamics of Affirmative Action within higher education are complex, and institutional commitment has fluctuated over the years. Affirmative Action plans have suffered serious reversals over the last decade with the influx of Reagan and Bush politics. Harriet McCombs (1989) states that these reversals exist amidst a number of contradictions. One contradiction juxtaposes the relationship between the noncommittal response to Affirmative Action by higher education institutions with

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*The most recent breakdown in these numbers is cited in *Fact Book on Women in Higher Education*, Touchton & Davis, 1991: 107. Data from "The Equal Opportunity Commission, 1985 EEO-6 Summary Report," are quoted in this publication. These data include: 43,698 women (35% of a total population of 124,374 male and female administrators) were full-time administrators in higher education institutions. Of these women administrators, 86% were white, non-Hispanic; 10% black, non-Hispanic; 2% were Hispanic; 2% Asian; and less than 1% were American Indian.*
the perception of higher education as the most liberal institution in our society (p. 130). McCombs notes that even though issues of racial and sexual oppression are most clearly articulated and researched in higher education settings, policies that reflect fair and equitable recruitment practices are not given high priority. Moving a step beyond McCombs’ insight on Affirmative Action calls for the need to coordinate efforts between commitment and action. This study is an endeavor to explore the relationship between commitment and action by focusing on the perspectives of some key players involved with a commitment-to-action scenario. These players include black women candidates who are both considering and being considered for senior administrative posts within the institution.

The single most frequently cited factor influencing black student retention in higher education is the visibility of black role models in the faculty and administration ranks (Washington & Harvey, 1989). However, universities and colleges are focusing most of their attention on increasing minority student enrollment without focusing attention on what or who encourages minority students to stay once they enter the academy (Magner, 1989). Less attention is given to making the environment a more hospitable place for minority students
to live and learn. One component of a more hospitable environment includes the presence of minority administrators (Flemming, 1984; Moses, 1989; Pruitt, 1985).

One of the major criticisms of Affirmative Action is that it denies individual merit and establishes a concept of group rights (Chamberlain, 1988; Sudakarsa, 1988; Washington & Harvey, 1989). This way of thinking is the antithesis of Affirmative Action philosophy. Affirmative Action strives to remove the group mentality by setting aside gender or race related attributes (imagined or otherwise) to judge persons solely on individual merit. Therefore, Affirmative Action furthers the concept of individual merit rather than denying it.

The second major criticism of Affirmative Action is that standards in quality are lowered by forced hiring of less qualified people (Chamberlain, 1988; Fulton, 1983; Washington & Harvey, 1989). The operative word in that criticism is "quality." If quality is viewed as synonymous with professional background experience, then black women will rarely compete with white men on an equal level. Past practices of discrimination regarding race and gender have prevented women, particularly black women, from progressing up the traditional career ladder. A closer scrutiny would find that many white men who
progressed up the "traditional career ladder" did not have the credentials that were deemed necessary for women, such as a Ph.D. (Wilson, 1990).

While Affirmative Action may not have accomplished all the goals it aspired to in its original conception, it has nevertheless been a major focus on college and university campuses. It has provided the legal foundation for the progress of women and minorities, and at the very least spurred the idea of sex and race equity in higher education. Supporters of Affirmative Action efforts run the risk of giving up as they encounter minimal progress. However, Chamberlain (1988) points out "the battle is not over, we are just entering a new phase" (p. 187). It is a time for continued analysis, monitoring, and developing new strategies to expose subtle forms of discrimination.

This study is an effort to expose some of those subtle forms of racism that include denying cultural difference. A tremendous gap in perceptions often exists between minority and white colleagues, because of the inability of white faculty and administrators to hear the voices of minorities (Washington & Harvey, 1989). This study provides a useful site to confront those struggling perceptions. By asking black women to focus on how they constructed their identity in their experience as a candidate for an administrative position, they may better
inform one dimension of cultural difference that is not readily recognized by the dominant culture of the academy - identity.

**Black Women in Higher Education**

Black women have made a commitment to stay within higher education because of the potential for challenging oppression, laying the groundwork for alternative approaches to research, and developing leaders in education. The motivation to remain is sustained by a sense of personal and community responsibilities. These responsibilities are expressions of what has been termed, "individual/collective identity" of black women - that is, both the personal (individual) and social (collective) histories that constitute their identity. (McCombs, 1989: 132)

A report funded by the Ford Foundation for Association of American Colleges under the Project on the Status and Education of Women entitled **Black Women in Academe** (Moses, 1989), focused exclusively on the special concerns of black women. The report was written in response to the general assumption that black women’s issues in the academy were the same as those of white women or black men. Moses writes:

Black women have been participants in higher education for more than a century, but they are almost totally absent from the research literature . . . [and] research on minorities and women often ignores the unique experiences of black women. The result is that black women are virtually invisible. (p. 1)

Although the intent of researchers in that body of
literature was not necessarily to exclude black women administrators, the result of this kind of categorization produced a deafening silence of black women's voices.

Each black woman in higher education brings a distinct personal history and unique set of experiences into her college or university setting. She also inherits an ethnocultural legacy - the cumulative experience of black women as a people. McCombs (1985) refers to this phenomenon as an "I/We" identity: "I am what I experience as an individual and what we experience as a people" (McCombs, 1985: 10). Her theory draws its foundation from the work of George Allport (1954) who contends that a person's collective identity is not chosen but "ascripted." The ascribed identity is inherent - one is born into a race of people rich with culture and tradition. McCombs juxtaposes an ascribed world view (We) with one that is based on individual personal experiences (I) to demonstrate the "I/We identity". Janet Helms (1990) adds another dimension to the interconnectedness of identities which is often ignored or glossed over in the literature. She describes a "reference group orientation" which includes identity issues that are linked to organizational membership, such as social class ties.

McCombs maintains that the mainstream cultural identity parallels that of the white male. This culture
is a system of organized rules which does not acknowledge the collective identity of black women. The presence of mainstream cultural identity in higher education institutions is manifested through the curriculum. A case in point is the development of Women's Studies and Black Studies over the past two decades. Although strides have been made in curricular diversity, Women's Studies and/or Black Studies are still not viewed as mainstream academia (Guy-Sheftall, 1989). If colleges and universities indeed house such programs, the teachings and publications produced by its faculty are often not viewed as "scholarly" (Pearson, Shavlik, & Touchton, 1989).

The sex and race representation of decision-makers in higher education settings is another example of the overriding presence of mainstream cultural identity. White men continue to dominate the ranks of tenured faculty and senior administrators. Women of all races are disproportionately represented in nontenured or "marginal" academic and administrative positions such as instructor, research associate, or professional librarian (Pearson, Shavlick, & Touchton, 1989).

Implicit social rewards such as status and higher pay scales are associated with mainstream cultural identity fuelling incentives to become a member. The mainstream culture that operates within higher education institutions
sends mixed messages to black women. For example, research related to black and/or gender issues is often not perceived as academic and therefore not recognized financially or professionally within the institution. Black women are often engaged in this kind of research, and the underlying message from the mainstream culture is that there is no place for research on or about black women.

In other instances only the race and sex of black women is acknowledged in higher education settings. For example, black women are often appointed to serve exclusively on minority-related committees. The message is clear that the mainstream culture expects individual black women to be the spokesperson for their entire race and sex. In this manner only the collective identity is recognized and this acknowledgment is not rewarded in terms of promotion or institutional decision making.

Whether it is labeled a Collective/Individual identity or something else, the challenge that black women administrators face to "fit" in predominantly white higher education organizations is clear (McCombs, 1986). Personal and professional choices are inherent in the process. Black women interviewing for senior administrative positions usually have an experiential background in the university, and they are aware of some
of the specific challenges involved with organizational fit. How or if black women experience tension between their identity and the identity of the organization and some of its members is not known. This study explores that organizational dynamic.

Stanfield (1985) illuminates the complexity of minority identity construction even further. He focuses on the plight of women and people of color to create and maintain "social knowledge" in a world that is dominated by an ethnocentric Euro-American male attitude (p. 388). The definition of social knowledge is determined largely through cultural context. Stanfield notes that the validation of that knowledge is a matter of power and privilege. The privileged subset in American society that does not include women and people of color interprets the "official" reality (p. 389). The societal leaders are largely dominated by white men. This privileged group imposes its expectation on the dominated group. For example, blacks are taught "official American history" that excludes major contributions of black Americans. In the espoused American history and ideology everyone is considered equal and hard work is rewarded. However, sexism and racism intercede in the reward system as white males dominate senior ranking positions, the highest pay scales, and are the overwhelming majority in public
Stanfield (1985) observes that "only through gross reification is it possible to explain the social without regard for the psychological" (p. 394). He implies that people are not always fully aware of how social interactions construct and shape attitudes, personality development, and feelings about self and others.

For black women the combination of social and psychosocial factors generate many possibilities for identity construction. Race, gender, and class are some of the obvious interactive components. However, those and other factors which influence the process of identity construction are not always interpreted through a focus on human agency or local knowledge (Anderson, 1989). What is called for in this study is a multi-layered methodological approach that examines identity both as it is consciously constructed via one's individual biography and identity that is influenced by factors that are ascribed and/or not easily verbalized and/or recognized by the research participant. With this approach, the analysis of the data emerges from a fluid borrowing between the act of story telling from the perspectives of the participants and the theory that grounds the researcher's perspective. A goal for the researcher in this interactive process is for each perspective to better inform each other and for everyone
to "get smarter" in the process (Lather, 1991b).

The emerging body of literature on black feminism addresses the need for a more highly developed sense of race and gender consciousness (Collins, 1988; hooks, 1989, 1990; Smith, 1985; Walker, 1983). Experiences influence identity construction, and a job interview is one of those influencing experiences. Because of the complexities of race and gender, the full implications and directions black women are now taking in the presentation of self are not yet fully understood by all involved, including black women (McCombs, 1985).

**Black women and identity issues**

Joyce Ladner's (1972) study of young black women uncovered unique patterns of value-formation that did not adhere to men or white women. Her study involved field work in a black ghetto where she spent a "considerable amount of time" interviewing, socializing, and "hanging out" with a group of teenage girls (p. 81). The sample consisted of several peer groups which changed in number and composition over the duration of the study. She used a systematic open-ended interview that related to life histories, attitudes and behaviors that responded to upcoming womanhood. During the last year and a half of her study she randomly selected thirty girls between the ages of thirteen and eighteen to participate in her final
analysis.

Ladner found that attitudes, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships were adaptations of three recurring factors. These factors included: recognition of the harsh reality of their environment; the cultural images of black womanhood; and the conflicting values and norms of the wider society. She concluded that there was an explicit connection among political, social, and economic forces that fed into the formation of values (p. 286). Ladner’s work emphasized the strengths of black women, rather than focusing on weaknesses as was often the case in previous studies on black women (e.g. Hentoff, 1966; Farber, 1970; Moynihan, 1970). She brought to light values and behaviors that emerged from a long tradition of black pride as a coping mechanism in the face of racism and sexism.

Ladner’s (1972) study on value formation of adolescent girls supports Barbara Smith’s thinking on the how black women’s identity is influenced by many factors, some conscious and others that are more deeply imbedded and more difficult to describe. Ladner eludes to this embeddedness when she talks about the powerful influence of the history of black women as a people. She states, "How was I to know that racism and sexism had formed a blueprint for my mistreatment long before I had arrived"
(p. 115)? "The identity an individual assumes is crucial to an understanding of her behavior (p. 102)"

Ladner’s (1972) linkage of identity and behavior transfers to this study. The participants are black middle class professionals rather than poor black adolescent girls, but the concept of linkage is the same. In the context of this study, the behavior that is linked to identity is the presentation of self. Ladner found that the environment largely shaped "what kind of form and content identity assumes" (p. 102). In this analysis Ladner does not assume a full sense of agency on behalf of the participants. That is, the girls are not always aware of how their sex, race, and economic class had influenced their identity. For example, when Ladner asked "Ethel" if she ever regretted getting pregnant, fifteen year old Ethel responds:

> Not to me, I didn’t; yet it looks like I did because now I can’t go skating and swimming and to other places I used to go . . . . After I have the baby I think I’ll change; I don’t know; I might do the same things, go skating, dancing and act jivey like I used to do with my other friends. (p. 226-227)

Many of Ethel’s peers were pregnant or had children. All or most were unmarried and living in their parents’ homes. Ethel appeared to view her pregnancy at age fifteen as a temporary interruption in her adolescent lifestyle. Single, teenage motherhood was the norm in the housing
projects.

The piece that is missing in Ladner’s study is how identity and behaviors potentially change. Instead, Ladner presents identity as static rather than moving. For example, many of the girls talked about a future that included college, but Ladner offers no insight on how or if the girls may experience changes in identity and behaviors.

The work of Paula Giddings (1984) examined the impact of black women on race and gender politics in the United States from the earliest accounts of black women feminists such as Sojourner Truth and Mary Church Terrell. Giddings recalls the work of Anna Cooper, a middle class, educated black woman who dedicated her life to the emancipation of black women. Believing that the liberation of the African American race lies in the hands of the average woman, Giddings recounts the words of Anna Cooper written in 1861:

We must point to homes, average homes . . . .
Only the BLACK WOMAN can say "when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me." (p. 82)

Cooper’s identity was not limited to her middle class companions. Born a slave in 1848 in Raleigh, North Carolina, she was active in the suffrage movement,
particularly as it pertained to the plight of black women. From the point of her graduation from college, Cooper became a staunch supporter of education as a means to liberation. Her view on education was that "the world needed the education of women to unlock the feminine side of truth, as valid as the masculine side and of equal importance" (Giddings, 1983: 123).

Erlene Stetson’s (1981) research resulted in a book of poems written by black women from 1746 to 1980. These contributions to the literature broke the artistic silence of black women who lived many years ago. Over the centuries the "problem of establishing an identity had drawn black women poets to similar themes, and even similar energies" (p. xiii).

Biklen & Brannigan (1980) present a series of essays by feminist scholars on the subject of women, their history, and the nature of leadership in Women and Educational Leadership. In "The Black Female Administrator: Women in a Double Bind," Rosie Doughty has the following to say about black women administrators:

The black female administrator is in a double bind, perhaps even a triple bind. She embodies two negative statuses simultaneously. One is her color, black, and the other is her sex, female, neither of which society values very highly. This dual status necessarily creates a third status, black female, an anomaly in the executive suite. To say that she is in a double bind merely means that the black woman is in a
position that restricts her freedom of action and choice. It is not an unusual position for the majority of black women. Given the tenor of times, one does not anticipate a significant change in the near future. There is no monolithic prototype of the black female administrator. Many models exist, but the common denominator for all black females is their continual bout with racial oppression in their lives that stems primarily from their dual position. (p. 165)

Doughty (1980) acknowledges the impact of racism and sexism on the black administrators, but despite these commonalities she resists a "monolithic model." In other words, identity is not a generic formula. Later in the chapter she notes the importance of social class. For example, although black women administrators may live in middle class neighborhoods, wear middle class clothes, and exhibit middle class tendencies, many still share a similar employment history with their less fortunate sisters, "regardless of class or job category" (p. 165). The complexity of race, gender, and class issues are tied into the complexity of the history that characterized blacks in Africa and later in the colonial United States.

In another chapter entitled, "The Socialization and Education of Black Girls in School," Sara Lightfoot has the following to say about the way identity issues of black women are presented in the literature:

One of the great misconceptions of social science is its view of identity formation in black women. Black women are seen as experiencing the double, addictive
burden of racism and sexism. There is also a notion that they must necessarily experience some sort of impaired or jointed self-image because they are torn by the conflicting pulls of blackness and womanhood. This dichotomous, polarized vision of the black woman's identity is misleading and partial. It also leads to images of black women as conflicted and divided people rather than resourceful, strong people with various sources of identification. For black women, the sources of identification are multiple, the forces shaping identity complex, and the developmental patterns adaptive, continuous, and changing over time. (p. 141)

Lightfoot illuminates the many factors that participate in shaping the identity of a black woman. The "double bind" of being black and female does not polarize her loyalties between race and gender. Rather, what emerges is an identity of her own. As a girl, she is ignored in the literature, a member of an invisible population. Young adult research provides prototypes of white girls, white boys, and black boys. White boys are described as dominant, aggressive, and controlling. White girls are obedient and cooperative (Cross, 1985; Ladner, 1987; Maccoby, 1966; Parsons, 1959). Black boys are considered hyperactive, withdrawn, and lazy (Baratz & Baratz, 1970). Images of black girls, no matter how distorted, are not presented in the literature regarding the socialization of black children. Stereotypic images of black women do not become formalized until they reach womanhood (Lightfoot, 1980). These adult images are varied and contradictory in nature. Black women are
matriarchal, strong, and resourceful, yet, they are often described as sexually promiscuous, socially ignorant and as welfare recipients (Frazier, 1986; Moynihan, 1970; Rist, 1970; Valentine, 1968).

There is much to be learned about the way black women construct identity, given the conflicting stereotypical images or the gaps in literature of young black female psycho-social development. This study provides an opportunity to generate new understandings of black women’s identity that may be used as a catalyst for developing new theories in this understudied domain. Its effort is to tell a non-static story that captures complexity and variety in the ways in which identity is constructed.

**Racism, sexism, and black women**

In early feminist writing there was a tendency to debate which "ism" was more determinant - sexism or racism, with sexism as the ultimate winner (Chodorow, 1978; Firestone, 1970; Jaggar, 1970: Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1984; Millet, 1969). The legal debate over whether gender or race was more of a discriminating factor in job selection continued until 1984, when the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) confirmed the predominance of race over sex as a discriminating variable in the workplace (Yeakey, Johnston, & Adkinston, 1986). Some of
the literature in the early to mid 1980’s on race and gender issues use phrases such as "double jeopardy" or "double whammy" to describe the oppression of black women (Mosley, 1980; Williams, A., 1986; Williams, S., 1985).

The either/or debate adopts a positivist tone in which people are placed in rigidly defined categories. The fact that feminism came after anti-racist activism, and that feminist and anti-racist groups have not yet formally joined forces, adds support to the well-entrenched habit of speaking comparatively about sexism and racism (Spelman, 1985; 1988). It is perhaps inevitable that such comparisons include, and often culminate in, questions about which form of oppression is more fundamental. Since black women experience aspects of both "isms," an either/or theory does not fit. In response to the notion that sexism pervades racism as an oppression, Simon (1984) pointed out that black women do not use that formula to describe their lives (p. 386). The experience of oppression is not easily described as merely piling issues of sexism and racism upon another for black women. The "isms" are not linear; they interlock, and serious misconceptions arise as one tries to compare and contrast the oppressions in an attempt to make one more prominent than the other. Within an either/or analysis, black women’s experiences and identities have
the potential to become hazy and/or invisible.

A number of studies on higher education administrators explore issues that relate to women and/or minorities. When the subject is women, the framework is often tied to sexist practices (Fulton, 1983, Green, 1988). When the subject is minorities, the topic of racism is often addressed (Helms, 1990; Jones & Montenegro, 1982; Papa-Lewis & Leonard, 1987). Rarely, however, does an author allocate a space for black women, or explain the category under which they are represented. Other studies acknowledge the absence of women and/or minorities, yet the analyses include conclusions that are assumed to be generalizable to all men and women, races and ethnic groups. As an example, a study of personality and job placement concluded that "ideal flexibility" and a self-directed orientation lead to a more responsible job and greater latitude for occupational "self-direction" (Kohn and Schooler, 1982: 157). This study was based on a sample of white men. Another study claiming to identify the major channels of mobility for professional employees excluded women and blacks from the analysis. In the author's words, "In this paper, I limit my analysis to non-black men to simplify the model" (Yagamuchi, 1983: 218).

To accurately address issues specific to black women
it is necessary to respond to a glaring gap. That is, to recognize that in order to begin to accurately address the issues of black women administrators, these women need a more clearly defined space. Black women obviously do not exclusively fall into a gender or race category. A black woman is a woman but her race contributes to her experience as a woman different from women of other races. She is black, but gender issues make the experience of being black different from black men. This study in addressing black women administrators, attempts to fill a small gap in the literature. However, it is my goal to have this study serve as a basis for future questions and projects regarding black women in higher education.

Black women administrators in higher education.

In 1974 William Moore and Lonnie Wagstaff presented a report on blacks in academe. In this report they noted that black women in higher education had not been a priority concern. Prior to the Civil Rights era, black women administrators worked primarily in historically black institutions and teachers colleges. Victims of scholarly neglect, black women were often discussed only within the context of black movements and/Affirmative Action issues (Epstein, 1973). Moreover, a search of the literature by Moore and Wagstaff (1974) observed that black women administrators were only mentioned as an
afterthought.

Carol Van Alstyne and Julie Withers (1977) conducted a survey in 1976. The findings suggested what most of the research demonstrated; relatively few women and blacks held jobs in higher education, except at women's colleges and historically black institutions (HBIs). Nearly half of black administrators were employed at HBIs, representing less than five percent of American higher education institutions. The study also revealed that two positions accounted for the majority of blacks at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) - Affirmative Action officer and student financial aid director. Van Alstyne and Withers also noted that the career patterns of black women were more similar to white women than to black men.

Myratis Mosley (1980) refers to black women in white academe as an "endangered species" who are most often peripheral to the policy and decision making core of higher education when they are present (p. 295). They receive little or no support from their peers, black or white. Mosley feels that Affirmative Action policies for black women have failed "miserably" and the needs and or contributions of black women fail to be recognized by women's organizations and national associations (p. 297). Mosley contends that policies and procedures to recruit
minorities need to focus heavily on black women due to their "endangered" status. Mosley's position supports this research in its attempt to focus specifically on black women.

