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African American Leadership in Urban Institutions of Higher Education:

A Case Narrative of the Social, Cultural, and Institutional Impact

of an Individual Leader at a Historically White Institution.

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Abstract

Leadership remains an important topic across various disciplines. The continuous demonstration of effective leadership and its impact on institutions and society fuels the inquiry into the various ways, behaviors, traits, and situations in which leaders and leadership are successful (Kezar & Lester, 2011). As more African Americans advance in higher education, so does the interest in studying the leadership of marginalized groups (Murtadha & Watts, 2005). This qualitative study revealed the values and images of a humanistic leadership style that are absent from mainstream leadership theories and practices by examining the theoretical lens of Ubuntu, an indigenous African philosophy. Using a single case approach, the studied captured a people-centered leader who utilized various management tools to empower, develop, and implement change. This study captured the (1) complex nature of African American leadership in academia; (2) explored how current mainstream leadership theories appear deficient in understanding the leadership style of African American leaders in higher education; and (3) attempted to uncover a new way of conceptualizing African American leadership. This approach broadened the traditional view of leadership by exploring the core concepts of the Ubuntu philosophy as a viable tool to train future Black leaders.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Gladys Pricilla Martin. My life’s journey has been blessed by your sacrifices and private talks with God. You are my rock, my protector, and more importantly, my friend. Thanks for your love, grace, and prayers. Love you dearly.
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*I acknowledge* a God that has blessed me beyond what I deserve. *I acknowledge* my brother and sister, my friends, research participants, and UEL cohort members. *I acknowledge* their unconditional love for me at times when I was unavailable to return the love and support. *I acknowledge* the spirit of my case subject. Your life’s journey has changed the course of my life. *I acknowledge* my continuous desire to live up to my personal manta of “*I will live my God purposed life to serve others.*” Finally, *I acknowledge* the support and guidance of Dr. James Koschoreck. Your unyielding confidence in my abilities never ceased to amaze me. Thanks for supporting me through all the revisions.
Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... ii
Dedication ...................................................................................................................................... iv
Acknowledgements ..........................................................................................................................v
Chapter I: Introduction .....................................................................................................................1
    Purpose of the Study .................................................................................................................2
    Impetus for the Study ...............................................................................................................3
    Significance of the Study ..........................................................................................................4
    Research Questions ..................................................................................................................5
    Study of Leadership ..................................................................................................................5
        Trait Approach .........................................................................................................7
        Behavior Approach ..................................................................................................8
        Situational Approach .............................................................................................10
        Power and Influence ..............................................................................................11
        Transformational Leadership .................................................................................13
    African American Leadership ............................................................................................16
Dissertation Overview ...................................................................................................................20
Conclusion .....................................................................................................................................21
Chapter II: Review of Literature ....................................................................................................22
    African Americans in Higher Education ................................................................................22
    Ubuntu: An African Perspective ............................................................................................25
        Ubuntu Core Concepts ...............................................................................................29
            Modeling the Way ................................................................................................29
            Communal Enterprise and Shared Vision ..........................................................30
            Change and Transformation ................................................................................30
            Interconnectedness, Interdependency, and Engagement .....................................31
            Collectivism and Solidarity ..................................................................................31
            Continuous Integrated Development .................................................................32
        Conclusion ..................................................................................................................35
Chapter III: Methodological Plan ..................................................................................................36
    Theoretical Framework .......................................................................................................37
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

“To talk about the need and importance
of Black leadership is something that affects
not only African-Americans but the entire country”
(Gordon, 2000, p. xiii).

As an African American administrator at a predominately White institution (PWI) in the Midwest, my personal journey leads me on a continuous expedition into how African American leaders navigate its political, cultural, and social environments. Starting from the premise that institutional culture is constructed from a majority perspective, this research is conceptually framed to articulate a perceived hierarchical paradigm that exists between the struggle, the legacy, and the current leadership opportunities for African Americans in higher education (see Figure I).