In 1984, a compilation of articles written by women in the field of higher education administration appeared in The Journal of College Student Personnel. One black woman writes:

As a Black administrator I am asked to be more nurturing and more accessible than my White female or male colleagues. Sometimes these demands are hostile. It seems that all the societal stereotypes cave in to test the professional role assigned to a Black woman. Black persons are not nurtured, protected, and supported in this society. Becoming a boss and colleague does not reverse that reality. (Hughes in Gelwick, 1984: 424)

Hughes addresses some of the conflicting negative stereotypes of black women that perpetuate many forms of racism unique to black women. From a gendered white supremacist perspective, the matriarchal black women is expected to be caring while asking nothing in return. Yet, because of her history of forced subordination, that nurturing should be produced on demand.

Much of the literature on black women administrators implies that failure or success is within their control. Suggestions are offered that detail how the black woman administrator can "pave her way to the top" of the higher education administration hierarchy. Some of these
strategies include: getting to know the organizational culture; developing impeccable interpersonal and technical skills; exuding self-confidence; developing a network of support within the institution; seeking a doctorate (Alexander & Scott, 1985; Harvard, 1986); and consciously working your way up the ranks (Williams, 1985).

The assumption underlying these suggestions is that the black woman is already on the "inside." However, there are barriers black women face that prevent entry to the "inside." Extending this thinking further, the interview process may amount to nothing more than a revolving door, ushering black women in to briefly view the inside, but quickly ushering them back out. Thornberry (1978) writes that anyone familiar with the process must realize the possibilities for abuse, for example, writing a job description with one particular applicant in mind. She illustrates one example where "everything but the height and hair color was included in the job description. When the applicant decided not to accept, the position was redefined" (p. 8).

White Woman Researcher - Black Women Participants

To be caught within the narrow circle of the self is not just a fearful thing, it is a lonely thing. (Pratt, 1988: 18)

Cognizant of the fact that the identity of black
women has been distorted by whites for centuries, I am aware that my presence in this research may be a cause for concern. Baca Zinn (1979) addresses this concern in her writing on the "insider-outsider controversy" when she asks, "Where shall minority research come from" (p. 210)? Basically she concludes there are advantages and disadvantages for same and different race groups participating. One of the basic advantages of the researcher and participants sharing the same race is the "special insight" that groups outside that race may lack (p. 210). The disadvantage is that people within the same culture may be "too subjective" and not ask otherwise provocative questions. The advantage of the different races between researcher and participants is the researcher’s inquisitive perspective that prompts many questions and assumes very little (p. 211). The disadvantage is that the participants may be less willing to open up to a researcher from another race. Participants, well aware of the realities of minority oppression, may be less trusting of a white researcher (p. 210).

Bonnie Thornton Dill (1983) provides personal encouragement to white women who aspire to participate in research concerning black women. She believes that the knowledge gained in the research process involving class
and racial differences will also enlighten the researcher to shared similarities with the participants. "Through joint work on specific issues, we may come to a better understanding of one another’s needs and perceptions and begin to overcome some of the suspicions and mistrust that continue to haunt us" (p. 146).

Yours In Struggle (Bulkin, Pratt, & Smith, 1988) includes a chapter written by a white lesbian feminist (Pratt) entitled, "Identity: Skin Blood Heart." Pratt focuses on the barriers of gender, culture, color, and her sexuality as a white woman and her own struggles with race relations. She described how lonely she felt the day she realized the ways in which her culture separated her from other women in terms of race, ethnicity, and class. Pratt recalls how she felt when a black woman friend called out her name in an accent reminiscent of her home:

Yet I knew enough of her history and mine to know how much separated us; the chasm of murders, rapes, lynchings, the years of daily humiliations done by my people to hers. I went and stood in the hallway and cried, thinking of how she said my name like home, and how divided our lives were. (p.19)

Pratt (1988) describes her history as a middle-class white woman growing up in the south. She married, had children, and eventually divorced. A significant turning point in her life was her "coming out" as a lesbian. The sharing of her life experiences with the reader allowed
her to feel the "pull of the ties that connected her to
women different than herself" (p. 47). Pratt's chapter
speaks to cultural and class differences among women and
the common bond of sisterhood that can develop in spite of
and perhaps at times because of those differences.

There are very few publications available that detail
the experience of American white women as they explore the
lives of American black women. All Our Kin (Stack, 1970)
was by a white woman anthropologist who lived in a low-
income urban black community for three years. Stack
sought to explore kinship relations to counter previous
racist perceptions of the culture of poverty. During her
stay in the "flats" she had a baby and developed a kin
network with the other residents. She began to relate to
people in a different way as a result of the research and
began to construct new definitions of friendship. Stack
demonstrated trust in her new kin relationships by her
willingness to have her "sisters" care for her baby. This
gesture was perceived as one of the highest compliments
one woman paid to another in the flats. She discovered
that the widely assumed definitions of the "family," such
as nuclear or patrilocal, hindered the way in which people
in the flats viewed their world. This study resulted in
fundamental changes in its author. These changes are the
ideal when a representative of one culture participates in
research on and with members from another culture.  

This study was like Stacks' in that the race factor between researcher and participants is significant. I expected to experienced changes as I learned more about the multi-dimensional aspects of identity construction for black women. However, this was not a field study where I become totally immersed in the environment of another culture. Additionally, although our experiences of race may be different, the participants and I share a middle class status. In the traditional and methodological sense, this was not a cross-cultural study.

This is not to say that this study is exempt from the insider outsider/controversy or the advantages and disadvantages within it (Zinn, 1979). There are two considerations that have influenced my pursuit of this study despite the disadvantages. First, as a feminist, I am concerned about the issues of all women, but I resist the presumption of speaking for other women, particularly women of other races or ethnicities. Therefore, by focusing on identity construction, this study is a way to become better informed about black women by black women.

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This concept of change is based on an anthropological term called "emic" whereby the researcher, as a result of being immersed in the culture of the fieldwork, presents the research from an insider perspective - *participant observation*. "Etic," however, refers to the perspective of a researcher as outside observer - *non-participant observation*. 
Second, this study openly recognizes that there is a need for feminist theory to progress further in its openness to a more inclusive sisterhood. This study models that premise by focusing on the conversations between women of different races. Inn notes that the "insider outsider controversy" helps to remind us of our political responsibility and compel us to carry out our research with "ethical and intellectual integrity" (p. 218).

Identity Politics

Identity Politics is all the rage. Exploitation is out (it is extrinsically determinist.) Oppression is in (it is intrinsically personal). What is to be done has been replaced with who am I. (Bourne, 1987: 1)

Identity politics is a much contested term within circles of feminist critique, and several prominent feminists provide valuable insight and serious challenges to the term (Bourne, 1987; Fuss, 1989; hooks, 1989; and Spivack, 1987). At its simplest, identity politics is "the tendency to base one's politics on a personal identity" (Fuss, 1989: 97). Through marginalized groups such as lesbians and women of color, an explicit politics of identity has become assumed by feminist praxis in many parts of the women's movement (Adams, 1989). By identifying themselves as existing outside the mainstream, these feminists have demonstrated an openly political
gesture and an act of self-empowerment. This action has heightened their visibility and prompted self-reflection.

This study incorporates an openly political statement with its demonstration of theory and practice that insists on the importance of differences. For example, the significance of white woman researcher/black women participants is central to the study. This component is strongly emphasized throughout the research. In addition, this study does not assume that because the narratives of black women are guiding the study, that they are speaking on behalf of all black women. The contextuality of the study is strongly emphasized.

As highlighted earlier, one of the flaws of the initial conception of the women’s movement was in its espousal of a monolithic identity among black women. Mary Louise Adams (1989) credits part of this penchant for homogeneity to a reluctance by women of privilege to come to terms with the whole of their identities – the oppressor as well as the oppressed. "How much easier it is to examine the ways in which we are denied our full potential than to see how we benefit when others are denied theirs" (p.29). When white women recognize black women’s concerns about racism, we must acknowledge our own complicity in it, which may threaten our own conception of ourselves as oppressed (Carby, 1982). By bringing in
race, class, and sexual orientation issues, feminism helps pull the margins to the center (hooks, 1981).

According to Cherrie Moraga, "The only reason women of a privileged class will dare to look at how it is they oppress, is when they’ve come to know the meaning of their own oppression" (1981: 33). This study, in its emphasis on identity construction, presents a focus for some of those conversations to occur. In addition, those conversations create a methodological site to participate in research as anti-racist praxis. Although this study does not intend to focus on oppression, oftentimes issues of race and gender are linked to oppression. On the surface, the concept of oppression does not appear to be an concept of social change. However, a better understanding of how oppression operates in our lives is a means to bring about change and become empowered as a result of those efforts. How identity is constructed may involve experiences of oppression, and it is an act of empowerment to be armed with the knowledge to confront it.

bell hooks (1989) revisits the personal is political slogan that grew from early radical feminist consciousness to parallel some of the implicit dangers within the concept of identity politics. The purpose of the slogan was for feminists to recognize how their personal identity relates to oppression in a larger marginalized group in
society. hooks elaborates on the danger of using self as the starting point for politicization. The tendency to get caught up in the "narcissism" of personal identity and not reaching beyond to promote social change in the political identity is a risk in this kind of identity construction. hooks also disagrees that the personal is political. She sees them as very separate. "Unsure of the political, each female presumes knowledge of person-the-personal" (hooks, 1989: 106). There is no need for a search for the political implications of identity if it is perceived as "synonymous" with political.

Barbara Smith differs slightly from hooks on the interpretation of the personal is political. Smith sees a necessary link established between the two when she says "we have an identity therefore we have a politics" (Smith quoted in Fuss, 1989: 99). hooks does not assume a link of progression between the personal and political. In her cross examination of identity politics, she is challenging women to consciously seek this necessary link.

hooks does not deny that individual women have been able to "concretely find deep structure" within the politic of identity and use those insights to promote radical social consciousness (hooks, 1989: 106). She notes however, that "it is possible to name one’s personal experience without committing oneself to transforming or
changing that experience" (p. 108). hooks clarifies that the process of naming one’s personal identity warrants merit because this process can be an act of resistance in a racist and sexist world that strips us of our identity by devaluing language, culture, and appearance. hooks is calling for an identity politics that insists on a shifting process between naming one’s own identity and a collective identity. The shift would involve the commitment to social change. She advocates ways to "reaffirm the power of the personal" while "simultaneously not getting trapped in identity politics" (p. 111). Personal narratives must be linked to the knowledge to act politically to "change and transform the world" (Ibid).

Diana Fuss (1989) also speaks to a need to interrogate identity politics by questioning some of the embedded assumptions. She calls attention to the risk of essentialism in identity politics and observes that identity is rarely identical to itself but instead has multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings" (p. 98). She traces some of the earlier roots of identity politics in the black lesbian culture and she quotes a passage endorsed by The Combahee River Collective, a black lesbian activist group. They say, "We believe that the most profound and potentially radical politics come directly out of our own identity, as opposed to working to end
somebody else's oppression" (quoted in Fuss, 1989: 99). Cherrie Moraga revised that concept later to add that "the Radical Feminist must extend her own 'identity' politics to include her 'identity' as oppressor as well" (Moraga, 1983: 128).

Fuss (1989) strikes a chord of agreement with hooks when she argues that the "personal is not political" which is the first step, she contends to "re-politicizing identity politics" (p. 102). She presents a concept of "re-theorizing" the identity in identity politics (p. 104) which involves a deconstructive approach that recognizes the unsteady and changing aspects of identity, influenced by unconscious conflict as well as concrete experiences. She also supports a deconstructive approach to assumed embodied identity such as race. She supports Gayatri Spivak's theory that race is not simply "chromatism, or homogenized identity" - the tendency to reduce race to a simple question of skin color (Spivak, 1986: 235). Rather she purports a more complex approach to race that includes other social factors such as language, religion, and geography.

The contributions of bell hooks, Diana Fuss, and Gayatri Spivak offer thoughtful insight on identity politics, provoking questions about identity construction and its role in promoting social change. I choose to
combine several aspects of their insights. My intention in this study is to actively engage in a process that links the personal narratives of the participants to a political agenda that promotes social change, to interrogate the politics of identity construction by questioning some of the embedded assumptions, and to challenge the notion of homogenized identity.

In this study, I will be asking black women to reflect on their construction of identity within the context of a bounded site. This process can serve as a starting point for a vision of greater social and political change. hooks (1989), although cautious in her use of the term identity politics, acknowledges that before any "revisioning" can occur, self needs to be examined from a "new, critical standpoint" (p. 107). The theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this study attempt to create a space for such a critical examination.

Summary

The topics in this literature review are taken from diverse scholarly disciplines. Because of this diversity, I am challenged to present a review that reads with ease and logic. Most research in higher education is not grounded in critical theory, feminism, or race relations. However, changing demographics predict an increasingly
pluralistic society and this calls for research in higher education that responds to those changes in a proactive manner. Part of my project is to offer alternative perspectives in academic literature that move beyond the traditional resources in higher education research. There is a gap in the research that addresses multicultural and gender-related issues, and this study attempts to contribute to narrowing that gap.

Some of the diverse topics that are covered in this literature review are related to the content/process dynamic that undergirds this study. Topics such as higher education, black women in higher education, and identity politics focus on the content that this study explores. Topics such as postmodernism, feminist theory, and white woman researcher/black women participants, address how the narratives and stories unfold. With the belief that our theoretical lens strongly influences how stories get told, this research is as much a study about methodology as it is about a phenomenon.

The next chapter addresses the methodological issues that frame this study. I present a design that addresses the research questions and leaves room for the emergence of other questions. The methodology is based on the assumptions of "new paradigm inquiry," the stages of which will be discussed at the beginning of the chapter.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The politics of method ultimately has to do with the politics of experience. Method influences how we think and what we are permitted to feel. (Eisner, 1988: 19)

During the most violent era of the anti-slavery crusade, Frederick Douglas said "power does not yield without struggle," and the power of positivist influences are still evident in human science research. However, we are living in an era of thoughtful questioning, where we are struggling with ways to participate in research that has integrity related not only to methodological criteria, but to the participants. In this study my aim was to become immersed in these struggles, to ask many introspective questions and to surface from the study a changed person.

The focus of this chapter is on the methodological issues involved in a study designed to generate more interactive and contextual ways of knowing. The questions that I ask in Chapter I call for a methodology that relies
on a collaborative relationship between the participants and me. My project is to create a forum for in-depth discussion, interactive sharing, and an "openness to counter interpretations" that emerge (Lather, 1986b: 65). This study provides an empirical site for these counter interpretations to occur. An overarching goal of the methodology is to present a series of fruitful interruptions that demonstrate the multiplicity of meaning-making and interpretation.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of inquiry paradigms and how new paradigm inquiry relates to this study. The relationship between researcher and participants and between data and theory is the next area of discussion. Finally, I explain the details of how these data are collected, how the study is designed, and what makes it trustworthy.

The Crisis of Understanding and the Postmodern Challenge

Dallmayr and McCarthy describe a "crisis of understanding" (1977: 1) that is central to social theorizing and is characterized by the expansion of the boundaries of social science inquiry. This crisis is created by the foregrounding of problems in epistemology and interpretation. Positivistic social science, despite its technical developments and growth in popularity in the
modern era, fails to explain the fundamental questions of meaning regarding life and interaction. The gap in understanding cannot be filled from within a positivistic paradigm. While the positivistic model assumes that meaning is self-evident in the social world, Dallmayr and McCarthy argue that the "the world is silent," that the social theorist or observer, as well as the social actors, impute meaning to the world (p. 2).

Meaning is created in everyday life through language and interaction, and similarly, scientific meaning or interpretation is created in the interactive research process. If one cannot simply observe the social world, but must interpret it as well, it becomes necessary to employ a methodology which differs from that of positivism. Theorists within a postpositivist tradition focus on interpretation and understanding, as opposed to prediction and control within the positivist tradition, and employ methods which permit this.

Habermas' (1971) notion of the three knowledge interests is particularly useful in understanding some of the different theoretical approaches to the crisis of understanding. He holds that social scientific theorizing and research can be categorized into three types, each of which serves different interests or goals, and each of which asks different questions and uses different methods.
Habermas' caveat regarding this typology is that these three knowledge interests are not to be seen as constituting a hierarchy or a progression; rather, they are simply asking different questions and choosing different foci.

The first knowledge interest is the instrumental, and is grounded in the purposes and methodologies of positivism, seeking to predict and control or to reach instrumental goals. Technical as well as cognitive approaches are important here, and logic as well as empirical observation are employed. Social science according to the instrumental knowledge interest follows a natural science model. The natural science model, however, is lacking in its applicability to the social world (Dallmayr & McCarthy, 1977). Thus, the first knowledge interest is unable to address questions of meaning. The dichotomy between subject and object, with the scientist placed in valorized position of objective spectator, only increases this problem. This subject/object issue is at the root of the crisis of understanding.

The second interest is the hermeneutic. The hermeneutic knowledge interest has the practical interest of furthering understanding, and is linked to historical inquiry, although not exclusively. Hermeneutic human
sciences focus on understanding phenomena or processes in context, and on the validity of conclusions rather than on their empirical verification according to the standards of positivism. The hermeneutic approach is a response to the crisis of understanding. Viewing the social world as constructed interaction, hermeneutic scientists focus on language and its use to address questions of meaning.

The third knowledge interest is emancipatory. This approach encompasses critical theory and feminist theory, and is concerned with the use and application of the human sciences for emancipatory ends. Habermas falls within this knowledge interest, but he also values the other two (Bernstein, 1985). The emancipatory approach represents a response to the crisis of understanding as well, as it differs from positivism in many ways that the hermeneutic approach does. In addition, emancipatory theory is a reaction to the hermeneutic assumption that it is adequate to interpret and understand, without acting on the resulting understanding to bring about social change.

Postmodernism is not incorporated into Dallmayer and McCarthy's stages of understanding and meaning-making. Nonetheless, postmodernism represents another stage in the crisis of understanding. Rejecting the universalistic assumptions not only of positivism, but of hermeneutics and critical theory as well, postmodernism theory seeks to
de-unify our understanding of the social world. Moving beyond simply seeing meaning as socially constructed, postmodernism sees it as multiply and situationally constructed, differing from context to context and according to perspective. Postmodernism both builds onto and challenges critical theory. The researcher is positioned throughout and within the research process, emphasizing the importance of his/her values within the web of language. The postmodern project is to expose those values and show how they are influencing the meaning-making. In this manner, postmodernism offers feminists ways to both work within and yet against dominant discourses (Lather, 1991b).

This study is "praxis oriented" in that it is characterized by the researcher's and the participants' shared involvement (Lather, 1986a: 260). "Negotiation, reciprocity, and empowerment" are fundamental components of the methodology and are situated within a postpositivist paradigm of inquiry (p. 257). The purpose of this study is to examine how black women construct identity through the presentation of self while engaged in a formal interview experience. The research methodology is distinguished by a high level of interactive communication between the participants and me. Mechanisms are in place that rely heavily on the input of the
participants in not only the interpretation of the data, but also in its critical analysis. The analysis process moves beyond meaning making. That is, the meaning is interrogated to provoke a better understanding of who and/or what has influenced the meaning. The analysis process includes the participants' perspectives not only in the early stages of first draft analysis, but also in the final analysis of the empirical findings.

Before I describe the more specific paradigmatic location of this study, I will present the journey of inquiry in the human sciences from positivism to postpositivism. The starting point of the journey will begin with the earliest conceptualizations of paradigm shifts, generating what Kuhn (1962) refers to as "scientific revolutions."

**Emergence of new paradigm inquiry**

A paradigm represents the way in which one views the world, makes assumptions, and draws conclusions. The paradigm shift from positivism to postpositivism is actually a shift in intellectual thought. Since Kuhn's (1962) initial introduction of paradigmatic revolutions to the literature, inquiry is often described as either positivist or postpositivist. The focus of postpositivist research is on meaning as a construction of reality rather than universal laws of human behavior. Postpositivism is
commonly associated with research in the interpretive paradigm (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1984). In general the interpretive paradigm is one characterized by multiple constructions of reality made meaningful by unique perspectives. The question of constructed realities is addressed by German philosopher Max Weber (1977) in his development of the notion of verstehen (interpretive understanding) as opposed to erklären (explanation). Meaning is carried within certain situations (Polkinghorne, 1983).

In the interpretive paradigm an attempt is made to explore the conceptual world of the participants with the goal of understanding the meaning that is constructed in the events in everyday lives (Bogdan & Biklin, 1982). Furthermore it is acknowledged that the knower and the known cannot be separated, as there is a mutual shaping of knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Daphnai Patai (1988) describes an implicit danger in a strictly interpretive approach to inquiry. Although the participants agree to take part in the study and may even enjoy the process, the ultimate satisfaction and power rests in the researcher's ability to infuse his/her authoritative voice in the interpretation and final analysis.

The critical paradigm moves beyond the descriptive
level of meaning making and interpretation by emphasizing more emancipatory political interests. The critical paradigm challenges the interpretive paradigm in that it seeks to expose the source of the participants' world view, that may be unknown to them as well as the researcher. These taken for granted assumptions are confronted at varying points throughout the research. The critical paradigm does not fully accept the participants' construction of reality at the very surface level, for "we are both shaped and shapers of the world" (Lather, 1986: 269). It is this interplay that warrants more attention. The critical paradigm at its best is more dialogic as the researcher works with the participants to question the assumptions inherent in the constructed realities of both the researcher and researched. This process works toward the overarching goal of arousing a greater consciousness regarding social justice.

Praxis-oriented inquiry conducted within the critical paradigm is committed to understanding the ways in which paradigms, theories, and methodologies influence the unequal distribution of power between the researcher and the participants (Lather, in press). Central methodological issues concern the desire to "generate new ways of knowing that do not perpetuate power imbalance" (Ibid: 8). In this manner the authoritative voice of the
researcher is problematized and steps are built into the methodology to disrupt this power.

Praxis-oriented empirical studies are constructed whereby the researcher identifies a priori the participants as disempowered in some way and works to empower the oppressed by helping them understand, and thereby change their own realities (Lather, 1986a). Postmodernism encourages the researcher to resist the temptation to play the role of the Great Interpreter (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983) therefore, the process of meaning making and theory building is shared among the researcher and the participants.

Methodological Issues

Paradigm fit in the context of this study

This study takes place in and is analyzed from a critical paradigm of inquiry. However, the analysis is challenged and deconstructed by postmodernism. The purpose of imposing these conflicting projects is to demonstrate that there are multiple ways to interpret data. Critical and postmodern research share the concern for participant-focused research, however conflicting agendas also emerge between the two perspectives. For
example, the notion of "false consciousness" used in critical or praxis-oriented inquiry is problematized in postmodern inquiry for "such a concept assumes a true consciousness accessible via 'correct' theory and practice" (Hall, quoted in Lather, in press: 12). Critical theory, on the other hand, challenges postmodernism to progress beyond the text and to interrogate the meaning making to determine what or who is informing the interpretation. The critical project assumes an "openly ideological approach" which is established a priori and it is this ideology that informs the meaning-making (Lather, 1990b: 70).

My feminist orientation provides the foundational critical theory on which the study is built. The dialogical aspect of the research methodology involving researcher and participants serves to shake, disrupt, and shift the foundation. This disruption is encouraged by self reflection and serves to broaden and strengthen the foundation in ways that accommodate the construction of new theory. Postmodernism helps with the disruptive process by challenging how the researcher's a priori

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1 A Marxist term which refers to the act of believing in something which is grounded in political distortion. One of the goals of praxis oriented research is to expose the source of the false consciousness, acknowledge the distortion for what it is, and to empower the researched with the newly acquired consciousness.
theory influences the data analysis.

This study is grounded in a critical praxis-oriented paradigm of inquiry and challenged and informed by postmodernism. This paradoxical approach supports a dialectic, multi-voiced discourse that provides a range of interpretations and a multiplicity of perspectives. Critical inquiry encourages self-reflection and a deeper understanding of the participants' identity construction and presentation of self. It provides a learning and changing forum for both researcher and participants through the collaborative process of interpreting and analyzing data. However, postmodernism challenges the researcher's position of power in the research process regarding his/her authority over the direction of the analysis. Postmodernism also provides an opportunity to question issues of power that are operating between the researcher and the researched in the collaborative interpretation and analysis of the data.

Reciprocity

A central issue that undergirds praxis-oriented research is reciprocity. Surfacing in earlier feminist empirical work (Oakley, 1981; Ackroyd, 1984) reciprocity involves a "mutual negotiation of meaning and power" (Lather, 1986a: 263). In its most understated form, reciprocity may be used as a "data gathering technique" to
establish a friendly relationship between the researcher and the researched (Eisner, 1977: 10). In praxis-oriented research, the meaning of reciprocity takes on a more profound role. Daphnai Patai (1988), in her research on Brazilian women, describes the interaction of the participants and herself as "their cultural assumptions and mine, their memories and my questions, their sense of self and my own, their hesitations and my encouraging words or gestures, and much much more" (p. 146). Patai presents the narrative of one particular woman, Marialice, through a text of prose poems. Patai’s intention in this presentation was to give voice to Marialice and to demonstrate the themes and patterns that Patai constructed from the narrative. Patai demonstrates a much deeper meaning of reciprocity than the traditional brush stroke method of gathering more and better data. However, Patai refers to only one dimension of reciprocity, which is the relationship between researcher and researched.

Lather (1986a) points out that reciprocity "operates at two primary points, the junctures between researcher and researched and between data and theory" (p. 263). To gain maximum reciprocity in praxis oriented research, Lather contends that several procedures and theories need to be in place. She summarizes these procedures and the following points are gleaned from that summary (p. 266):
1. Interviews conducted in an interactive, dialogic manner, that require self-disclosure on the part of the researcher.

2. Sequential interviews of both individuals and small groups to facilitate collaboration and a deeper probing of research issues.

3. Negotiation of meaning. At a minimum, this entails recycling description, emerging analysis, and conclusions to at least a subsample of respondents.

4. Discussions of false consciousness which go beyond simply dismissing resistance to Marxist interpretations as such. We need to discover the necessary conditions that free people to engage in ideology critique, given the psychological hold of illusion - "things people cling to because they provide direction and meaning in their lives" (Fay, 1977: 214)

All four points relate to this particular study and they are all placed within the context of the analysis process in the Data Analysis section.

The second point of intersection where reciprocity is found in praxis-oriented research is between a priori theory and empirically-grounded findings. Acknowledging that there is no value free approach to research, caution is advised to keep a "particular framework from becoming the container into which the data must be poured" (Lather, 1986a: 267). Lather’s point is particularly salient for this study since it is guided by a priori feminist theory. Collaborative analysis is at the heart of this study which helps to keep the researcher’s values in check and encourages the building of theory.
Research Design

The participants in this study are part of a sample of candidates who have interviewed for senior level administrative positions at a large research institution of over fifty thousand students. Access to these data was made possible through an Ohio State University Affirmative Action grant to Drs. Mary Ann D. Sagaria and Anne S. Pruitt to examine the recruitment and selection process of senior administrators. The two faculty members who developed the proposal grant, Patricia Gagne (a graduate research associate), and I comprised the research team. I was involved in all phases of the research project after the initial proposal had been submitted for funding. Some of my roles included participation in sample selection, the creation of the interview guides, interviewing, and interview tape transcription. I participated in these processes from September, 1989 through June, 1990. The follow-up interviews, data analysis, and member checks as they related to my study, continued over the next year. Therefore, this study covered a span of two years.

The following sections describe the design that was used as my "blueprint." First, I conducted a pilot study to generate and fine-tune my research question. Next, I selected my sample, developed the interview guide, and conducted interviews. The following sections describe the
details of the design. I also describe the components of the study which make it "trustworthy."

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted as part of the larger research project in December of 1989 prior to submitting the dissertation proposal, written correspondence, and interview guides to Human Subjects Review. The audio taped interviews with the participants in the pilot study were conducted by the other graduate associate on the research team and me. After the other members of the team reviewed the tape, discussion meetings followed where we exchanged feedback on interview style and the appropriateness of specific questions.

Most of the post-pilot changes involved a rewording of a few questions. This process was collaborative and for the most part, went very smoothly. I was only uncomfortable with results of the wording that addressed one small aspect of the interview guide. This discomfort involved the contextual use of the word gender. The word gender is commonly used to describe a person's biological sex when it is meant to describe sexual differences within the context of societal issues. However, many people are hesitant to use the word sex, so gender is used to encompass all aspects of woman/man differences (Armstrong, 1988). These discussions took place between the other
graduate associate and myself in the initial drafting of the interview guide. I did not feel this disagreement called for a long debate since it did not affect the integrity of the study, but since the interview guide was used in this study I felt a notation was warranted.

Each participant received a letter from the faculty member who headed the research project (See Appendix A). The letter explained the study and requested their participation in a one and a half hour interview. The other Graduate Associate and I telephoned the candidates several days after they had received the letter to determine whether they were willing to be interviewed, and if so, arranged a time and place that was convenient for the participant. We explained that an audio taped interview was preferable because we wanted to be as accurate as possible with their narratives. But, if the candidate was not comfortable with taping, the interviewer would take notes.

For the job searches that were applicable to my study, I explained the focus of my personal research to those participants, and asked permission to use the data from the interview for my dissertation. When I addressed this subject with the black women candidates, I emphasized the point that it was not my intention to speak for black women, therefore I would be relying strongly on their
input into the analysis and interpretation of the study. I prefaced this statement by expressing my full understanding should they have chosen not to participate. I was sensitive to the fact that they had agreed originally to participate in a one and a half hour interview to discuss aspects of a job interview and they had fulfilled that commitment. I wanted the candidates to feel comfortable about accepting or declining my request. Without exception every candidate agreed to participate in my study. The participants were guaranteed anonymity in this study. The names and specific job titles were changed and transcripts and field notes were coded as well.

In the following section I will describe the methods of inquiry involved in this study. These mechanisms were designed to maximize reciprocity and clarify the meaning of identity construction within the context of a job interview. The site of this study is highly contextual and it is not my intention to work towards generalizability to other settings or to all black women. Instead, specificity of thick description is the goal where resources are developed in the study to allow the reader to become familiar with the participants and the research setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Sample Selection

The population for the study consisted of 1,110 candidates who interviewed for 234 administrative positions at a research university that were advertised between September 1, 1987 and August 31, 1989. The research team chose twelve position searches to examine from the initial job posting through the job offer. As we approached the project, we agreed to consciously diversify the searches by race, sex, and administrative department. From the 234 job searches conducted during that time frame, there were only seven blacks hired - four black men and three black women. Another four black men and three black women interviewed for jobs but had either declined or had not received job offers.

As part of the overall study, I interviewed hiring officials, committee chairs, successful candidates, and some unsuccessful candidates involved in the twelve job searches. The six black women candidates who agreed to participate in my study ranged from age 34 to 48 years old. Five were involved in senior administrative job searches and one was involved in a mid-level management position. I added the mid-level position because it was specifically related to minority student services. I was interested to see how or if the presentation of self and identity construction may differ in an interview where a
race focus was publicly stated in the job description.\textsuperscript{2}

**Methods**

The primary method of inquiry was the interview. This method allowed the participants to reconstruct their experience of the job interview and to describe conversations and/or events within that process. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that the major advantage to the interviewing method is that "it allows the respondent to move back and forth in time - to reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and predict the future, all without leaving a comfortable armchair" (p. 272). In addition to the interview, the participants were asked to share any written correspondence related to the recruitment and selection process. This material included interview schedules, letters between search committee chairs and candidates, information packets, etc.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe interviews as either structured or unstructured. The structured interview is the "mode of choice" when the interviewer knows specifically what s/he is looking for and frames the questions with that knowledge in mind (p. 269). The

\textsuperscript{2} Senior administrators in this study are Chief Academic or Student Affairs Officers. These are line positions, which mean their supervision scope extends two or more levels below them. Mid-level management refers to positions which usually includes one level of subordinates under their supervision.
unstructured interview, on the other hand, is chosen when the interviewer does not know what s/he is looking for and relies on the participants to help clarify what it is.

The interview guide (see Appendix B) used in this study is best described as semi-structured, which incorporates both the open-ended and structured designs. It is structured to the extent that the questions were formulated ahead of time, but they were designed to allow for an open conversational flow to occur between myself and the participants. Issues of identity were addressed in a structured format in question numbers seven, eight, and sixteen of the candidate interview guide. These questions read as follows:

7. Was there anything in particular you wanted to come across in the interview? Tell me about that.

8. Was there anything that you did not want them to know about you? If so, what?

16. Have you changed in any way as a result of participating in the [on-campus interview] process? If so, how?

Many of the other questions in the guide did not directly focus on identity but issues of identity emerged. For example several questions provided insight on some of the factors that have influenced the participants' identity. Two of these questions were: "What do you feel are your most outstanding achievements?" (#2), and "You've told me
a lot about your professional life. Would you talk a little bit about your personal life?" (#14)

My intention in this interview was to collect enough data to generate a preliminary analysis of patterns or themes that were shared with the participants. Follow up conversations occurred that were guided by some open-ended questions (see Appendix C). Four of the interviews were done in person. The mileage distance limited the option of face-to-face interviews with the other candidates so I conducted these interviews by telephone. All but one of the initial one and a half hour interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. One woman expressed her discomfort with audio equipment but agreed to let me take notes. Follow up conversations with all the participants were not taped. Field notes were kept for all interviews and follow-up conversations.

As with all research methods, interviewing also has some limitations. A major limitation is that interviews are constrained by particular time frames. My experience as an administrator made me aware that an hour and a half of the participants' time was the most I could reasonably ask for given their crowded schedules. I was also sensitive to the fact that up to that point, I was a total stranger of a different race and I was careful not to presume that the relationship would progress much further
during our initial interview. It is also possible that the participant may not remember all the issues or experiences pertinent to the study in a limited time frame.

Another potential limitation of the interview is interviewer bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). This may be reflected in the interview questions and non-verbal reactions of the researcher. As stated earlier, the interview guide represents a collaborative effort of a research team. Its intended use was to collect data for the purposes of the research team's focus as well as for the focus of my dissertation. The tapes of the pilot interviews between the interviewees and me were used to provide feedback for the rest of the research team on my interviewing style and wording of questions. This process was tremendously helpful in encouraging me to attend to potentially biased words or phrases that I used without thinking. For example, when I paraphrased in the pilot interview I occasionally said, "Would it be safe to say . . .?" A member of the research team pointed out that the word "safe" implied that the participant may have something to hide. I agreed and was careful to change my paraphrasing to, "Would it be accurate to say . . .?"

A final limitation of the interview that warrants noting is self-presentation which refers to the
participants' perspectives and perceptions. Patton (1980) observes that those perspectives are "subject to distortion due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics, and simple lack of awareness" (p. 245). This limitation helps highlight the necessity for a methodology that does not rely solely on the participants' interpretations. The narratives are connected to feminist theory that serves to question and at times to challenge the participants' interpretation. This limitation is particularly important given the race difference between the participants and researcher. That is, black women participants may not be as open to sharing their perspectives on race issues with a white woman researcher. However, the white woman researcher/black women participants dynamic is a prominent issue that weaves throughout the study and specific steps are taken to counter the self-presentation limitation. For example, participants are actively involved in both presenting and analyzing the data. This interaction helps to both encourage the development of a trusting relationship to develop between the researcher and participants and to strengthen the commitment from the participants as to how the story gets told.

In the context of this study, the strengths of interviewing outweigh the limitations. To discern individual perspectives, person-to-person communication
needs to be present. The initial interview gave voice to how the participants' perceived their job interview experience, or in other words, how they constructed that reality. Follow up conversations and/or informal interviews were necessary to probe the construction at deeper and more expanded levels.

**Establishing Trustworthiness**

No amount of trustworthiness techniques built into a study will ever "compel" anyone to accept the results of the inquiry; it can at best persuade.  
*(Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 329)*

In most traditional research, investigators attend to issues of internal and external validity, objectivity, and reliability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) draw parallels for each of these methodological issues and label them credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. Lincoln and Guba ask, "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of" (p. 290). In other words, how "trustworthy" is the study?

**Credibility.**

Credibility is the extent to which the findings are consistent with the participants' views of constructed reality, while acknowledging that reality takes on "multiple meanings" *(Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 301).*
Activities to increase the likelihood of producing credible findings for this study include: prolonged engagement; triangulation; peer debriefing; and member checks. I define these activities below and also address their significance within the context of this study.

**Prolonged Engagement** is the investment of significant time to learn the culture of an environment. The amount of time required to accomplish this task is determined by the researcher. My experience in higher education involves ten years as an administrator at a mid-sized university and more recently, four years as a doctoral student and graduate associate at a large state university. During my career in higher education, I developed strong collegial relations with men and women faculty, administrators, and students from diverse races and ethnicities.

The second component of prolonged engagement involves investing enough time with the participants to establish trust, and to become familiar with the context of inquiry. This trust is a developmental process whereby the researcher demonstrates on a continual basis that promises of anonymity will be kept and hidden agendas are not part of the study. Lincoln and Cuba (1985) quantify the development of trust with "daily engagement" of time (p. 303).
The amount of time that I was able to spend with the participants is problematic to the overall concept of prolonged engagement. After the initial one hour interview, I had follow-up conversations with each participant. Our conversations began with the preliminary analysis stage and later resumed with member checks (to be covered later) as we worked toward the final analysis. Mechanisms for building rapport and establishing trust were built into the design of the study, however not on a daily basis. The design provided several opportunities for interactive conversations between the participants and me. This study, therefore, illustrates that the concept of prolonged engagement needs to be placed within the context of the study. For example, total immersion into a culture on a daily basis is most appropriate for field work where the researcher's culture is significantly different than the researched.

My immersion into the everyday lives of the participants in this study would not only have been intrusive, but not suited to the research focus. I met with the participants at different times to gather the data, discuss the initial findings, and collaborate on the analysis. Therefore, the engagement between the participants was best described as intermittently intense.

Triangulation is the technique for improving the
probability that findings and interpretations of the data are accurate and credible. The most significant mode of triangulation used in this study was the use of multiple sources. The sources included four successful candidates (one of whom declined the job offer), two unsuccessful candidates, and five specific job openings. Other sources that were used although not in great depth, were resumes of candidates, interview itineraries, and any written correspondence that the participants shared related to the job interview. The concept that all the participants discussed was the presentation of self during a job interview at the same institution.

Denzin (1989), although supportive of the use of triangulation as a credibility check, also offers a useful critique. He contends that if all social action is contextual and unique, than there is little probability of like interpretation between resources. Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer further insight into this dilemma by encouraging investigators to focus on "the judgment of accuracy of specific data items" (p. 316). Triangulation holds an implicit danger of adapting to a positivistic approach to inquiry if the investigator gets caught up in trying to determine which is the right story by triangulating different human sources. Patton (1980) suggests that it is best to expect that different data
sources reveal different aspects of what is being studied. Because of the belief that reality is socially constructed, Lincoln and Guba support the use of triangulation as a tool to judge the accuracy of "particular data items" as opposed to data perceptions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 316). The purpose of triangulation is to explore differing perceptions not to determine the "truth" of the matter under investigation.

Peer-Debriefing involves the researcher evoking insights from a peer who is not involved with the research. The peer debriefer helps make the implicit issues more explicit by questioning the researcher's interpretation. The task of the debriefer is to help make the researcher more aware of his or her values, and how they are influencing the study. Multiple purposes are served by peer debriefing. It helps keep the inquirer "honest" by setting up a system of feedback on a regular basis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 308). This process allows new meaning to be explored and interpretations to be clarified. After a session with the peer debriefer, if the researcher does not feel comfortable with his or her position in the interpretation, s/he may want to reconsider that position (Ibid). The peer debriefer should provide an appropriate level of challenge and support so that the researcher may defend the position in
a credible manner, but not lose his or her sense of enthusiasm and confidence.

Since the women in this study were black, I asked a black woman friend and colleague to serve as the peer-debriefer for this study. She was familiar with both the concept of identity construction and the methodological issues involved in the study. She is also a senior administrator at another university. We had three meetings, one after my initial data analysis, another after the collaborative researcher/participant analysis, and the third after the final analysis. Other informal meetings and telephone conversations occurred in response to the various phases of the study.

The agenda of our first meeting involved a three hour discussion of the results of my first "rough cut" data analysis that consisted of some broad concepts or themes. I shared this analysis with Alice (peer-debriefer) and through her helpful comments, I developed a set of questions (based on those themes) to further explore with the participants.

The second time that Alice and I met, I shared my "feminist analysis" of the data. I had already talked with each participant about this analysis as well. I shared the comments from the participants with Alice and asked for her reaction to those comments. I shared an
outline on how I would "deconstruct" my feminist analysis based on the participants' comments. Alice provided constructive criticism and genuine enthusiasm to this stage of analysis.

The third "peer-debriefing meeting" involved a fine-tuning of the analysis and a discussion about how to present the data. This meeting was most helpful in developing a format that would demonstrate a commitment to a multi-voiced approach to the presentation and analysis of the data in this study. At the same time, Alice provided insight on ways to highlight the participant-focused design of the study.

*Member Checks* are key roles that involve the participants' input in the study. Guba (1981) refers to this process as the most important action inquirers take in terms of establishing credibility. Without this process, the study would result in a very limited and lifeless analysis. Its purpose is to place the participants in a position of central importance in the creation of knowledge. There are varying degrees of importance placed on member checks in postpositivist inquiry. In its most minimal representation member checks are used by the researcher to clarify wording that took place during the interview. For those committed to praxis research, the member checks are built into the design from
the earliest stages of interviews through the final analysis.

Opportunities for participant feedback were incorporated throughout the study. I met with each participant to clarify some of the meanings in their narratives. However, of central importance in this study, is the role the participants played in the final analysis. They critiqued my feminist analysis and offered their theoretical and analytical insights. These insights were incorporated in a "second reading" of the final analysis. Each analytic reading of the researcher and the researcher/participants are juxtaposed to illustrate how the member check influenced the results of the analysis.

Transferability.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) draw a parallel between the positivist term of external validity or generalizability to the postpositivist term transferability. I find this problematic for two reasons. First, I believe that the analytic approach exacerbates the positivist/postpositivist debate. Since there is no existing "critical test" that will resolve the truth or falsity of rival belief systems, I believe this debate is pejorative (Fisner, 1979: 214). Second, postpositivists generally ask different kinds of questions than positivists, usually from two different frames of
reference, therefore it is unlikely that the criteria used to judge credibility will be similar. Postpositivists may not share similar criteria with positivists but that should not be confused with not having sound criteria for credibility.

Admittedly, Guba and Lincoln are not completely comfortable with the term "transferability." They support the use of "thick description" as a major technique for establishing transferability, but "proper thick description is still unresolved" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 242). They define thick description as "salient features of the context" which specify "everything the reader may need to know in order to understand the findings" (p. 125). Again, I contend that there is a problem in comparing transferability to generalizability. If postpositivist research is framed in the rejection of universal claims, then the results of such studies could never and would never profess to be generalizable. Transferability has enough strength to stand on its own.

Transferability is actually claimed by the readers of the study rather than the writer of the study. The writer supplies the data in context (thick description) and the reader concludes whether or not to contemplate a possible transfer (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 316). This process is contextual as opposed to generalizable, and there is no
comparison between the two. The "burdens of proof of claimed transferability is on the receiver" as opposed to "burdens of proof for claimed generalizability on the inquirer" (p. 241).