At the core of this paradigm lie the valuable intellectual contributions and achievements of African American scholars such as W. E. Dubois, E. Franklin Frazier, Richard Wright, Carter Woodson, Alex Haley, Harold Cruse, Langston Hughes, and many others who struggled to gain educational opportunities in the U.S. In the center of the pyramid lies the image of the Nguzo Saba, the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa--Unity, Self-Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity, and Faith. These core leadership principles represent a collective leadership and community-organizing model that speaks to the legacy of African American leadership and the importance of creating an environment that supports, values, and develops future Black leaders. Within the Nguzo Saba image, the two sets of eyes represent a double consciousness in which African Americans view their roles, their values, and their contributions as scholars and leaders. The full, distinctive lips represent the
muted, passive, and active voice of Blacks. The pinnacle, or highest point of the pyramid, is represented by Harvard University, the first U.S. institution of higher learning. This institution stands for intellectual rigor, opportunity, success, research, innovation, discrimination, segregation, oppression, supremacy, inclusion and exclusion, and the voiced and voiceless. These collective images represent a dichotomous relationship among African American leadership, Black intellect, and the academy.

**Figure: 1**: Conceptual Framework

![Conceptual Framework](image)

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this research is to expand the discourse on leadership in higher education with a specific focus on the role and impact of African Americans, the largest minority group represented. Using a single-case subject in this study, the research aims to (1) better recognize the ways of leading exhibited by an effective African American leader; (2) determine whether current leadership theoretical perspectives adequately explain African Americans leadership; and
(3) uncover a new way of conceptualizing Black leadership through an indigenous African philosophy called Ubuntu. It is hoped that this research agenda will add insight into identifying, developing, and expanding African American leadership at the university level.

**Impetus for the Study**

The idea for the current study derived from a pilot study entitled, “African American Leadership and Community Organizing” in which I probed the perceptions and attitudes held by Black leaders regarding leadership opportunities at a traditionally White institution (Martin, 2011). The results of the study highlighted three themes: (1) the limited participation by African American leaders in shared-governance processes within the university; (2) the various roles Black leaders play in advocating, mentoring, and providing strategic support for other Black staff and faculty members, and (3) the impact of individual leaders in minority communities in shaping institutional culture.

During the pilot study, I became captivated by how unprompted and unsolicited narratives from the majority of participants attributed their professional and personal success to a single individual within the campus community. The initial inquiry prompted further investigation into the power and influence of individual leadership in minority communities and what style of leadership is considered most effective. In spite of reservations about how to answer questions regarding validity, or how the study could be generalized in a larger context, I finally decided to employ the single-case method based on the following two guiding principles: (1) to investigate an existing phenomena within the context of a real life narrative, and (2) to conduct an empirical inquiry outside of traditional theoretical frameworks.

While some would dispute the validity of the single-case approach, Flyvbjerg (2006) disagreed, stating that “a scientific discipline without a large number of thoroughly executed case
studies is a discipline without systematic production of exemplars, and a discipline without exemplars is an ineffective one (p. 219). Specific to the study of Black leadership, Myrdal (1944) suggested that we should not start from an attempt to define the principle concepts of black leadership, but rather focus our attention on discussing the role and importance of individual persons in the “sphere of social action” (as cited in Gordon, 2000, p. xvi). This study was designed to examine the ‘sphere of social action’ exhibited by one African American leader by exploring how one’s individual leadership can affect the social paradigm and reframe the discourse of underrepresented populations through the Ubuntu philosophy.

**Significance of the Study**

Current leadership theories remain inadequate in addressing women and minorities. Murtadha and Watts (2005) stated that “this limited representation distorts the historical context, the purpose, and the consequences of leadership discourse in a racialized school by failing to spotlight the need to dismantle the monolithic architecture of education based simply on a White male perspective of leadership” (p. 591). Amey (2006) noted that one challenge to gender, race, and ethnicity studies in leadership is the need to develop culturally sensitive frameworks that go beyond the dominant models of leadership. The author claimed that postmodern theories such as critical race theory, feminist, and complexity theories help us to better understand leaders whose experiences are not easily portrayed within traditional frameworks (p. 57). This study is significant because it looks closely at an indigenous African philosophy, which incorporates cultural, spiritual, and humanistic perspectives of leading and applies it to an African American leader at a Midwestern university. This approach encompasses the traditional view of leadership by exploring and viewing theoretical ideas of the Ubuntu philosophy as viable tools to utilize in examining and training future Black leaders.
Research Questions