**Confirmability.**

Confirmability is the process of assuring that data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are grounded in contexts and persons apart from the evaluator and are not simply "figments of the evaluator’s imagination" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 243). I used three techniques suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1989) to establish confirmability. First, the data were triangulated through the compilation of multiple sources. Second, data and all documents related to the study were archived to specifically assess the source of records and sources of data. Included in these archives were audio tapes and transcripts of the interview, rough cut analysis and hunches, and final data analysis notes. The notes also included data that were gleaned from some transcripts and placed into emerging patterns and categories. Third, I kept a "reflexive journal" throughout the study to chronologically track the events and insights that occurred during the process of data collection and analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The purpose of the journal was two-fold: first, it provided a good record for the
administrative details of the study; and it provided a narrative on how the study evolved by tracking the patterns that emerged, the conversations that followed, and the substantive accounts of the interaction between the participants and me, and between the peer debriefer and me.

The reflexive journal also served as a vehicle to continually reveal my paradigmatic and theoretical assumptions that have been addressed in the preceding chapters. The journal provided the opportunity for me to question ways that the data were shaped by my values and how the data shaped mine.

**Dependability.**

Overall, dependability is assessed by the "overlapping methods" of data collection and theoretical perspectives (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 188). The overlapping methods included the various components involved with the established credibility claims. The theoretical perspectives are stated clearly throughout the study and documented in the reflexive journal. The overall record-keeping serves as a source of dependability for postpositivist research. I have kept detailed records of this study in the form of field notes, transcripts, a reflexive journal, computerized coding, and records of various stages of data analysis. These records serve as
the criteria to judge the dependability of the study.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed inductively. Lincoln and Guba (1985) compare inductive data analysis to content analysis, a process aimed at uncovering embedded information and making it explicit. Inductive analysis is likely to identify the "mutually shaping influences that interact" and accommodate a developing relationship between researcher and participants (p. 40). This opportunity not only provided a forum for reciprocity between the participants and me, but also encouraged a constant interplay between the data and my own theoretical assumptions (as described in Chapter II) that guided the study.

Two essential subprocesses are involved with inductive analysis, unitizing and categorizing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 203). Unitizing involves a process of coding in which the raw data are systematically transformed and aggregated into units which permit precise description of relevant content characteristics (Holsti, 1969: 94). Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe categorizing as sorting the units into provisional categories. Transcripts of the interview were coded and categorized on a computer, using the software package, "The Ethnograph," which was
developed specifically to work with data generated by interviews. After I entered the codes to the computerized program, The Ethnograph enabled me to easily pull out all the narratives that were common to one code. This process helped me to determine the commonalities and differences within one particular category.

The process of coding and recoding data was very complex and time consuming. I used a system that was loosely modeled after Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) design for developing grounded theory3 (see Figure 1). Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe the interaction of linking categories and subcategories as a mechanism to produce grounded theory. However, it should be noted that it was not my intention to develop grounded theory. Rather, my intention was to enhance feminist theory by juxtaposing the voices of a white women researcher and black women participants. In addition, my intention was to explore the ways in which contemporary feminist thinking may or may not be addressing the needs of black women in higher education and develop a rationale for change.

I approached these data with an "open coding" system

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3A grounded theory is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, expanded, and verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
that gleaned out major themes or broad categories. Next, I focused on specifying the category (or phenomenon) in terms of "the conditions that give rise to it" (p. 97). This process is called "axial coding." These conditions are referred to as subcategories because they are a more precise description of the category. Examples of categorized conditions include background conditions, context, intervening conditions, action/interaction, and consequences.

Background conditions may include the events or incidents that lead to the development of a phenomenon. The context includes a specific list of properties that pertain to the phenomenon such as location. The intervening conditions involve the conditions that have bearing on the interactional strategies that pertain to the phenomenon. Action/Interaction involves the strategies that are devised by the participants to manage or respond to a phenomenon within a specific set of perceived conditions. Finally, the consequences describe the results or outcome of action and interaction.
Figure 1.

System for Data Analysis

Participants' names and job titles were masked to provide confidentiality. As with other feminist studies (Gilligan, 1982; Patai, 1988; Richardson, 1988), I assigned a first name only to each of the women. I initially coded and categorized the data without the input of the participants. This process allowed me to see how or if the categories would change as I built in steps for more collaborative work. All transcripts and related materials were stored in a locked cabinet and my personal computer.

I developed broad-based categories based on my
perceptions of the narratives in the transcripts. My peer-debriefer was most helpful with this process. I had a tendency to want to analyze the data much too deeply at this stage of the process. She reminded me that if the analysis was to be collaborative, the categories should remain open-ended. This approach would leave room for more input from the participants as well as a more expanded data base.

I contacted each participant by telephone. I told them that I would be sending them a first cut analysis of the data and would appreciate their response. This analysis included my perceptions of some broadly defined themes that emerged as I coded the transcripts. I scheduled a meeting with each of them. At those meetings we discussed my initial findings and discussed their perceptions. I had also prepared some follow-up questions that pertained to some of the patterns that emerged in the initial analysis. Through this process, I expanded and enriched the data for this study. Interestingly, three of the six participants requested different names from those which I had randomly selected. Coincidentally, one of the names that I had selected was a childhood nickname for this particular participant and she was concerned about a potential breakdown in anonymity. The other two participants chose names that were personally appealing to
them.

As a result of those meetings, I took a second look at the data and my original analysis, narrowed the categories, and developed an analytical reading that was grounded in feminist theory. I sent these readings to the participants with the understanding that I would telephone them to solicit their feedback. Next, I contacted each participant (one was unavailable) and we discussed my analysis. Based on their comments, I developed a deconstructive analysis of my original feminist analysis (Lather, 1991b). The participants’ comments regarding my feminist analytic reading guided my writing of the deconstructive analytic reading (which is described in more depth in Chapter IV). The process of data analysis is illustrated in Figure 2. The step-by-step approach begins with a wide range of possibilities and ends with a clearly defined extraction of concise theoretical formulation.
The Story: Data From Initial Interviews

Coding of Data: Open-ended Categories

First Member Check: Follow Up Questions Categories Narrow

Researcher Analysis: Critical Analysis/Feminist Approach

Second Member Check: Feminist Analysis is Critiqued by Participants

Analysis: Second Reading/Deconstructive Approach

Figure 2
The Process of Analyzing Data

Strauss and Corbin (1990) note the importance of being sensitive to theory during the process of data analysis. Theoretical sensitivity takes on the personal qualities of the researcher. These qualities are experienced in varying degrees depending on the related readings and previous experience of the researcher. Strauss and Corbin elaborate on theoretical sensitivity in the following passage:
Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn’t. (p. 42)

Some of the catalysts for theoretical sensitivity may be found in the literature base, personal experience, and knowledge of the context of the field. However, the issue of race complicates the concept of theoretical sensitivity even further. It should be obvious by now that the integrity of this study hinges on how the participants inform the study. In this manner theoretical sensitivity must include a research and analytical design that includes the participants' insights as a central focus.

Summary

This chapter has described some of the methodological issues that emerged in a plan for this study. The values and relationships shared among and between researcher and participants were woven throughout the research plan. With that knowledge, different actors may ask the same question, employ identical methodological tools and produce different results.

I have begun this chapter with a discussion on how new paradigm inquiry evolved, and why the critical paradigm is site of this study. A section on reciprocity addresses the framework of mutual negotiation between the
researched and researcher and highlights the praxis-orientation of this study. The research design presents and describes information that is needed to both generate and complete the study such as sample selection, methods, and techniques to ensure that the study is trustworthy. This chapter concludes with a discussion of both the pragmatic steps related to the analysis of data and some of the issues related to research ethics that guide those steps.

The following chapter illustrates the fruits of our labors. The chapter begins with an introduction to theoretical underpinnings of the analysis process. I present the data through a series of tale-telling. These tales introduce the reader to the participants and demonstrate the multiple ways that data may be presented and analyzed.
CHAPTER IV

THE DATA SPEAK/SPEAKING DATA

This chapter emerges from the culmination of my interaction with the narratives of the participants and the theoretical underpinnings that guide the analysis. To reiterate, the intention in this study was to explore how a group of black women candidates construct their identity throughout a job search and selection process. At the earliest stages of sorting and coding the data, I become acutely aware of the many possibilities of presenting and even analyzing the data. Therefore my objective in this chapter is to show that in the pursuit of knowledge, we come to "know" in different ways. These different ways of knowing "reshape our sense of possibilities for what we do in the name of the human sciences" (Lather, 1991b: 125).

Several creative ways to present data have broken new ground in human science research. For example Patai (1988) offers a prose poem approach to her presentation of data. Lather (1991b) presents many "tales," one of which is the "reflexive tale" where the data are presented in a
playlet format that presents a research team's story of data analysis. Snyder (1990) presents data in the format of a play where the voices of the participants and the researcher are juxtaposed in the analysis of the data.

The presentation and analysis of the data in this study are divided into four sections. Each section involves the presentation of an emerging theme in the data that is represented first by a "realist tale" and then analyzed both through a "critical tale" and a "deconstructive tale" (Lather, 1991b). The purpose of the tale-telling approach is to illustrate the limitations and possibilities within the presentation of data. The specifics of the tales are described in the following paragraphs.

Each section begins with excerpts of the data that share a common theme. The data are first presented through a "realist tale," which is a way of introducing the reader to the participants allowing the participants to tell their stories (VanMaanen, 1988). In the writing of the realist tale, VanMaanen notes that the author "disappears into the described world after a brief, perfunctory, but mandatory appearance in a method footnote tucked away from the text" (1988: 64). The intent of the realist tale is to distance the author or researcher from the data so that the data more-or-less stand alone. The
researcher does play a key role in the realist tale when s/he selects the narratives that are used to construct the story. In other words, the selections of the narratives from the data strongly influence the direction the story takes. In the realist tale, however, the shaping of the story by the researcher is backgrounded.

A component of the realist tale includes developing a context within which the data are framed. The focus of the tale is restricted to a particular context or phenomenon, in this case, and emerging theme. This process allows the data to flow in a way that constructs a story by linking individual narratives together that are related to the particular phenomenon.

While the realist tale introduces the readers to the participants and to their stories, it offers little or no insight on issues that guide the analysis. This is where the "critical tale" comes in to interrupt the realist tale with a political agenda. These same data are used to develop strategies that promote social change. The critical tale also illustrates how my theoretical investments shape my analysis of the data. I present things that are said or not said from my vantage point as a researcher and a feminist. As the researcher, I work with the participants to elevate our understanding of identity construction by searching for embedded influences
that are not readily apparent. This project is also praxis oriented in that it provides an educative and changing forum for researcher and participants. The participants read the critical tale, and respond. Their task in the reading of the critical tale is to critique my analysis and provide input into the telling of the "deconstructive tale."

A deconstructive tale follows the critical tale. The intent of this tale offers an analysis of my critical analysis from a postmodern perspective. Rather than using the participants' narratives as the subject of the deconstructive tale, the focus is on my construction of the critical tale. The deconstructive tale is suspicious of hegemonic theories and in this case the hegemony is feminism. To deconstruct is to probe the desire of the critical theorist, and the participants help with this probing through their critique of the critical tale. For example, a deconstructive question asks, "How much is the theorist's own theoretical biases influencing how the data are presented?" The difference of race between researcher and participants is a clearly acknowledged factor in this study, and is a source of suspicion from a deconstructive approach. Power is also a source of contention in the relationship between researcher and researched. The researcher is in a privileged position as the one who
analyzes the data. As a white researcher this privilege is maximized. To mediate the unequal distribution of power in the research process, the deconstructive tale asks, "Whose voice is present in the analysis?" "Who has influenced the direction of this analysis?" "Who is comfortable with the analysis?" "Who is not?" "What is not being said?" These questions help to highlight the presence of the researcher in the discourse on identity construction and to disclose some of the issues that are informing the analysis.

Unlike the realist and critical tales, the deconstructive tales are told in the third person to illustrate the "multi-voiced texts" involved with the tale-telling (Lather, 1990a). The voice of the third person distances the researcher from the deconstructive tales since their purpose is to challenge her assumptions in the critical tales.

Emerging Themes

Emerging Theme I: Assertiveness: A Matter of Survival

Reading 1: The Realist Tale

In my reading of the data I perceived a theme of assertiveness and a strong sense of self-strength emerging in the presentation of self. Some of the participants specifically talked about "assertiveness."
participants did not label it as such, but described a forceful presentation that they consciously chose or resisted during their on-campus interview. Five of the participants realized that there was a fine line to walk between assertiveness and aggressiveness. Assertiveness appeared to be a socially acceptable degree of self-confidence to communicate in their self-presentation. An aggressiveness self-presentation, however, runs the risk of being too pushy or belligerent. Several of the candidates referred to the politics of their given situation and how this may influence the extent of their assertiveness. Some of the participants talked about assertiveness as an integral part of their identity in their everyday life as well a formal job interview setting. The following excerpts provide some clear examples of how assertiveness played out in the construction of identity through their self-presentation.

Tina is a thirty two year old woman with a Master’s Degree in Human Resource Management. She has seven years of practical experience in higher education and interviewed for a job with the hope of enrolling part time in a doctoral program at the institution where she would be working. She acknowledges that she was not the first choice candidate, but she eventually was offered and accepted the job. When I asked Tina if there was anything
that she would not want the search committee to know about her, she responded:

Um, let me see, it wasn’t really anything I didn’t want them not to know. I didn’t want to come across being very um, aggressive. But my mannerisms at times can be [aggressive], that only happens because of the situation that I find I’m in constantly. I’m always in these positions where I’m very visible. And I’m always takin’ on issues that are opposing the status quo. You know, and so I didn’t want to give them a lot of examples of me always constantly fighting the administration and always fighting this office [referring to the department within which she now works] and so forth, cause I didn’t want to give that impression. It’s usually after six months that I have to actually take a stand and fight for something you know (chuckle). So, I didn’t want to come across as being aggressive or a trouble maker. I have to keep the politics of the situation in mind.

In a follow up conversation, I asked Tina to elaborate on her feelings about being assertive or aggressive. She explained that her professional assertiveness was a very conscious presentation, but it was not the style she leads in her personal life. She explains:

Well I am really different in my personal life. I’m really low-key, almost introverted. I think I change so drastically because my professional job is so public and I have to be assertive to get the job done. My job is so political that at times I make decisions that make me realize that I may not have a job at the end of the day.

Dee is in her early forties, has a Ph.D. and has been working as a senior administrator at an Historically Black Institution (HBI) for six years. She interviewed for an academic administrator position and was not offered the
job. She took a very non assertive approach to the interview and her presentation of self. She says:

I tend to be very low key. You know, I’ll get the job on my own merit and if I get it, fine, if I don’t fine. But, I tend not to rely on others to intercede on my behalf. ...I tend to be very private with things like that [job search]. I figure the fewer people who know, the better. And then if you don’t get the job, you never have to tell anybody.

Later Dee learned that the search was reopened and an internal candidate applied and got the job. She was disturbed by this and felt that the search committee should have selected him in the first place "and saved time and money." She expressed some concern about why she was not selected. She wanted to hear some feedback but she was hesitant to ask. She didn’t believe she would be told the whole truth anyway. Dee says:

Uh, I don’t know if they’ll ever get to that point [supplying feedback to candidates] because all of us have some enemies and I think people are concerned about liability . . . you know you may want to say to someone, you should not have worn a very short dress or tight dress or something. There’s always the possibility someone will come in later with a lawsuit and say, "You didn’t hire me because you didn’t like the kind of dress I had on." There is no opportunity in place to nurture or help the candidate interview better. This is not what the design of the process is meant to do.

Rose is in her mid forties and is a senior academic administrator. She is one of very few women in her department and all the men are white. She was hired for her position at the same time as a white man, who was
assigned to work on several projects with her. She refers to her colleague as "teacher’s pet" because he was their boss’s favorite. It was clear to Rose, shortly after they were both hired that he did not have the academic or administrative skills to handle the job and that she would find it necessary to work very hard to cover for mistakes. Nonetheless, this job was very important to Rose. She had worked very hard to get an interview for this position. As an internal candidate she took advantage of opportunities to "get noticed." She says:

I’m sure people were thinking how audacious I was. Nobody likes a yeller and a screamer . . . . I make a lot of noise, and cause a lot of trouble. It’s the only way to get noticed around here . . . . The politics is killing me! . . . . You need to be aggressive and noisy and let people know that you’re just not going to let them walk all over you. That’s not to say that this is a formula that necessarily works. It gets you in a lot of trouble too. I mean men can be obnoxious and loud and aggressive and this is accepted but women are seen quite differently with these attributes. It’s kind of a Catch 22 because if you are passive or act like a "cutie pie" they’ll run all over you, but if you are noisy about issues or take an assertive approach, you have them treating you with suspicion and hostility. But, hey its how I survive. There are those moments that you just have to put on those trousers and get busy! I find I have to do a lot of "mending of fences." You know I need to take a very nasty aggressive approach to crack the system and once I get in I can put on my nice personality. But I do that only when I’m sure!

Rose and the other man worked together for about a year before he accepted a position in another office. She notes that he accepted a position at the university with
far less responsibility, but he received the same generous salary as his previous job. Rose was relieved that he was "out of her hair" but disgusted with "his incompetence being rewarded." She says he managed to become the "pet" of others who took care of him.

Bonnie, is in her mid forties and very well known in her field of expertise. She was invited to apply for the position, was offered the position and declined the offer. Bonnie was assertive from the beginning of the process; in part, by asking some very provocative questions. For example, she had reservations about the "politics of the situation." She observes:

What kind of empowerment is this person going to have to accomplish things? Uh if you really are talking about making a serious dent in some of these serious problems, I'm not interested in being the hostess with the mostess, and that's what it appears [they were] talking about. If you want to have tea parties or fashion shows or whatever, go find someone else.

Later Bonnie reflects on the experience of her candidacy.

I'm not sure whether it was possible to be more outspoken. I try to present that I am not a game playing person. Game-playing disturbs me. I shoot from the hip and try not to be abrasive. I also believe in a high level of ethics.

C: Are you comfortable with your presentation?

B: Oh, yea, I am comfortable, because when I weigh it all, I think more good has come as a result of the candidness and the directness than harm. When I do recognize there has been some feelings hurt or they have misinterpreted or misunderstood, or been taken some, you know taken back by it on occasion, would say, quite frankly, that is probably the smaller
number of people. Uh, most people are shocked and end up saying, the candidness has been incredible because they’re so used to dealing with layers that they have to dig through.

Amy is a thirty-nine year old woman with a Master’s degree in Communication and considerable experience in personnel matters. She was offered and accepted the position for which she interviewed. She talked about assertiveness in relation to the preparation for her job interview. She said:

Being at all assertive gets to be such a hassle after awhile. I have to decide how much to gauge my investment in being forthright and assertive, because you’re judged as difficult if you are a woman, particularly a black woman, and I know that men are not laying awake at night before an interview worrying about how outspoken they are supposed to be. I see this more and more as I work here. You try to act professional and it works against you. There is such a men’s network out there, and I think the network knows no special color, at least from my experience here. You know, men are just so worried about covering their own hide and their buddy’s hide as well. My eyes have recently been opened to that phenomenon, believe me!

As Amy begins to relive the interview experience, she comes back to the issue of assertiveness. She appears to struggle with not only what it means to her, but what the advantages are to being assertive:

I think that competent is another word for assertive, someone who would make decisions and communicate those well. I wanted them to see me as someone who would fight for, no fight is not a good word, um, not passive I guess. I would pick my battles. Sometimes assertiveness takes the form of writing a memo that is very confrontive. I find with assertiveness I don’t always get what I want. People often get
defensive when I confront things or they kind of zone out. I think they confuse assertiveness with being difficult. I am direct, never rude, and I don’t lie.

When the participants talked about assertiveness they discussed it within the context of an overall "strategy to survive" (Rose). They connected an assertive style in the interview situation to the wider scope of personal experiences that influenced the assertive strategy. The following passage includes quotes from all six participants as they discuss their self-presentation and why they consciously choose to be assertive:

For women it’s a very conscious part of what we do. When I leave my house every morning I am faced with survival on a daily basis - wherever I go. Men on the other hand, wait to get groomed and taken care of by others. We’re on our own and sometimes we can go off in the wrong direction.

I want to appear very secure. I have a high need for people to see me as independent . . . . I never want to embarrass myself.

It becomes a part of everyday life, a matter of survival. Nobody can take care of me like me.

I wouldn’t know how to be anything else." Part of all this assertive talk is strategy, but for the most part it all comes out of my mouth naturally.

I can sense sometimes that men are threatened by what I am saying and that’s their problem. They get particularly antsy when I talk about my research on minorities, but that’s too bad.

If there’s one thing I rate as a survival skill in this world is discipline and strength and this comes across in all that I do and all that I say.

I choose to be assertive knowing full well that it is not a sure-fire method to succeed, it’s all a risk.
Assertiveness: A Matter of Survival

Reading 2: The Critical Tale.

The decade of the 1970s witnessed an emergence of various workshops, seminars, and books on assertiveness training (Baer, 1976; Bloom, Coburn, & Pearlman, 1976; and Ringer, 1974). Through this particular self-help theory, women were given permission to be open and forthright but were cautioned against pushing this too far. The title of Baer’s (1976) book, How to Be an Assertive (not aggressive) Woman, best sums up the boundaries of assertiveness training that were imposed on women. Clearly, many of the participants in this study voice their distrust of this self-help method. They are fully cognizant that there are no guarantees for successful outcomes if women develop the art of an assertive style. Their distrust of an "assertive formula" and awareness that there are no clear-cut answers is apparent when they say, "I have to gauge my investment in assertiveness," or "it’s not a formula that necessarily works."

Although the participants often talk about the risks to "being assertive," these risks are not always grounded in a gendered perspective. For example, Tina talks about wanting to appear assertive and not aggressive, and Bonnie talks about "shooting from the hip without being abrasive." From my feminist perspective, what Tina and
Bonnie are really describing is a self presentation that borders on the fringes of male territory. Rose illustrates this gendered territory when she says, "nobody likes a yeller and a screamer," but later she adds that men "can be obnoxious and aggressive." In other words, no man likes a woman who yells and screams.

Tina does not want to be seen as a "trouble maker" or one who fights the system, rather she waits until she feels secure in her position (six months) before she exposes this side. Thinking that some of the "politics" make her tenure rather unstable ("I make decisions that make me realize that I may not have a job at the end of the day"), she still realizes that the "only way to get the job done" is to be assertive. Rose, on the other hand, takes a "nasty and aggressive approach to crack the system" and once she feels she is in the system she "puts on a nice personality." On the surface, Tina and Rose exhibit opposite perspectives on assertiveness, but what they really differ on is the optimal timing of crossing the line from assertiveness to aggressiveness. However, they are both talking about a strategy for working within a system that does not reward women for being assertive or aggressive. Amy illustrates a general discomfort with an overly assertive approach when she says, "fight is not a good word." However, the participants recognize that
"survival" is dependent upon some degree of assertiveness.

Dee has taken the opposite strategy which is to resist being assertive. She prefers to be "low key" and to "get the job on her own merit." However, Dee did not get the job. She did not ask for feedback because she assumed that hiring officials are not honest about feedback for fear of litigation backlash. She does not see the interview and selection process as "nurturing" and does not necessarily believe it should be. Dee shared an example of why a person may not get a job and the hiring official may be reluctant to be honest as "the candidate may have been wearing a very short dress." Dee was describing a gendered search and selection process. First, in her use of language to describe the process as not "nurturing," she associates the experience with a term commonly associated with women (Gilligan, 1982; Oakley, 1981; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Secondly she provides an example of why a "person" may not be hired for a job that exclusively pertains to women candidates.

The participants very consciously exhibited and/or resisted a level of assertiveness in their presentation of self that moved beyond the on-campus interview to the actual job setting. Amy describes an assertive presentation of self in a job interview as an "investment" of time and energy into some inevitable "hassles." She
felt certain that the male candidates did not lose sleep worrying about their assertive presentation. She was implying that men did not face the same "hassles" when they are assertive.

Assertiveness and/or an aggressive style is socially acceptable for males, and society provides them with ample opportunities to exercise this privilege. We are reminded of this in our everyday lives. For example when George Bush was running for U.S. President in 1988, his opponents launched a major media campaign to discredit Bush by identifying him as "a wimp." The wimp talk came to a screeching halt, however, when Bush lost his temper and verbally attacked Dan Rather on national television. A decision that would have rendered political suicide for a woman Presidential candidate caused Bush's popularity to instantly rise in the public opinion polls. Bush had clearly illustrated to the American public that he was a man's man.

Assertive behavior that is presented in the job interview and/or on the job site itself usually results in some gains and some losses. Rose describes it as the "Catch 22" where the passive behavior has "people running all over you" and the assertive behavior leaves people "suspicious and hostile."

Is there a happy medium on an assertive presentation?
From the perspectives of the participants, there are certainly no guarantees. With the white male dominated senior administrative ranks of higher education, black women frequently take risks when they assert themselves, but these risks are necessary in "the strategy to survive." Rose best sums it up when she says, "There are those moments when you have to put on those trousers and get busy!"

Amongness: A Matter of Survival

Reading 3: The Deconstructive Tale.

"As subjects, people have the right to define their own reality, "establish their own identity, . . . as objects, reality is defined by others, one's identity is created by others" (hooks, 1989: 43). A feminist approach to the preceding data analysis imposes a gendered reality. Assertiveness is a gendered term that oftentimes sparks a dialogue that polarizes the experiences of women and men. The researcher freely admits that some of the participants do not tell their stories from a gendered perspective. However, she takes advantage of her position as the interpreter in the research process by imposing a gendered analysis on all of the narratives. This analysis dynamic assumes "the 'we' who know better" attitude because we "have somehow got science and can write the theory of their naive narratives" (Bennington, quoted in Lather,
1991b: 138). For example, the analysis presents Tina and Bonnie as avoiding levels of assertiveness that are considered as unacceptable for women in a sexist society. However, Tina and Bonnie may actually be describing a self-imposed level of professional courtesy. They offer an opinion that "abrasiveness" and "aggressiveness" are unacceptable behaviors. Yet, the researcher implies that there are gender-related outside constraints informing their perspective.

The critical analysis presents Dee as resisting an assertive presentation. The researcher also connects Dee’s "low key" presentation with her status as an unsuccessful candidate. There is an assumption implicit in the analysis that an assertive presentation of self ensures a better chance at success. However, there are many other factors that figure into the selection of a candidate that the researcher fails to mention such as experience and level of expertise. Furthermore, the critical analysis does not acknowledge Dee’s comfort with her low-key presentation of self. Dee appears to be satisfied with her presentation of self, despite not having been offered the position.

Part of the collaborative approach to this study includes the researcher sharing her feminist biases with the participants. Rose and Amy share a very gendered
perspective on their presentation of self, but, they may have been influenced by the researcher's biases. In addition, Rose and Amy are working in a stressful work environment, and much of the stress appears to stem from their relationships with male colleagues; concurrently, these relationships may likely influence their perspectives. Talking confidentially to a feminist researcher provides an opportunity to vent these frustrations. Their gendered perspectives capture the full attention of the feminist researcher and sustain the researcher's a priori theory.

**Emerging Theme II: Cultural Diversity and Organizational Fit**

**Reading 1: The Realist Tale.**

The narratives of the participants' illustrated that the term cultural diversity takes on a wide range of definitions. The women in the study expressed their experience with the concept of diversity and how it related to their experience with their job interviews. For our second meeting, Bonnie invited me to her home. She was in the process of redecorating. Her living room was filled with African sculpture, fabric, and sketches. We began to discuss the concept of cultural diversity and its relation to organizational fit. I was surprised by
her response and grateful for her insight. Bonnie explained:

This whole diversity thing has gotten redefined over the years, in fact I don’t use that language anymore. I don’t say underserved or pluralism or any of that because I think there are people who have different ideas about that than I do. I had someone say to me at an interview that I could also bring the cultural perspective to the job that they were looking for and I said, "What kind of cultural perspective are you assuming?" I mean, I mean you and I most likely share the same cultural experience (referring to me). I grew up in [an affluent section of the city] and went to [a highly selective liberal arts college]. I did not even see an African Dance ensemble until I was twenty-five years old! Now its fifteen or twenty years later and only through a real concerted effort on my part am I beginning to capture my African identity. I know my ancestors come from the continent of Africa, but I don’t know where. Its a big continent and there is a lot for me to learn. But I don’t necessarily represent the Black culture. If I choose to wear dreads I will, but I don’t choose to right now. I look with pride that my origins take me back to Africa but there’s a lot for me to learn. I am also proud that my great, great, great grandfather was Irish. I do not have to deny my American culture any more than I have to deny my African culture. There are some folks who seek to deny their American culture. I know there were some mistakes made in American history but it’s our history . . . . The concept of shared philosophy [between a candidate and a search committee] is an interesting thing. In fact what people are really looking for are candidates to share a similar philosophy and then they can play the numbers game with race quotas.

Bonnie not only confirmed my original hunch about hiring officials’ limited understanding of or commitment to cultural diversity, but she made me aware of my own assumptions. Sitting in a room that was filled with a presence of African heritage, I assumed that she would
describe a very Afrocentric core identity. Instead Bonnie described a very complex concept of cultural identity. She often referred to "not denying" aspects of herself. Amy talked about cultural diversity outside the context of the job interview. She says, "It is one thing to talk about cultural diversity and another thing to practice it." She talked about her work as a consultant for cultural diversity issues and said she received a lot of support for this in her department. In fact she received several merit increases because of these contributions. However, her eyes were opened to some of the boundaries of this "appreciation for cultural diversity" when it came to career opportunities for her. Amy elaborated:

One thing that happened on the job is worth noting. I had received very good feedback on the work I was doing. I was working in a relatively small department within the division and requested a lateral transfer to a larger and more visible area and my request was denied. I asked why and they said they hired a man with some experience with international student populations and this position was working with international students. You see men were very favored there. ____ would always hire the sensitive counseling oriented type regardless of what his managerial experience was. I remember hearing that the man who got the position I had applied for had just been in town for the day visiting a friend of ____’s. He was planning on starting an import export business in the area when this friend of ____’s suggested he apply for this position. He then proceeded to write his resume on the back of a menu, honest to goodness! He got the job! ____ had a tendency to groom these men once they were hired at very mid management positions and before you knew it, they were serving as Vice Chancellors without the benefit of an interview!
Amy talked about the "feeling" regarding an interaction with hiring officials and their perspectives on cultural diversity and institutional fit. She says:

I once interviewed for a job where I felt that I was clearly an Affirmative Action requirement for their pool of applicants. I came to campus and noticed that the department was all white males with one white female at an assistant level. There were no women at the senior level. I was put up in a dormitory room. Can you believe it?! Before I had gone there to interview, a colleague of mine, a white male by the way, had gone to this same campus to interview for a senior position and he had been seriously courted, so I was shocked when I saw MY accommodations . . . . I noticed that the department was all white and for the most part male so, I asked the director of the department what he felt the implications would be if he hired a black woman as a senior administrator. Well I think I blew him off his feet. He was very defensive and the more he talked the more clear it became that he had no intention of hiring me. I can't tell you exactly what he said, it was a very clear instinctive feeling that I had at the time.

Amy describes a "clear instinctive feeling" and Dee and Rose both talk about an attitude that conveys a question about organizational fit:

People look at me as a black female and they expect me to be a token. I am not a token. I am a highly intelligent person who is better than most men at my job. This does not make men comfortable. When I sit across the table from a white man I can sense hostility and I know they are assuming that I am hostile towards them. Whether I am or not it doesn't matter, they believe it to be true. The correct image here is that of a tall white man with a strong military background. They go far on those credentials. The only way my image comes in handy around here is if they want someone in a "scraper position" but no way do they want a black woman being all out there to do a lot of public relations. They leave that to the tall, white, ex-military guys
(laugh)! (Rose)

Not so much at this interview, but I certainly have had this experience before. There are a lot of questions about my working at an historically black institution and how those skills may or may not transfer to a white institution. They may say things like, "Well your institution is so small and how do you think you will adapt to such a large institution such as ours." They may also say, "Well you’re a high level administrator now at a small school, and how will you be able to give up that place of authority if you take a lesser title here?" Thinking back it’s not so much what they said, it’s how they said it. They imply that I don’t know a lot about my field and give me all this information that they assume I don’t know. I get the message that I’m okay - but just not for them. (Dee)

Rose and Dee both describe a process where members are selectively admitted into the organization. The "fit" ascribes to a predictable homogeneity. Rose says that black women have a place in the organization but one that involves low visibility and a lot of hard work. Dee’s credentials impose a barrier to entry into the organization. Her work experience at an HBI is highly scrutinized by the search committee and not perceived as transferable to a predominantly white institution (PWI).

Jan is in her mid-forties and has an extensive publishing background. She is a tenured faculty member and an experienced administrator in both higher education and in the private sector. Her concerns about whether she was actually being considered as a serious candidate began to surface before her on-campus interview. She describes
the her early communications as "official . . . the whole process was one which I would describe as not warm or a process that fit me . . . the search committee never demonstrated that they were very interested, excited, or that they wanted to recruit me, even though I was among a very small list of finalists." The position for which she interviewed but was not offered was in academic administration. The correspondence that Jan received before her arrival on campus was a "series of form-type letters, nothing at all personal." She refers to some of her interactions with the search committee members when she actually met them:

I think there were some concerns with the type of research that I do. Of course nobody ever told me that because this is not the kind of feedback that they wanted to give. It came up enough to make me feel that there was a concern that I was doing research on minorities, and at that time in particular I was doing a lot of research on poor black teenagers . . . the subject repeatedly came up about the population that I work with. Things were said like, "Is this a valid interpretation of the findings since white subjects were not included?" In my mind I could understand wanting an administrator who respects research, but this position was not a research position, it was administrative!

Jan continues to talk about the concept of "organizational fit." She refers to the assumptions that people incorrectly make about all black people being the same "regardless of class, education, background, etc." She continues:
I think that knowledge is very limited by our own willingness to consider how we might learn about populations who are different from us. And I’m saying, I’m a black women, but my being black is not enough because I stand out like a sore thumb in these poor communities. I mean, you know, so it’s not a matter of the racial dimension. I mean when I start talking to people, they know I don’t live there. Contrary to what white people may conclude, to put it in blunt terms, I am not one of them.

Later, Jan comes back to the topic of her research and talks about "playing the tenure game" where she felt she needed to not only focus on a particular type of research but a particular methodology.

So there’s all these kind of things that are more than technical competence and computer skills and knowledge of analysis of variance that goes into the generation of knowledge and understanding. And I think people are really distracted by that and have judgments about that and make judgments about the quality of your work based on their beliefs . . . . I can get involved with all that technical wizardry and it’s easier to get hung up on the technical stuff .. .. People love that kind of stuff. And I’ll tell you, for me professionally that was not the most intellectually exciting period of my life [referring to quantitative research during her days as an assistant professor "trying to get tenure and publish rapidly"].

Jan discussed the "intellectually stimulating" research on poor black teenagers which was the focus of the questions from the research committee. She struggled to describe the concerns she had about the committee’s reaction. It was not so much what they said as much as an attitude they conveyed:

. . . So it’s not the asking about it [her research]
that troubled me, it's the sense that disapproval was based on cultural values and a sort of ethnocentrism, and even a sort of devaluing of the population that bothered me . . . . At no point did anyone say, "This is not valid, this is ludicrous, um this is not sophisticated." . . . . It was the kind of attitudinal kinds of things that were going through the questioning.

Months passed before she heard anything from the chair of the committee. It was only after she had accepted another position when she received a note from him, congratulating her on her newly acquired position. Another letter followed soon afterward informing her that another candidate was selected for the position for which she had applied at ____ University. She said that it was her belief that the decision to hire the successful candidate had been made months before she received that letter. She described this entire communication process as "discourteous" and "less than honest." However, Jan notes, the process was not all bad. Because of some people that she met through that job interview, she has been asked to do some consulting work for a national conference that was being sponsored by that institution. A person who attended the presentation of her research was impressed with her work and referred her for a consulting job.

Tina talked about how she prepared to address the concept of organizational fit in her on-campus interview.
She wanted to demonstrate to the search committee that she was the best possible candidate and a "good fit" for the position:

I had an opportunity to show them some of the work I had done at my past institution. You know, I brought a small portfolio with me, describing some of the programs I had implemented. . . . My looks are deceiving. I look like a student and I want people to know that I'm not as young as I look. I wanted to come across as very, very, experienced so that they would see that I was not that young.

Tina also talks about a dimension of organizational fit which became clearer to her after her on-campus interview. Prompted by a discussion that she had with the first choice candidate who was a friend of hers, (a black male) she began to wonder if his sex was influencing the decision. Tina explains:

I found out a lot of things that transpired after my interview which made me aware of the concern for my fitting in. I knew the first choice candidate. We were aware that each other was applying and he kept me informed of his progress. I KNOW that I was really the only one qualified for the job because I was the only one who had run an program. He had run a very different kind of program. But, he was a man.

Tina was surprised that her friend was offered the position because he was so much less qualified than she. She assumed that experience and expertise would win out over any other criteria.

Rose talks about her interview with her Academic Dean. She recalls:

He said, "We know you have the credentials but will
you fit in?" I felt like saying, "I don’t need you!!" But, I didn’t say it. I have to get along with the higher ups, the reality is that they do not have to get along with you . . . . I knew that I was there to do the labor and the man who was hired was there to beat his chest!

Rose says that it is sometimes difficult to obtain credit for the work she does, since so much of it involves a "group effort." She says she was often asked to work with men who didn’t know what they were doing. They didn’t do the appropriate amount of research, they were not up on the current literature, or that they were just "simply lazy." Rose gets involved in committee work on curricular issues where "people can bear witness to [her] skills."

Cultural Diversity and Organizational Fit

Reading 2: The Critical Tale.

Without exception, the participants voiced a skepticism of the institution’s desire to promote cultural diversity. Their skepticism is not surprising given the societal conditions that perpetuate less than desirable race relations. It is a "political reality" that black people in America are victims of institutional racism and economic depression (Joseph & Lewis, 1981). As Amy says, "It’s one thing to talk about cultural diversity, it’s another thing to practice it."

My conversations with Bonnie were illuminating as she talks about her "cultural background." She describes a
traditional middle class childhood and adolescence, but she also talks about her desire to "capture her African identity." She appears to be frustrated by the assumptions that white people make about her ability to provide a "distinct culture." Bonnie explains that she is not even sure that she has a distinct culture, as she is still in the process of learning about her African roots. Key to our conversation was her comment about shared philosophies between the hiring official and the candidate. She implies that cultural diversity sometimes operates at a very surface level such as the color of skin. What it really amounts to is the hiring a black woman who will not challenge the existing philosophy. She calls this process the "quota and numbers game."

Amy offers some insight on the institutional advantages or disadvantages that emerge when one engages in a culturally diverse perspective. She tells the story of how she was consistently given praise for the seminars she taught on race relations, but when she requested a lateral transfer to a larger more visible area within the department, she was denied that opportunity. Amy had earned the reputation for being very open about the destructive nature of racism and how it permeates all aspects of society, and her workplace was no exception. Much of her training involved audience participation,
group discussion, and self-reflection. Again, she received very good feedback from the senior administration on that aspect of her work and the awareness that she brought to the people in her department. However, when the opportunity arose for her to interact in a much more significant way with the campus community, she was denied access. Amy’s experience illustrates an example of a marginalized fit. That is, she was praised and rewarded (she received several merit raises) as long as she did not enter "the mainstream."

Rose does not want to be seen as a token, and clearly she is not a token. However, she is relegated to behind the scenes work and is rarely allowed to present her own work to the public. Also, the group work that she often is assigned to makes it nearly impossible for others to evaluate the amount of work that each had invested. She was not surprised at the situation, especially after the Dean voiced concerns about "her fitting in." She has begun to actively engage in an effort to make her accomplishments known, but she is operating under extremely sexist and racist oppression.

Dee and Jan’s experiences of their on campus interviews were similar. Dee received a covert yet clear message that "[she] was okay, just not for here." She entertained a variety of questions about the assumed
transitional problems she would face coming from a "small school." In addition, the small school was historically black. The questions obviously held a racist undertone, but they also illustrated issues of power and dominance. For example, the question, "You're a high level administrator now, but how would you feel about giving up that place of authority with a lesser title?" assumes that if she were offered the position, she should expect not to be as powerful as she was in the black community.

Jan talks about the hostility she felt ("an attitudinal kind of thing") as the committee questioned her research. She observes that the job for which she was interviewing was administrative, yet the focus of the search committee’s questions was on her research. She felt a strong sense of disapproval of her most recent work both in terms of the minority-specific focus and the methodology. Jan notes astutely that knowledge is limited by our willingness to learn from populations that are different from us. Certainly the committee appeared to be less than enthusiastic about Jan’s minority-specific research, thus limiting their willingness to learn. The committee also appeared to devalue research that did not include white participants. Jan is describing an attitude that is not open to new ways of knowing. At no point in the interview process does Jan feel as though she is being
courted. Jan, who is a nationally acclaimed scholar, is put in a position of defending not only her research about black teenagers, but also her identity as a black woman. She alludes to the tendency of white people to perceive black women as having a monolithic identity. She describes the vast class and cultural differences between her and the participants in her study, "contrary to what white people may conclude."

As with Amy, Jan experienced a marginalized acceptance into the academy. She was not hired for the administrative position, but her presentation at that interview resulted in some consulting work at a national conference. Clearly, her research and her presentation of her research was impressive enough for her to be asked to consult for a conference that was being sponsored by the institution.

Tina did not seem to be aware of the committee’s concern for her "fitting in" until after her interview. She had a positive interview experience, and did not recall any anxious moments. Therefore, when she realized that her friend was the first choice candidate she was surprised. From Tina’s perspective, her professional credentials were much stronger than his. She was much more qualified and her references were very strong. However, if she was indeed participating in a gender-
biased search, no amount of experience or qualifications on her part would have mattered.

In partial summary, the participants describe experiences that raise questions about organizational fit, which is vaguely defined. They often speak about what was unsaid as opposed to said, the attitudes conveyed from hiring officials, and uncomfortable communication that occurs between the search committee and them. Amy talks about the frustration of wondering whether she is chosen to be a finalist in job searches as a token affirmative action gesture or whether she is actually a serious contender. Jan implies that she has the same concerns when she describes the mixed messages that she receives from the very early stages of the recruitment and selection process. The narratives of the participants illustrate that despite the covert nature of some of the racist and sexist practices, they are equally visible to the candidates as the overt practices.

**Cultural Diversity and Organizational Fit**

**Reading 3: The Deconstructive Tale.**

The researcher’s feminist lens is clearly focused as she explores issues of cultural diversity and organizational fit. Amy and Rose agree that issues related to organizational fit are both gender and race related. They both talk about overt racist and sexist
practices that prevent them from becoming full fledged members of the organization. However, Bonnie, Amy, Dee and Jan primarily connect race issues with organizational fit. For example, the questionable tenet of Dee’s credentials is related to her work experience at an HBI. Although the search committee talks about the size of the institution as a concern, Dee is suspicious that the concern is more related to racial membership of the community. She makes no reference to gender issues in her narrative. Jan talks specifically about the search committee’s "devaluing" the minority population in her research. Her comments about white people perceiving one monolithic identity among blacks are grounded in racist attitudes conveyed by white men and women. "Disapproval," she notes, "was based on cultural values and ethnocentrism."

The researcher describes Tina’s job interview as an example of sexism. The first choice candidate was a black male so the researcher assumes that gender was an overriding issue. However, the researcher’s focus on gender issues fails to account for a very prominent concern in the black community, which is the need for positive black male role models. This need is of a particular concern for black educators. This concern is based on the steady decline in black male retention rates
in higher education while black women’s retention rates have remained stable (Flemming, 1984; Green, 1988; Touchton & Davis, 1991: 54). So if indeed Tina was participating in a gender-biased search, the impetus for such a bias is not necessarily grounded in a desire to discriminate against women. Rather, it may be influenced by the desire to improve the retention rate for black male college students.

Bonnie’s narrative about cultural diversity/organizational fit was related to false assumptions that whites make about blacks. Linked to the analysis was the researcher’s own admission that she too was guilty of making false assumptions about Bonnie’s cultural background. That admission points to the problematic of a white person in the privileged place of the researcher in this study, and warrants a suspicion of her critical analysis. bell hooks (1989) notes, "writing about cultures or experiences of other ethnic groups different from one’s own becomes most political when the issue is who will be regarded as the authoritative voice" (p. 44). The researcher frequently uses direct quotes from the participants to frame her analysis. However, her voice is the one that resonates in the analysis, despite her feminist goal to empower the participants.
Emerging Theme III: People Who Have Influenced Identity Construction

Reading 1: The Realist Tale.

With the exception of Jan, all the participants spoke about people who have influenced their identity. Role models or mentors have influenced other aspects of their lives besides their presentation of self at a job interview. Our discussions about mentors, therefore, expanded beyond boundaries of the on-campus interview. In many cases mentors have profoundly shaped the lives of the participants and have played a key role in their identity construction.

Blackwell (1884) states that relationships that develop between mentors and mentees are "developmental and dynamic" and they strongly influence career advancement (p. 2). The attributes that are associated with mentors are varied and are linked to both personal and professional characteristics. Levinson (1978) contends that gender plays a strong role in mentoring relationships and mentors often seek out mentees of the same sex and vice versa. Other factors that enter into the mentor/mentee equation include similarities with race, socio-economic class, and religion (Keele & DeLamare-Schaefer, 1984; Moore, 1982; Swoboda, 1986). However, given the paucity of women, particularly black women in
administrative positions, many women do not benefit from mentoring relationships in higher education settings.

I asked the participants to talk about key people in their lives who have influenced who they are and how that manifests itself in their self-presentation. Some of the women talked exclusively about people who have influenced their professional identity. For example, Tina’s mentor is a black woman administrator. She talks about her mentor as someone whose style Tina wants to emulate:

She’s a very high ranking official. I think the reason she’s my mentor is because we are so very different. You know, she can manipulate the system without making an awful scene. Me, I come in like a hurricane and trees fall all over the place (chuckle), but she is more like a mild wind. We may get the same results but her way of getting there is so much more smooth! . . . . I also wonder how she was when she was my age. She’s a lot older than me.

Tina recognizes that her mentor exudes a sophistication that may be related to age and experience. Even though Tina and her mentor may "get the same results," the mentor’s style appears to be more professionally desirable to Tina.

Rose shared that the experience of her job interview opened her eyes to a political agenda that she had not previously noticed. When she was hired to work with many "unqualified and incompetent males" she felt she needed some formal support to counter the "favoritism" that operated within her department. Rose decided to actively
pursue a mentoring relationship. Rose looked for someone who would help guide her through some threatening territory. Rose's mentor was a white senior administrator who had worked at the university for a long time and had established a sterling reputation. She shares:

Males bond. They belong to an exclusive group that is tribal and white and this hurts women if they sit back and watch it happen! I specifically asked [Margaret] to mentor me because she was so well respected in the academic community and she was a fierce warrior. One time I was experiencing some efforts to discredit me, like I would be left out of important meetings and I would go to my mentor for advice. Immediately Margaret would go into action. .. before I knew it she was dropping my name all over the place to influential people in the academic community and she helped me pull a portfolio together which illustrated my accomplishments. She also helped me when I found out that there were some ridiculous pay inequities operating in my department and that all the "pets" got merit raises and I had been overlooked. She helped me through the political ropes. It sounds awful but you have to learn how to use people .. . I used to think that I could be up front with people and work hard and that's all I'd need to do. I now know I need more, I need to have eyes in the back of my head.

Rose very consciously sought out a mentor to help her "survive the politics." Race was not an influencing factor in Rose's choice, but gender clearly was. Rose wanted a woman with a strong reputation to guide her in the right direction.

As opposed to Tina and Rose, Dee talks about mentors in her life in the general sense. She could not think of any one part of her that mentors had influenced, but she
did share some insightful comments about gendered mentoring relationships.

My first mentor was a black male, in fact most of my mentors were black males. In a work setting men tend to take you under their wings more often than black women. My experience has been that black women are a little less generous with nurturing and support than black men. It's harder for me to break the ice with black women. (pause) . . .

After Dee's pause, she offered an illuminating analysis related to her feelings about black men and black women as mentors.

. . . It may be that black women with power have had to battle to be where they are and they're just not up to exerting the energy anymore. I know that we say that black women are more nurturing at home. Black women are still the backbone of the family, even those who are in high power positions in their careers. I mean they usually care for their parents and adult children. You get very tired with those personal responsibilities. I know that I always tell my husband if he doesn't feel well that he has the option of not going to the PTA meeting, but black women do not have that option. Black men may just have more time and energy to devote to mentoring. Maybe if black women took the time to mentor, other people in their personal life would suffer from a lack of attention . . . . As I think back that all makes sense, because I did have a black woman mentor while I was in graduate school. She was very busy with her professional work on a national level and she was also involved in a commuter marriage and supporting a daughter through graduate school. I found that it was my responsibility to bridge the gap between us if I was going to benefit from her wisdom. Once I took the initiative she was great. I had to spell out what I needed and from then on she took me to meetings and spent some time mentoring me.

Although Dee starts out with a perception that black men as opposed to black women "take the time to mentor,"
she begins to analyze her words. Dee connects the luxury of "mentoring time" to the cultural responsibilities that black women have in their role as "the backbone of the family."

Bonnie further illustrates how the traditional culturally-defined roles of black women in her life have influenced her identity and strongly influenced how she lives her life.

I’ve been one of those blessed people. My mother, my husband’s mother, and my father’s great aunt are the people I think of when I hear the word mentor. My models and mentors have been those kind of people. The other stuff [professional success] just comes if you’re disciplined enough, but what they had to offer involved so much more. My father’s great aunt would put on some glorious and grand dinners and she would have been insulted if anyone helped or brought anything, and she was a domestic. My husband’s mother had ten kids and she managed to find the time to spoil them all . . . not with material things but with attention. Now she was a domestic too, but somehow she found the time to devote the time and energy to all ten kids. There’s a strength and determination to survive with a dignity and integrity with these women. They were not afraid to show their feminine side. Sometimes we try to deny our feminine side . . . . I admire women who do not give up their feminine side . . . . I do not admire women who choose one side or another. My mother was a career woman but very much the homemaker as well.

Bonnie talks about integrity and strength as a quality that she greatly admires. The mentoring relationships she describes also possess a quality of nurturing when she talks about the attention that these women have given to the family.
Amy also talks about a nurturing aspect when she discusses her three mentors. She also refers to the integrity of all three of them. Her female mentor was black and the two males were white. She shares:

I co-taught with a second grade teacher once and she was so confident, competent, and so appreciative of me. I wanted to be just like her and treat others as she did . . . . Also there were a couple of people who I worked with after graduate school who strongly influenced me. This one man I worked with was a counselor. He is key to the way I interact with people every day. His style was so supportive. He never told you what to do. He was genuine and caring. Then there was this other man I worked with who was very different from my other mentor but he was influential as well. He was very honest about his priorities in life. God first, family second, and work third. He also modeled these priorities in his everyday life. I never had to guess where he was on an issue. He was very directive and had a strong sense of integrity. That relationship was so profound that I looked for a mentoring relationship to develop at my next job. Quickly I learned that finding someone like him was difficult.

Amy describes her mentors' characteristics in very personal terms even though their relationships were professional. Not unlike Bonnie's narrative about family mentors, Amy's descriptions of her mentoring relationships focus on great deal of interaction between mentor and mentee, and the characteristics such as trust and caring were key ingredients to the mentoring/mentee process.

People Who Have Influenced Identity Construction

Reading 2: The Critical Tale.

Tina describes her mentor's professional style as one
that Tina would like to emulate. She wanted to model her mentor's "mild style." Tina observed that she and her mentor may both accomplish the same task, but they have very different ways of interacting with people in the process. She recognizes that a professional persona is important for a black woman. Her mentor's style is one that is not as likely to call negative attention to her. Tina's 'hurricane' approach, however, is likely to be perceived as professionally inappropriate. A black woman who exudes a forceful persona may appear threatening to men in positions of power.

Rose took the initiative to develop a formal mentoring relationship. She realizes that success for women does not come solely by working hard and by establishing a competent reputation. After her experience with her job interview, she has a mistrust of the system and wants to stay one step ahead of "the teacher's pets." She needs to have "eyes in the back of her head." For these reasons, she took the initiative to develop a formal mentoring relationship with someone whom she could trust to "show her the political ropes." She chose a mentor who would protect her like "a fierce warrior." Margaret, Rose's mentor, also carried a lot of influence in the academic community, both regionally and nationally. Rose needed some power on her side to balance the influence of
the men in her department. Rose describes the benefits of her mentoring relationship in very concrete terms, like merit increases, the development of a professional portfolio, and access to meetings. Unlike Tina, Rose was not so much interested in process as much as a successful outcome. However, they were both talking about working within a highly political and power-laden system. They were both seeking help from women who were established within the system. With the help of their mentors, Tina and Rose would become more knowledgeable and better prepared to work within a male-dominated system.

Dee started out by talking about black men taking her under their wings more often. She did not perceive black women as generous with their nurturing and support. She began to describe a "queen bee" theory which espouses that women who are in positions of power do not like to share the power with other women. However, she quickly shifted to some very insightful analysis on why her black women administrators may be less likely to mentor other black women. She relates her insight to her own personal life. She talks about her limited amount of free time as a wife and mother. She also says that her husband has an option to avoid or postpone family responsibilities. These options are reserved for husbands and fathers, not wives and mothers. Dee also brings race, along with gender into
the analysis as she discusses the role of black women as the backbone of the family. She then remembers a black woman who was a significant support system for her in graduate school. Dee describes all the professional and family responsibilities that her mentor had, yet she managed to find time to mentor Dee. However, Dee had to initiate the relationship, but it was a very positive one as Dee "bridged the gap." As with Rose, Dee’s relationship with her female mentor was initiated by an independent gesture on Dee’s part as opposed to being "taken under one’s wing."

Bonnie talked lovingly about the black women in her life who have deeply influenced her identity. She quickly dismissed any notion of career-related mentors. She describes a type of inner strength that she has developed as a result of the women in her life. She alludes to the struggles that black women have in their everyday life that they need to combat with their feminine side, which is grounded in strength and a high level of responsibility. She talks, as Dee did, about the black woman as the backbone of the family and she describes the concept of the "superwoman" who does it all. But she does not appear to see the black woman’s overwhelming responsibility to her family as a breadwinner and homemaker as negative. Rather, she says she has been
taught to "survive with dignity."

Amy’s mentors all appear to have shared similar characteristics. She admired their integrity, honesty, and caring. She talks about one of the men as an outstanding influence on how she approaches her work. He consistently put family before work. However, family-related responsibilities cover a broad spectrum. One end of the spectrum involves spending time with one’s family. Examples may include, engaging in family outings and watching television. The other end of the spectrum involves attending P.T.A. meetings, planning meals, housecleaning, arranging day care, etc. In actuality, men have the advantage of earning a reputation as a family man by participating in a relatively stress-free and flexible range of family duties. Many times those duties do not compete with work responsibilities.

The participants talked about how mentors have influenced the way they approach their job and/or how they aspire to live their lives. Some of the participants talked specifically about mentors in their professional lives and others discussed mentors in their personal lives. Issues of strength and/or integrity continually surfaced in either domain. Sometimes those issues emerged within the context of struggle for control or power on their job site and other times they emerged in a more
personal way that was rooted in a cultural heritage or
gendered experiences.

**People Who Have Influenced Identity Construction**

**Reading 3: The Deconstructive Tale.**

Only two of the participants had black women mentors
who were administrators in higher education. Given the
paucity of black senior women administrators in higher
education, this situation is not surprising. The
researcher states that since Rose chose a white woman
mentor, her choice was gender-related and "race was not a
factor." However, there may have been no black women
senior administrators with the characteristics that she
was looking for, since black women are the least
represented population in the senior administrative ranks
(Touchton & Davis, 1991: 107). Rose clearly wanted her
mentor to have high visibility in the academic community.
Rose confirms that gender was a strong factor in her
choice but she does not mention race. The researcher
interprets Rose’s failure to mention the race factor as an
endorsement that race was not important to Rose.

With the exception of Rose, the participants describe
mentoring relationships that are developed and sustained
by characteristics other than gender. For example, Amy
and Bonnie both refer to their mentors as having high
integrity, strength, and a strong sense of family. They
are describing a concept of mentoring that is different than Rose’s. Bonnie puts the two concepts in perspective when she says, "the other stuff [professional success] just comes if you’re disciplined enough, but what they [her mentors] had to offer involved so much more." Amy shares Bonnie’s sentiment when she describes the profound effect that her mentor had on her life. His influence affected her everyday presentation of self. She illustrates the impact of this relationship when she says that his influence is "key to the way that I interact with people every day."

Amy and Bonnie describe the influence of their mentors that transcends the boundaries of the work setting. Dee’s narrative illustrated this same pattern. For example, Dee described the things she admired about her black woman mentor that were not related to the work setting. She described her mentor’s ability to juggle family obligations, professional commitments at the national level, and supporting her daughter through graduate school.

No one distinct pattern emerged among all the participants who spoke about mentors. They appeared to have developed unique relationships with mentors for a variety of reasons. Some of the relationships were clearly influenced by a desire to grow professionally.
Other mentoring relationships developed as a result of family relations an/or a respect for a caring and nurturing model of human interaction. With the exception of Rose's mentoring relationship, the participants offered minimal insight on gender issues related to mentoring. The researcher adds a layer of gender perspectives which were not voiced by the participants voices. In this manner, the researcher's investments shape the participants' voices.

Emerging Theme IV: The Double Jeopardy

Reading 1: The Realist Tale.

The concept of the double jeopardy of race and gender never did not emerge during the initial interviews between the participants and me. Therefore, during our second meeting, I asked the participants to respond to the idea that black women have the double burden of race and gender with which to contend. The conversation about gender and race issues flowed very easily with Jan and Amy. For instance Jan talked about a "suspicious attitude" that search committees convey when the candidate is a black woman. She says, "... especially when it appears that the woman of color has superior qualifications." Jan says that she too became suspicious about race and gender biases when the candidate who was selected for the job was
a white man with no administrative experience and "he was not a stellar researcher." She contends that the criteria for the job were loosely constructed to ensure his job appointment.

When Amy interviewed for her job, she did not sense that she would be "battling such sexist behavior and such a high need for control." On the contrary, Amy believed that her expertise would be highly valued in the institution. Two things happened that may have enhanced the atmosphere of "intense distrust and low integrity." First, the man who originally hired Amy left his position. Amy's colleague, a black man, was promoted to that position. She explains:

There is an ol' boys network that operates. Black or white it makes no difference in the case of the ol' boys network. Men are men. My supervisor now is black and he is so paranoid that someone is out to get him and he actually says from time to time that the white women are all out to get him. He is very well established in a men's network, and unfortunately, that's the network with power. He hasn't been at this institution that long either, so it's not simply a matter of long-term connections.

Amy implies that gender is winning concern in the contest of gender and race issues. She elaborates more on race and gender when she shares some of her thoughts on affirmative action:

It's frustrating to never know whether you're being interviewed as part of an affirmative action requirement or not. One time at an interview I asked
a group of people how they thought I could contribute to their organization. One man looked at me and said, "Well you fill two of our affirmative action requirements for starters." I looked at him and said if that is all they saw in me, then I would not be interested in accepting the position. He immediately shifted into this mode of well I was just joking .. .. I ended up taking the job for a variety of reasons and it was a good job for the most part but I found that they expected that I would be doing many things to retain minority students even though there was nothing in my job description that remotely resembled this criteria. It's what I refer to as the "hidden job description" that people expect from all minorities, especially black women (chuckle).

Amy's experience of being perceived as the expert on minority issues is frequently cited as a concern for black women (Carroll, 1982; Harvard, 1986; Williams, 1986). The expectation is that minorities will become actively involved in minority concerns and serve as the minority representative on university committees. This expectation does not usually lead to career promotions or extra monetary compensation (Chamberlain, 1988; Hull, 1982; Williams, 1985).

Dee appeared to struggle with the linkage of race and gender. She could not think of anything specific about her on-campus interview that related to race and gender. She says:

Well, (pause) race is the major component of my identity. Most of my experiences remind me of race .. .. color is central to all of us. People are not color blind. As far as gender, I know there is a gender bias present but I don't notice it as much. For instance I may be automatically referred to by my first name or called honey or gal. But I honestly
don’t experience a lot of gender issues. But I know as I look at job mobility I see a big difference with men going up the ranks. I believe there are concerns about equity. I believe white females certainly are in positions where they are making more money than blacks and I know white men are making more money than blacks. You see it just doesn’t matter because people see black as black. It doesn’t matter whether you’re making $150,000 a year or $10,000. We’re all lumped together. People are not color blind.

Later in the conversation, Dee talks about her experience of race and gender in an historically black institution.

In prior settings I did experience that double burden. Here there are women as well as men in senior level positions. I may be wrong but I don’t think African American men are as sexist as white men. We all have a common bond of race and let’s face it, there is no struggle for power distribution. Black women are not necessarily shared by others. Some African American men do feel threatened by African American women. That has not been my experience. When I worked on an all white campus, I was reminded by somebody every day that I was black. Here, [HBI] seldom am I reminded that I am a woman.

Dee offers a thoughtful analysis about gender relations at a predominantly white institution and an historically black institution. She compares her experiences at both types of institutions. Her experience with racism is clearly predominant at the white institution. At the HBI she does not experience power struggles around gender relationships.

Tina clearly has to think about gender issues and how they may or may not be operating in her life. She offers some comments on how the process of being involved in this
study has encouraged her to reflect on gender issues.

Tina explains:

... I thought about that question you asked earlier about how or if my identity shifts and that doesn't make sense to me. I am always and foremost black in every situation and that is central. I am always culturally aware of how I am fitting into the environment I am in, whether it's personal or professional ... I really wasn't paying attention to gender issues in my life and I NEVER think of myself as a feminist. You've got me thinking more about this gender thing. Now as I look back at it, I think that gender was an issue. I now truly believe that the hiring official thought that a man should be running this program.

As with Dee, Tina's comments on race/gender surprised me. It appears that race identity is so central that gender consciousness pales in comparison. I find Rose and Bonnie's responses are even more revealing of this phenomenon. The following excerpt of a conversation between Rose and me illustrates a perspective on race and gender issues that I had never read or heard before Rose and I talked:

R: Being black is a blessing, I mean I really like being black, but it doesn't help with a career in terms of getting breaks. One thing it does do is toughen you up. You don't go through life with rose colored glasses. If I hadn't been black it would have taken me five years or so to realize that being cute and smart just doesn't cut it. The more female you are the more of a detriment it becomes at least from my perspective ... I find men who exhibit feminine tendencies are also in jeopardy.

C: What are those feminine tendencies?

R: I think if they're passive and quiet. A lot of it has to do with style. I would never play up my
feminine side by wearing jewelry or ruffles . . . .
Being black is my core identity. I don’t think of myself as female. At a job interview, I consciously avoid any feminine characteristic. I find that the more you emphasize being female the harder it gets. I always want to give a serious self-presentation so that I am taken seriously. I know from experience on the other end of the job interview that women who play up their looks are the victim of vulgar comments. Women need to control the probability of that happening at all times. I never let my guard down in my job interview. You cannot change the climate of an organization. You either accept how it is and strategize to survive, or leave. I don’t have the luxury of leaving because my husband is a senior engineer in a firm downtown, so we are committed to staying . . . . I had this holy Man tell me once that I wasn’t feminine and I thanked him. Of course he thought he was insulting me.

C: What about this "feminine side" or "being female," does this change in other settings, like at home?

R: Well I’m a mom and a wife, but being female is not encouraged at home either. In most black households the cutie pie image is not there. There is no time for that kind of nonsense. The female is working and bringing in half if not more of the income. You know with the past problems of black males getting hired, black women could always get a job.

C: Has this been your experience?

R: No, my husband always worked full time and he had earned his professional degrees before me. I had two kids during the time I was working on my doctorate so that kept me pretty busy.

Rose talks about some of the challenges that she faces because of race, but uses those negative experiences to her advantage. Race helped to "toughen her up" and rid her of "rose colored glasses." Although she doesn’t describe it from a gendered perspective, Rose also derives a self strength from negative interactions that she has
experienced with sexism. For example, during one of our conversations she refers to the chair of her doctoral committee as a "mean bastard" with whom she never had a pleasant conversation. She says she felt "trapped" by him and the "power he held over her." Yet, she shares, "that experience helped me develop a tenacious personality that has helped me in my career."

Bonnie, as opposed to Rose, talks about "not denying her feminine side." This feminine side "has boundaries." She shares a story about two women with whom she worked in a previous job. One woman was very "talkative" and elaborated on many details in a conversation like "what the people had served at the reception the night before." She always wore extremely feminine attire like "ruffled dresses." The other woman always wore very masculine attire like "navy pin striped suits." One day the "pin striped woman" stopped by Bonnie’s office and asked her when she was planning on taking a lunch break. Bonnie started to describe when and why she was going to take a late lunch break when the woman interrupted her. She said, "Why is it women always have to have a ten minute conversation to answer a simple question?!” Bonnie explains:

My first thought was what a bitch! But, you know I think she had a point. All that rambling like the ruffled dress woman did was such a waste of time.
Men don’t want to hear that crap! It’s people like her [ruffled dresses] that create the impression that women can’t be business-like. We need to cut the crap and get to the point . . . there’s a point where the feminine side gets in the way. There are some positive things to take from the feminine side like the sensitive perspective that we bring but it can go too far . . . . Now I am comfortable with my feminine side. You should see the reaction I get when I say, "I’ve got to sew some buttons on my husband’s shirt tonight, or that I cook, he CAN’T cook . . . my husband thinks that his socks grow clean and matched out of his bureau drawer.”

Later on in the conversation, I ask Bonnie to talk more about her feelings about gender and race issues. She shares:

My experience with feminism is not that good. I’m kind of anti-feminist and let me explain. When white women first became part of the protection act I saw a lot of white women getting selected over men of color for jobs. I do support human rights but I am suspicious of feminist rights. I know that white women suffer discrimination but they are also beneficiaries. You see feminism doesn’t mean anything to me as a black woman. When black men were out of jobs black women could always work because they were not seen as a threat in the workplace. Black women do not pose the threat to white people that black men do. When I am walking down the sidewalk with my two girlfriends I don’t see people step to the other side out of fear. But when three black men walk down the street people get scared. We were never the ones having the rough time. We were always accepted. I see now that the black female is getting really aggressive in her relationship with black men and that disturbs me. We have never been alienated the way that black men have. It’s white women who are on the top of the job market then black men and then black women . . . I know that there are many issues to contend with such as race, gender, and class. If I run out to get something at a store and I have jeans and a T-shirt on I don’t know whether I’m being treated poorly by a clerk because of a race issue or a class assumption.
As with some of the other participants, Bonnie related my "race and gender" question to feminism. Clearly the concept of feminism was not one that Bonnie supported. She confirmed my belief that although feminism has progressed over the past decade, it is still perceived by some black women as a white middle class concept, far removed from the concerns of black women. As with Rose, Bonnie related the victories of feminism to the defeats of the black male.

The Double Jeopardy

Reading 2: The Critical Tale.

As Jan discusses the job interview experience, she refers to the emergence of race and gender issues. She does not distinguish race from gender discrimination. For example, she says that people are likely to be more threatened if a "black woman" is highly qualified. "Superior qualifications" are especially threatening to the oppressor. Hiring a black woman with questionable qualifications, on the other hand, would be less threatening to the oppressor. To hire a woman like Jan is an almost sure-fire guarantee that the power of the status quo would be threatened.

Amy describes sexism as the primary source of oppression in her professional life. "The ol’ boys network," from her perspective, has "no color
distinction." Power is the central focus of the sexist practices. Amy talks about the powerful network and the concern from her boss that "white women are out to get him."

Amy’s experiences with sexism are grounded in a struggle for power between men and women. Sexist practices often involve a tremendous amount of anxiety and energy on the part of the oppressor when the outcome results in increased power and control. However, it appears that the majority culture in higher education does not invest a high level of energy in minority concerns. The majority culture assumes that because Amy is black, she will take an active role in minority-specific issues. Amy’s active involvement in race concerns is not threatening to the majority culture since the outcome of her efforts will not result in an increased level of power. Amy’s job responsibilities as a senior administrator include a high level of input into the institution-wide decision making. She is committed to race issues in higher education, but she is not willing to be distracted from her role in institutional decision-making.

Dee struggles with the concept of gender issues. She acknowledges that there are gender biases in the world, but she does not perceive herself as experiencing them.
Being called a "gal or honey" diminishes as a concern as she talks about issues of racism that affect her daily life. Her professional environment (HBI) clearly influences her thinking. She sees herself as almost sheltered from gender issues because she doesn’t believe that black men are as sexist as white men. She too, brings up the issue of power. Her perception is that there are no power struggles between black men and women because by virtue of their race, "there is no power to distribute." She does concede that there are global issues of pay inequity related to gender, but white men and women are still drawing larger salaries than blacks (Pruitt, 1987; Touchton & Davis, 1991).

The bond of sister and brotherhood among black men and women is strong and understandable given their rich history of racial struggle. Because of this bond it is not a simple task for black women to talk about black men in a negative way (hooks, 1989). Loyalty to one’s people overrides a feminist agenda. However, when one girl in four is a victim of sexual violence by males before the age of eighteen, one in four is raped, and half of all married women are victims of male violence, then the ways in which men and women interact must be a concern for all women (hooks, 1989: 130).

Tina demonstrates the tendency of black women to
focus on race rather than gender concerns. She is "always and foremost black in every situation" and is "culturally aware of how she fits in [her] environment." Tina’s statement exudes strength, commitment, and an enormous amount of focused energy, leaving very little time for gender issues. She is not reluctant to see gender as an issue as she begins to reflect on her relationship with her boss, but she makes it clear that she is not a feminist.

Rose distances herself from a feminist consciousness when she says, "I don’t think of myself as female." She consistently refers to "being female" as a negative thing - "a cutie pie." Interestingly enough, Rose does not seem to be aware of her own positive female image. She is a forthright no-nonsense woman, who is extremely intelligent and a highly competent administrator in a male-dominated profession. She has obviously become stronger and wiser as a result of her experiences with sexism. Yet, she connects a female identity to a very negative image of a whimsical coquette.

The history of black women in the work force and the family has shown that the "cutie pie" image has seldom if ever been an option for black women. Rose illustrates the tremendous impact of her cultural history when she talks about the role of women in the black family. "Being
female is not encouraged there" as well. Rose does not perceive "being female" as a hard-working, strong, and independent woman. Instead, she connects a female identity to a "cutie pie," an image which she believes is not tolerated or accepted in the black community.

Bonnie describes herself as "almost anti-feminist." She clearly views feminism as a movement that has worked to the advantage of white women and the disadvantage of black men. Her cultural history strongly influences her views. She says it is the black man who suffered when Affirmative Action was redefined to include the rights of women. People were not threatened by white or black women, but the racism towards black men was grounded in fear. "Black women could always find domestic work." Rather than focusing on the oppressive nature of domestic work, Bonnie’s perception was that black women were fortunate in comparison to black men. Therefore, she states, "Feminism doesn’t mean anything to me as a black woman."

Bonnie, as opposed to Rose, does not want to "deny her feminine side." She describes some of the aspects of her feminine side of which she is most proud: cooking meals for her husband; doing laundry; sewing buttons on his shirts. She takes pride in doing all the traditional things for her husband while managing a successful career.
The feminine side she describes involves taking on most, if not all of the household responsibilities. Her mother modeled this behavior in her own home while maintaining a career, and Bonnie takes great pride in her ability to maintain that same lifestyle.

However, Bonnie notes that the "feminine side" has boundaries in the workplace. Too much of the feminine side is not good. For example, her office is tastefully decorated with subtle feminine touches such as art work and silk flowers. "Any man could move in there tomorrow and would not have to change anything." In addition, when she describes a woman-shared communication style that tends to ramble, she says, "Men don't want to hear that crap." Ultimately, Bonnie allows the presence of men in the workplace to limit the boundaries of her feminine side.

The participants confirm that race and gender issues are extremely complex and interwoven for black women. Even more apparent is that gender issues take on a variety of meaning for these women. Some of the participants appear to have a limited amount of awareness about gender relations, yet they are clearly aware of race issues. Strikingly, the overwhelming source of pride in their race surfaces when they talk about their experience as women. The participants do not describe family responsibilities
as being oppressive, but rather a part of their rich cultural legacy as black women. This cultural legacy translates to many aspects of their lives. Issues of gender are so ingrained in the everyday life experiences of the participants that they are not easily recognized as gender-related. For example, Rose says, "I don't think of myself as female," yet earlier she describes black women as the "backbone of the black family." The participants rarely focus on the negative aspects of their gender/race identity. Rather they approach aspects of gender and race issues with strength and pride, which are also components of their cultural legacy.

The Double Jeopardy

Reading 3: The Deconstructive Tale.

Joseph and Lewis (1981) talk about the difficulty that black women have in understanding white women's perception of sexism in their everyday lives. "The advantages of 'skin privilege,' which White women profit from in terms of their Whiteness, can blur the complexities of exploration and oppression sustained by the 'White' camp (p. 44). This lack of understanding is fuelled by the vast differences in the histories of black and white communities. Black men and women have sustained a relationship within a context of survival and struggle against white domination. The evolution of culture for
black men and women has been largely influenced by opposition to the majority culture and its laws. The struggle for survival has been a collaborative approach among men and women for the most elemental human rights. Black women have been and still are actively involved in a history and present of shared resistance with black men.

The researcher acknowledges the cultural differences between the participants and herself, but she interprets the participants' narratives through the lived experience of a white middle class feminist. For example, she describes Jan's experience of discrimination as a race/gender concern because Jan refers to the concerns of a "black woman." That terminology is the extent of Jan's reference to a race/gender perception of discrimination, yet the researcher uses that one reference as an infrastructure for constructing a double jeopardy concept. Both in the realist tale and the critical tale, the researcher refers to sexism as the primary source of oppression in Amy's professional life. She positions the two dynamics of racism and sexism as competitors in a "most oppressed contest," with sexism as the ultimate winner. This kind of interpretation is not fruitful in that it elevates the concern for one oppression by minimizing the concern for the other. This kind of interpretation parallels some of the concerns that black
women voice about feminism. Likewise, the researcher is condescending when she implies that Dee’s feminist consciousness needs to be raised so that she may be more aware of the victimization of women related to incest, rape, and male violence in society.

Clearly, none of the participants embrace a feminist consciousness. Some go so far as to describe themselves as "anti-feminist," or not concerned about a "female identity." Five of the participants describe their cultural histories and their black identity as a central component in their everyday lives. Yet, the researcher equates their strong sense of pride and strength to their identity as women.

Finally, despite the researcher’s clear acknowledgement of the participants’ rich cultural legacy, she is reluctant to focus on a legacy that, by the participants’ own admission, includes black men. She refers to the bonds of sister and brotherhood among a race of people who have suffered human indignity. However, she minimizes the brother-sister bond in her attempt to wake the participants feminist consciousness. This strategy perpetuates feminism as a white middle class project and trivializes the deep emotional ties that black women share with black men.
Summary

This chapter has been a story about the process of inquiry as much as it has been a story about the content of the inquiry. My project has been to present a "self-reflexive pondering on the politics of [the] research" (Lather, 1991b: 151). The participants’ critique of the critical tales were most helpful in this reflexive pondering. The critical tales also provided some thoughtful introspection for the participants as they demonstrated by some of their comments. Some of the more positive comments are as follows:

I never really thought about feminism that way. I think I have had a tendency to only think in terms of race when I heard the term oppression, that has changed.

I’m still not what you’d call a feminist, but I certainly have a more accurate understanding of what this is all about!

You have given me a reason to listen now when I hear feminists talk.

When I read the feminist analysis, I learned a lot about me. I think you were right on target.

This process gave me a real boost. It helped to reaffirm for me that I need to continue on the path that I set a long time ago. I need to continue to assert myself, be true to who I am, and to be more readily aware of gender issues as they surface.

Maybe I’m a feminist at heart.

I’m not so much into labels, but I do think it’s important for some women to do what feminists are doing. They are calling attention to some very important components of all our lives.
I'm going to be more aware of gender from now on. I got very emotional over all this.

However, some of the comments that the participants shared were less favorable about feminism and a feminist analysis. Some of these comments are as follows:

I know your heart is in the right place, but you can never really understand how black women think.

I don't understand why feminism wants to include the issue of black women because they are so different (pause); it's a whole different thing.

Just about anything can be a gender issue if you think about it.

The collaboration encouraged me to take a closer look at how my personal feminist agenda influenced the analysis process. Their honest and thoughtful feedback was my guide in the deconstructive tales and helped us all to better understand the multiplicity of meanings that operate in our everyday lives. This chapter also helped to illuminate the understanding that the construction of knowledge is molded, influenced, and driven by sets of personal values, ascribed culture, and particular experiences.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The participants have shown that a variety of people and experiences have influenced identity construction. Some of these experiences were unpleasant and painful, yet rather than focusing on the negative, they used those experiences to "build character" or "learn." Rose says that this response is a strategy that black women learn early in life. All six black women describe in varying degrees a social reality that includes the "blessings" of being black and the struggles that accompany racism. Therefore, when the women in this study describe the job interview experience as "political, inhospitable, less than honest, and uncomfortable," their frame of reference suggests at best, an uneasy tension with the organization. "Not letting [their] guard down," gauging [their] investments, or "feeling skeptical," are comments related to a presentation of self that are grounded in their lived experiences with sexism and white supremacy.
This chapter includes a summary of the purpose of this study and a discussion of some of the methodological issues that evolved. Next, I present a discussion of the tales which are framed by a feminist perspective and related to higher education. A discussion about the implications that this study has for higher education follows, along with some practical recommendations. However, recommendations and conclusions are paradoxical to a postmodern study since they imply that the inquiry process uncovers truths that need to be disseminated. Therefore, I conclude with directions for future research that incorporates an open-ended discussion about identity construction. This discussion is framed by the concerns articulated by the women in this study.

Summary of the Purpose of the Study

This study sought to explore the ways in which six black women participants constructed their identity through their presentation of self during the process of their candidacy for a senior administrative position. The job interview experience was central to the study. However, other experiences and human interactions that led up to the on-campus interview were also explored as they appeared to have significant connections to the participants’ self-presentation. The concepts of
assertiveness, cultural diversity, organizational fit, mentoring, and the double jeopardy were explored in relation to race and gender issues. This study includes some practical recommendations to be used as a resource for hiring officials and search committee chairpersons in higher education. These recommendations were influenced by the contributions provided by the participants in this study. In addition, this study provided an opportunity for the black women participants and a white woman researcher to explore our commonalities and differences as they relate to our experiences as women in higher education.

Methodological Discussion

The Black woman cannot help being cautious in allying herself with a 'privileged competitor.' (Constance Carroll, 1982: 125)

As I stated in Chapter III, this study was as much concerned about process as it was about content. From the very beginning, this study was designed to give voice to black women administrators in higher education. The collaborative effort made the study rich with interwoven perspectives. In addition, the collaborative analysis involved an extensive time commitment from each of the participants, for which I am grateful. This collaboration strongly influenced the deconstructive aspect of the
analysis and helped the participants and me to better understand how our values and experiences affect the ways in which we construct our realities.

Joseph and Lewis (1981) state that women of different races need to open the lines of communication between them in order to promote social change. However, for this to happen, we must engage in "an explosive dislocation of the taken-for-granted vision . . . and the political arena we relate to and have been shaped by, if the most basic understandings are to become clear" (p. 127). This study has made me acutely aware of the different histories and cultures that sustain my consciousness in racial and gendered terms. The collaborative process exposed us to disagreements, thoughts, and struggles as women. A clearer understanding of what is not generally conspicuous in conversations among black and white women emerged as a result of this process.

We cannot escape from the racial and sexual biases of political movements in which we have been and still are involved. My interaction with this study has enabled me to see that these biases may be used as an impetus to move away from a self-centered belief that my political position is the correct one. As I listened, explored, and confronted different perspectives, I better understood that meaningful alliances are strongly influenced by a
willingness to reflect upon and expand our thinking. The collaborative work encouraged the participants and me to confront our political histories. We not only shared what we thought and felt was important, but we worked to evaluate how race and gender was informing those thoughts and feelings. In this study the culturally-shaped strategy to survive in the heritage of black women met the cultural heritage of white women’s battles for autonomy. Through that introduction, we became acquainted with new positions of understanding about the complexity of identity construction.

Discussion of the Tales

A feminist agenda?

First and foremost, it must be noted that none of the participants fully embraced a feminist perspective. Many of the women referred to gender struggles, issues of sexism, and their unique concerns as black women. However, at no time did they espouse a feminist consciousness. This study helped illuminate an uncomfortable fit between black women and feminism. Second wave feminist theory acknowledges past eurocentric-related flaws and has since professed to be more race and class conscious. Nonetheless, for many of the participants, the concept of feminism is firmly rooted in
a history that empowered white middle class women at the expense of black men.

Women of national political stature such as Eleanor Holmes Norton and Shirley Chisholm have brought a black feminist consciousness to the forefront for professional black women in America. For example, in a recent issue of *Ms.* (July/August, 1991) Eleanor Norton Holmes recently said, "Feminism in not controversial in the black community any longer" (p. 38). The growing visibility of current black feminist thinkers like bell hooks, Barbara Smith, and Bonnie Thornton Dill illustrates some of the progress of a once predominantly white women’s movement. However, in this study the black professional women are resist endorsing feminism. It is likely that the early history of the women’s movement as white and middle class has left most of the women in this study hesitant in developing trustful alliances with feminists.

One reading of the data, therefore, would suggest that a feminist consciousness is not expressed by the women in this study. They describe themselves as "anti-feminist," "non-feminist" or "not aware of gender issues." A more fine grain analysis of the narratives expresses an acute sensitivity to race and gender relations and the interplay of power within those relations. Although the women in this study do not label themselves "feminist,"
they appear to be *talking feminist*. They talked about developing strategies to fight the social power within the system such as developing mentors to show them the political ropes. Some also about talked about ways to maintain a sense of integrity and dignity in a system that did not empower black women. Comments such as these demonstrated what bell hooks (1989) calls "acts of resistance" and are manifestations of a feminist consciousness (p. 111). Therefore, feminism as a concept is recognized in ways other than verbal claims. Language is an important means of communicating commitment and is certainly central to the methodology of this study. However, observing ways in which people make choices and live their lives can often be as informative as words. To Smith-Rosenberg’s (1986) contention that "words are mental and cultural constructs," I would add that actions may sometimes be overlooked as a construct in the quest for politically correct language (p. 111).

Barbara Smith refers to the "in-house discussions" of black women that are shared and understood through the lived experience of black women (Smith, 1984: 69). Part of these discussions include the implicit understanding of a culture where black women have been and continue to be a constant source of strength and pride to a people. Some of the participants echo this same pride as they discuss
what it means to be a black woman and how other black women have strongly influenced and molded their values and identities.

Bonnie describes the memories of her childhood and the influences of her mother and mother-in-law much in the same manner that bell hooks (1990) describes her own childhood. hooks says, "houses belonged to women" and women created an atmosphere where souls were nurtured, dignity was learned, and there was an "integrity of being" (p. 41). She describes the abilities of black women to "construct a safe place" where all black people could be affirmed in their minds and hearts, despite hardships of racism in the outside world (p.42). Bonnie refers to this affirmation when she talks about her mother in law working full time as a domestic yet still finding time to "spoil" all her ten children with love and attention. Several of the women talk about the focus on integrity and human dignity that has been strongly influenced by black women’s leadership both in their homeplaces and workplaces. Grounded in their interactions with black women in their growing years, the participants continue to value the respect for human dignity and integrity.

Dee and Rose discuss the challenges that highly educated and career-driven black women face in their dual roles as the "backbone of the black family" and a senior
administrator. They discuss the issue of juggling family responsibilities with work responsibilities as part of the cultural legacy of black women. The challenges are exacerbated by having to compete in the workplace for promotions and/or recognition. As some of the participants point out, men have the a culturally-defined luxury of putting family responsibilities on hold, while black women do not. Although they do not label it as such, Dee and Rose allude to a black feminist consciousness when they describe these overlapping discourses of race and gender within the context of professional responsibilities and family duties.

Black feminist thinkers as well as the women in this study recognize the strong linkage between race and gender issues for black women. Rarely do they separate one issue from the other in their discussions. bell hooks (1990) points out, that many black women "do not commit themselves publicly to feminism," however, black feminist talk is often heard among black women (p. 220). Dill (1987) attributes this phenomenon to the growing recognition among black women that a "dynamic and contradictory framework" surrounds their lives and complicates their relations to many aspects of society" (p. 104).
Results of Participating in this Study

The consequences of an assertive self-presentation.

Although none of the participants framed their perspectives as feminist, many of them offered thoughtful insight into their identity as black women and how that manifested itself in their presentation of self. For example, most of the participants spoke about cultivating an assertive presentation that was strong enough to demonstrate their competence but not so strong as to appear too overpowering.

The married participants claim they assume the majority of family-related responsibilities. These responsibilities included the traditional work of wives, mothers, and daughters such as cooking, housework, community service. However, the participants also talked about women in the black family who were not described in concrete or work-related terms. For example, they talked about inner strength and dignity that was associated with black women’s identity. Working inside and outside of the home was not so much a basis for contention as it was a source of pride. As the participants shared aspects of their background and personal lives, I began to have a better understanding of what is meant by the reference to black women as "the backbone of the family." This phrase means much more than the role of financial provider.
(although some participants note that this situation was often true since black women "could always find domestic work"). For example, Bonnie talks about admiring the women in her family for maintaining work outside the home and managing a household with "elegance and efficiency."

As products of a culture where women tend to assume strong roles, the direct and assertive approach would appear to be an easy transition from the home to the workplace for the participants. However, assertiveness is not always in their favor in the work setting, so they sometimes "gauge their investments" of an assertive presentation. They talk about the risks and the hassles that accompany the image of a strong woman but recognize that the alternative image of a passive woman often results in being professionally overlooked. Therefore, most of the women favored an assertive presentation and they related this choice to a "strategy to survive."

Being confronted on a daily basis with issues of sexism and racism, this strategy was a conscious choice but held no guarantees for professional success.

The question of cultural diversity and organizational fit.

The tales related to cultural diversity suggested that most of the participants were concerned about the assumptions that the search committees/hiring officials
made regarding the participants’ abilities to "fit" into the organization or institution. Unfortunately, most of the participants defined those assumptions as having disempowering or negative career consequences for them. For example, Jan detected a hostile attitude from the search committee about her research on black teenagers. In the eyes of the committee, minority-specific research appeared to be less than scholarly. On the other hand, Amy talked about "the hidden job description" where minority women administrators were expected to attend to the concerns of members of minority groups for the entire campus. Yet, when Amy did indeed invest time in minority-specific concerns, her efforts were not rewarded in terms of career mobility within the institution. Dee described the search committee’s tendency to devalue her work at an historically black institution because of its predominantly black population. Bonnie was frustrated with the assumptions that white people often made about her knowledge of African history. Tina and Rose detected some concerns about "fitting in" that related to their being women.

All of these data suggest that conversations about the meaning of cultural diversity within higher education settings need to occur before any commitments to cultural diversity are made. The participants demonstrate that
although they are all black women, their background, interests, and perspectives vary. Their unique constructions of identity challenge the tendency to describe black women in monolithic terms. Therefore, cultural diversity as a concept involves much more than visibly recognized characteristics among people. Probing the meaning of cultural diversity through race, class, and gender relations has the potential to encourage new directions and more clearly articulated commitments to diversity within higher education. As these conversations occur, it is important to look at how the dominant culture (or status quo) operates to resist or accept cultural diversity and how or if it needs changing to accommodate race and gender diversity.

The role of mentors.

As the participants discussed their identity construction and the people who have influenced it, they described two distinct patterns of being mentored. The first pattern was a mentoring relationship that was actively sought by the participant. The other pattern was described as more serendipitous. Regardless of the circumstances that led to acquiring a mentoring relationship, the effects were life-sustaining and profound. The participants often spoke about looking for strength, integrity, and honesty in a hostile environment.
The participants were often unfamiliar with "the politics of the environment" and they needed guidance. In addition, some of the participants talked about aspects of their identity construction that were influenced by negative experiences with people. For example, Rose’s experience with her academic advisor "toughened her up," while Bonnie’s experience with a woman colleague had her reevaluate her own style of communication.

The need and desire for mentoring relationships on the part of the participants was evident. Rose talked about the experience of her on-campus interview which "opened her eyes to a political agenda" of which she was not aware. The opportunity to establish trusting relationships with people who will "show them the political ropes" strongly influenced the quality of the work experiences of these women. Issues of mistrust were grounded in racist and sexist experiences and triggered the participants’ desire for a professional and supportive relationships with people who could both empathize and help them. Paradoxically, Dee notes that black women professionals who are in a position to mentor rarely have time to notice if other black women colleagues are in need of mentoring. This lack of attention to potential mentees is likely not due to disinterest but rather to their many family-related and professional responsibilities.
However, Dee observes that many times a mentor will make herself available if the mentee initiates the relationship.

Racism and sexism.

This study revisited the concept of the "double burden of racism and sexism." The participants were asked to describe how or if the issue of race and/or gender influenced their presentation of self. Four out of six of the participants talked about a "black core identity" that was central in their lives. Gender identity, on the other hand, was constructed in varying ways. Bonnie and Rose illustrate opposite ends of the spectrum in their construction of a gendered identity. Bonnie actively engages in a self-presentation that shows her "feminine side." She sees this as a dimension that is a very central part to her personal and professional life. However, she recognizes that professional success sometimes calls for placing limitations on a persona that is "too feminine." Rose, on the other hand, finds no rewards or benefits from "showing her female side." "Being female" has not been encouraged in her everyday life as a family member or as a higher education administrator. Both Bonnie and Rose recognize that too much feminine behavior results in negative career consequences.
Jan notes that even before black women have the opportunity to present themselves as candidates, search committees are sometimes suspicious about the qualifications of black women. Black women’s qualifications are more highly scrutinized and seriously challenged. She concludes that white male candidates, by virtue of their sex and race, do not face these issues. They do not have to defend their qualifications, or for that matter, do not necessarily have to excel in their professional accomplishments.

Amy and Tina did not initially connect race or gender issues to their presentation of self during their on-campus interview. However, concerns about gender issues surfaced afterwards. Amy realized after a short time on the job that she would never be welcome in the "ol’ boys network" (that included black and white men). Tina discusses her presentation of self that focused on a demonstration of her competence and past work experience. She left the interview experience feeling good about her presentation. Like Amy, it was not until after the interview that she realized that her sex may have been a barrier to her being selected as the first choice candidate. As with Rose, the interview experience opened Amy and Tina’s eyes to a political agenda that was not
visible in the early stages of the job interview experience.

**Implications for Higher Education**

Several factors may be gleaned from this study to better inform the efforts to increase the representation of black women in the senior administrative ranks. The participants’ narratives highlight their experiences as candidates and provide insight to job search and selection processes in higher education.

The focus on how the participants constructed identity highlighted the complexity of the concept of cultural diversity. To reiterate, this study is contextual as opposed to generalizable. However, the analysis of the data offers some practical recommendations to a particular reference group - search committees and hiring officials in predominantly white research universities. These recommendations are as follows:

- Higher education institutions should assess the need to have personnel advise and train search committees about issues of diversity. Most of the literature on search and selection processes that relates to Affirmative Action addresses systems and procedures that ensure fair and equitable practices. These procedures include diversifying the pool of candidates by race and gender,
advertising in minority-specific journal, and achieving race and gender balance among committee members (Fulton, 1983; Green, 1988; Papa-Lewis, 1987). This area of training addresses some of the overt issues of sexism and racism. However, this study suggests that issues of covert sexism and racism need more attention, particularly in regard to interactions between search committees and black women candidates. For example, the participants talk about search committees who are not always willing to accept, let alone, learn about minority-specific research. The black women participants in this study demonstrated a strong sense of pride and commitment to race issues, therefore it would not be unusual for black women candidates to focus their research efforts in a minority-specific direction. On the other hand, the participants illustrated that professional interests vary among black women and that search committees should not assume that black women are "the campus-wide minority experts."

Discussions should take place prior to the screening of candidates that focus on current demographic information about black women in higher education. For example, many black women have educational and experiential backgrounds that include historically black institutions. Most black senior women administrators currently hold positions at HBIs (Chamberlain, 1988).
Rather than judging this experience as too narrow, stronger and broader consideration should be given to experience and expertise that transfer to larger and integrated populations.

A theme that runs throughout the narratives of the participants involves an incongruence between the traditional organizational definition of cultural diversity and the lived experience of the black women participants. That is, this study with its focus on identity explored an aspect of cultural diversity that went far beyond the visible differences of skin color between majority and minority populations. What is called for, therefore, is a deconstruction of the term cultural diversity among hiring officials and search committee chairs. These deconstructive conversations could be mediated by members of the university community who have demonstrated a commitment to cultural diversity. This process would challenge the tendency of the majority culture to define the concept of cultural diversity exclusively in terms of physical differences.

**Black women candidates should be actively recruited.** The participants in this study have shown that the interview process can be less than empowering. The black women in this study said things like "He said, 'We know you have the credentials, but will you fit in?" or "It
became clear that he had no intention of hiring me."
Comments like those were generally related to the
participants’ perceptions that racist or sexist undertones
were present during their on-campus interviews. That kind
of dynamic is likely to cause discomfort for the black
woman candidate and limits the search committee’s ability
to get to know her.

The search committee chair should initiate
communication with the candidate before she arrives on
campus to determine if she has any questions and to convey
a welcoming attitude. A "series of form letters" from the
hiring official that one of the participants received
before she arrived for her interview caused her to feel
skeptical about the hiring official’s intentions. She
observes that at no time during the process did she feel
as though she was being seriously considered for the job.

Family situations for many black women candidates
warrant special attention. Some of the participants
talked about the role of black women as "the backbone of
the family." Oftentimes caring for elderly parents and/or
managing a household are components of their everyday
lives. Candidates and their families should be offered
assistance in finding suitable housing, researching school
systems, churches, housing for elderly, and spousal
employment. The participants spoke about issues of racism
and sexism that surface in their everyday lives. Therefore, higher education institutions should be attuned to those issues and work to improve the quality of life for minorities within their campus communities, thus helping to create a more hospitable and inclusive environment.

An informal mentoring program should be considered at colleges and universities. Networking or developing mentoring relationships can be an empowering component of black women's lives. The participants expressed a variety of mentoring relationships that have greatly affected their perceptions. The participants in this study who talked about mentors, established mentoring relationships with women (two black women had male mentors as well as women mentors). However, this study points out that many black women administrators are so busy with their family and professional responsibilities that they may not notice a "mentee in need."

Senior women administrators, regardless of race, need to reach out to black women administrators who are new to the institutional setting. In addition, established senior women administrators need to recruit other women to provide time and friendship to newly appointed black women administrators. Since there are generally more white than black senior administrators at predominantly white
institutions, informal luncheons or gatherings could be scheduled among women with the intention of sensitizing white women to particular concerns of black women administrators. The impetus for this mentoring program should be initiated among the top level women administrators to provide status and credibility to the networking process of mentoring. A commitment to mentoring on behalf of senior women administrators would help acquaint new black women with the "political ropes" that the participants refer to and ease their transition into the organization. In addition those relationships would educate white women to the particular concerns of black women administrators and open up opportunities for a more inclusive sisterhood.

Directions for Future Research

A research project that may prove fruitful for future consideration would involve interviewing hiring officials and search committee chairs to explore their reactions, assumptions, and perceptions to and about black women candidates. Questions could be formulated to address some of the "attitudes" and "feelings" of hostility that some of the participants’ detected. In addition, aspects that relate to a "gendered search" could be more fully explored by focusing on the dynamics and results of search committee processes.
The context of the job selection process and the focus on black women senior administrators was just one of the many possibilities to pursue multicultural research in higher education. Questions need to be asked about other underrepresented groups in higher education such as Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asians. These groups could offer insight as participants in future research related to cultural diversity. A variety of contexts within higher education such as the work environment or career mobility could be used as a common focus to explore.

The highly interactive and dialogic design of this study provided opportunities for the researcher and researcher to know and learn in different ways. This study also served to illustrate a commitment to cultural diversity by acknowledging the ever present complexity of race issues and political ideologies. In more fully collaborative research, a study co-authored by two women from different races and different political agendas could provide insight to women’s issues in higher education. In addition, such a study would illustrate a pluralistic approach to gender that demonstrates a commitment to exploring "common differences" (Joseph & Lewis, 1981).

This study with its focus on identity construction looked at one small aspect of cultural diversity as it
related to black women within a specific context. However, race and gender issues connected to other aspects of the participants lives such as the workplace, family relations, friendships, and collegial relations. As demonstrated by the comments of the participants in the Summary section of Chapter IV, the process of participating in this study raised the gender consciousness level for all the participants. In addition, this study provided an opportunity for me to think, talk, and write about feminism in a different way than I had been accustomed. The perspectives of the black women participants served as a constant reminder of my own biases that were grounded in white feminist thinking and helped to deconstruct that thinking.

bell hooks (1989) talks about her "longing to find sources that would explain black female experience" (p. 150). Without those sources she feels powerless to "define [her] own reality or to transform "oppressive structures" (Ibid). The defining of one’s reality speaks to the issue of expressing and exploring cultural diversity. Colleges and universities are rich with opportunities to incorporate feminist and/or cultural diversity talk. Search committees represent only one group of people within a university setting to whom issues of gender and culture need to be addressed in order to
encourage a better understanding of cultural diversity. Other groups and/or committees within universities warrant further exploration in terms of how the awareness level regarding cultural diversity might be raised. These committees may have very different purposes, but a commitment to cultural diversity touches many realms of the academic community. For example, committees which address issues related to the curriculum, guest speaker engagements, faculty forums, and professional development opportunities, have the opportunity to incorporate race and gender diversity as discussion topics. Future research might explore how traditionally-defined committee structures might expand their agendas to raise the level of race and gender consciousness in carrying out its goals.

To respond to changing demographics, future research in higher education needs to be framed by theories and approaches that are multi-cultural and gender sensitive. A new agenda to reconceptualize the way we think and process knowledge is gaining momentum. This exciting agenda stems from the crisis of understanding and the "multi-sited constructedness of our selves and our worlds" (Lather, 1991b: 21).
Summary

This study is about making connections between theory and practice in higher education. The theory is based on gender and race empowerment and the practice is the job search and selection process. The black women in this study show that there are many factors that influence how they construct their identity and how this manifests itself in their presentation of self. Their narratives and co-analyses have provided much-needed insight on the dynamics that operate throughout the search and selection process from an "insider’s perspective." The participants’ contributions have also given those people connected to search and selection processes some valuable information. This information may be used as a resource to stimulate conversations about cultural diversity and gender issues. With the incentive to advance social change, these conversations can lead to promoting cultural and gender diversity on our college and university campuses.

Key to this study was a research design that developed linkages between experience, social power, and resistance in an effort to bring about organizational change. The women had unique experiences to share regarding their interaction with members of the university, but patterns emerged that related to the
issues of black women administrators as a collective. A greater understanding of these issues came about as the participants and I worked through the analysis with an interplay of feminist theory and subjective experiences. The ways in which the group of black women in this study construct their identity is a starting point for understanding how power relations structure society and how we can work to change the structure - opening up possibilities for political change.
Appendix A
Letter to Participants
February 8, 1990

PARTICIPANT'S NAME
ADDRESS

Dear _____:

Within a week or so, we will be calling you from The Department of Educational Policy and Leadership regarding research we are undertaking. In this study, we are examining the recruitment and selection process of senior administrators and professionals at _____ University. We would like to talk with you about your experiences as a candidate for the position of ________.

We are writing in advance of the interview because we have found that many people appreciate being advised that a study is in progress, and that they will be asked to participate.

When our interviewer calls, she will ask to arrange a date and time for the interview which is convenient for you. The interview will take about one and one-half hours. Your participation in our study is strictly voluntary. If at any time during the interview you wish to withdraw your consent, you may do so.

Your help in this effort to better understand the interview and recruitment process at _____ is essential to the study's success. We would greatly appreciate your participation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask our interviewer when she calls. Or, please feel free to contact me by phone at ________, or by mail at ________.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann D. Sagaria
Project Director
Associate Professor
Higher Education and Student Affairs
Appendix B
Interview Guide
Thank you for making the time in your schedule for this interview. As I mentioned on the telephone, this is a study of the recruitment and interview process in the hiring of senior level administrators at the (name of university). I am a graduate research associate working with Drs. Mary Ann Sagaria and Anne Pruitt in the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership. Through our research, we hope to understand the recruitment and interviewing process at ________, particularly as it pertains to women and minorities.
The transcript of this interview will be coded to provide confidentiality. Your identity will be protected and is unnecessary for the purpose of this study. Only members of the research team will have access to the tapes, and the tapes and transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet.

What I hope to accomplish during this interview is to have you re-live the recruitment and interview process as you experienced it. I am interested in your thoughts, feelings and perceptions as the process progressed.

We’ve discussed recording this interview on the phone, but I would like to ask your permission to tape record our conversation. (Turn on the recorder). May I tape record our conversation? Thank you. May we begin?

1. Tell me about your career before applying for this position.

2. What do you feel are your outstanding achievements?

I would now like to shift our conversation to the job search

3. How did you first become a candidate for the position?

   PROBE: If found in an academic journal or other advertising, what was the source?

   Who did you first talk with about the job? (Get content of the conversation)

   Did the person you spoke with approach you, or
did you approach her or him? (Get content and context of the conversation.)

Were you encouraged to apply for the position?

If so, how and by whom? (get content, context, and timing of all conversations and/or correspondence).

Did you discuss your qualifications with anyone?

If so, with whom? (Get content, context and timing of all conversations and/or correspondence.)

At any time during the recruitment and interview process, were you aware of any other candidates?

Did you know who they were?

If so, how did you learn that they had applied?

How did you learn who they were?

(NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Get identity of all contacts, context of conversations and correspondence, content of all conversations and correspondence, and directionality of contact.)

4. How were you informed that you had an interview?

PROBE: How soon were you contacted for an interview?

Who contacted you?

How were you contacted?

Could you reconstruct the content of the conversation or letter?

What materials or information were you provided to help you prepare for the interview?

Who provided this information?
When did you receive it?

How did you feel about (perceive) the way you were contacted and the information that was provided to you? (If the respondent does not understand the question, probe in terms of timeliness and adequacy of information.)

5. I would like to talk with you now about your preparation for the interview.

What did you do to prepare for the interview?

PROBE: What information did you gather about the position?
About the department?
About the college?
About the university?
How did you gather the information?
Who did you talk with?
Did you contact them, or did they contact you?
Tell me about your conversations.
Who helped you prepare? (Get the identity of the person and the context of the help).
What did they do to help you prepare?

6. Please explain your interview process as it evolved. I would like you to begin with the travel arrangements that were made and take me up through your departure from campus.

PROBE: Who made your travel arrangements?
What were the travel arrangements?
Who met you upon your arrival? (Establish the person’s identity)
Who did you meet with, both formally and informally? (Establish identities and contexts of meetings).

How much time did you spend with each person? (Get content of all conversations and meetings).

How long did you meet with the hiring official?

When did you meet with her or him? (Get content of conversations).

Were you assigned an official host?

Who was that person?

Did you know the host prior to the interview?

Were you comfortable with the host?

What did you perceive the host’s role to be?

What were the race and gender of your host?

7. Was there anything in particular you wanted to come across in the interview? Tell me about that.

8. Was there anything you did not want them to know about you? If so, what?

9. Tell me about the benefit package you were offered.

Was there any opportunity for negotiation?
Did you negotiate?

Were there any conditions necessary in order for you to accept the job?

PROBE: Vacation time?  
sick leave?

Professional development?

Budget for professional travel?

Research or release time?

Insurance?

Spouse employment opportunities?

Moving expenses?

Help in finding housing?

Tuition benefits for self and/or family?

10. What was the best part of the recruitment and interview process?

What was the worst part?

How could the interview process have been improved?

I’d like to talk with you now about the job offer.

11. Offer and Accept:

PROBE: How was the offer made?

If verbal, was there written confirmation?  
(Note: get content of all conversations and correspondence)

What information was included in the offer?
How did you feel when you received the offer?

How did you feel about the way the offer was presented?

How soon were you notified?

How much time were you given to consider the offer?

How soon did you accept?

12. Offer and reject: I'd like to talk with you now about the job offer.

PROBE: How was the offer made?

If verbal, was there written confirmation? (Note: get content of all conversations and correspondence)

What information was included in the offer?

How did you feel when you received the offer?

How did you feel about the way the offer was presented?

Is there anything that could have influenced you to accept the position?

If so, what?

How soon were you notified?

How much time were you given to consider the offer?

How soon did you decline the offer?

What were your reasons for declining the offer?
13. No Offer: How did you first learn, either formally or informally, that you would not be hired for this position?

PROBE: How did you feel about the way you learned that you would not be hired for this position?

How soon did unofficially and/or officially hear?

What information was provided in the conversation or correspondence you received?

Who contacted you?

How did you feel about the way you were contacted?

14. You've told me a lot about your professional life. Would you talk a little bit about your personal life?

PROBE SELECTIVELY:

What is your marital status?

Dual career?

Spouse's (partner's) career?

Did spouse/partner seek employment at ______? Children? How many? Ages?

PROBE: Was your family a consideration in applying for this position? If so, would you tell me about that.

15. Having been through the interview process, would you interview for the same position, if the opportunity arose?

PROBE: Why/why not?

Would you interview for a different position within the department?

Why/why not?
Would you interview for another position within the university?

Why not?

16. Have you changed in any way as a result of participating in the interview for ________?

If so, how?

17. What recommendations would you make for improving the interview and recruitment process?

(Continue to ask for additional recommendations, until no more are offered.)

18. Is there anything that you would like to add that we have not addressed?

Thank you for the time you took today. May I call you if I have any questions? If you wish, we will send you a summary of our study when it is completed.
Appendix C
Consent For Participation
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

I agree to participate in the research entitled "Enhancing Administrative Recruitment at ________________ ."

Professor Mary Ann D. Sagaria or her authorized representative has explained the purpose of the study and the expected duration of my participation.

I acknowledge that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. I understand that I am free to discontinue participation in the study at any time.

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: ________________  Signed: ________________

Signed: ________________  (Principal Investigator or her authorized Representative)

Witness: ________________
CONSENT FORM

I consent to participate in the research entitled: The Construction of Identity Through the Presentation of Self: Black Women Candidates Interviewing for Senior Administrator Positions at a Research University. This research is part of the larger study, "Enhancing Administrative Recruitment at _____________.___."

________________ has explained the purpose of the study. I have agreed to discuss the analysis of the data with the researcher which includes receiving a draft of the data analysis in its completed form.

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: ____________________ Signed: ____________________

(Participant)

Signed: ____________________

(Principal Investigator)
Appendix D
Follow Up Questions
Interview Guide 2

1. What or who influenced the way you present yourself in an interview situation?

2. What do you believe are some of the central components of your identity?

3. Does your identity shift, depending on the situation?

4. Would you elaborate more on what you perceived as issues of related to organizational fit that surfaced in your interview?

5. What are your reactions to the term "double jeopardy" which refers to black women facing the double oppression of sexism and racism?
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