Using the theoretical framework of Ubuntu, I applied the following questions to guide my inquiry as a means to uncover a new way of conceptualizing African American leadership and discover whether Ubuntu adequately captures or explains the case subject’s leadership style:

1. In what ways do current leadership theories inhibit or expand our understanding of the case subject’s leadership style?

2. What specific traits or tenets of the Ubuntu philosophy adequately capture the leadership style and behaviors of the designated case study?

To investigate these two questions, I developed 15 open-ended, semi-structured questions and a participant questionnaire form, and reviewed a comprehensive archival data collection in order to facilitate expressive dialogues about the case subject. Given Murtadha and Watts’s (2005) assertion about the generally limited understanding of the contributions made by African American leaders in higher education, this study may might help to illuminate specific leadership traits and behaviors seen in African American leadership.

Study of Leadership

The social phenomenon of leadership is one of the most observed but least understood. While the conceptualization of the term leader can be traced back to millennia starting with ancient Egyptian rulers, Greek heroes, and Biblical patriarchs, the study of leadership as an organizational and psychological science has been around for only about 200 years (Burns, 1978; Yukl, 1989).

The social construct of leadership means different things to different people (Yukl, 1989). Historically, leadership has been defined and examined through individual traits and behaviors, power and influence, and relational and administrative positions. As many scholars have pointed
out, there is no single definition of leadership (Razik & Swanson, 2010; Yukl, 1989; 2010). Nor are there research techniques or perspectives broad enough to encapsulate the varying aspects of leadership. Stogdill (1974) stated that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept.

Over the past century, the number of leadership studies, articles, books, and self-help manuals has grown exponentially. Varying leadership definitions and typologies saturate contemporary education literature, leaving many scholars both intrigued and perplexed (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999; Yukl, 2010). A careful review of the social construct, as seen in a variety of definitions, principles, and typologies of leadership offered by several scholars, has yielded the following summary:

- A process whereby an individual influences a group of people to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2004, p. 2).
- “The ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization” (House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, Dorfman, Javidan & Dickerson, et al, 1999, pg. 184).
- The process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, thus facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2010).
- A subtle process of mutual influence, fusing thought, feeling, and action (Bolman & Deal, 2010).

These are only a fraction of the leadership core concepts. In an attempt to bring a semblance of conformity, Yukl (1989) pleaded with researchers to “whenever feasible, design leadership research so that over time it will be possible to compare the utility of different
conceptualizations and arrive at some consensus on the matter” (p. 5). His appeal would be
difficult to accomplish because the sheer volume of literature findings in this area has been
broadly defined, elusive, and highly contested. Therefore, developing a single definition is
almost impossible. Burns (1978) summarized the struggle to define leadership this way:

Always, it seems, the concept of leadership eludes us or turns up in another form to taunt
us again with its slipperiness and complexity. So we have invented an endless
proliferation of terms to deal with it… and still the concept is not sufficiently defined (p.
3).

In an attempt to simplify the exhaustive scope of leadership, the next section outlines five
basic theoretical approaches to leadership: (1) trait, (2) behavior, (3) situational, (4) power-
influence, and (5) transformation. These five basic leadership theories serve as foundation
principles by which leadership traits can be studied.

**Trait Approach: The Great Man**

Trait theory was one of the earliest approaches for studying leadership. The theory was
first introduced in the early 1900s and is best known as the Great Man theory. Influenced by
Galton’s (1883) hereditary studies on elite White males, trait theorist supported the notion that
leaders were ordained at birth. Steeped in traditions of royalty, birthrights, and special privileges
such as religious affiliation, trait theorists espoused the idea that leadership could neither be
learned nor developed, but rather that leaders possess innate traits through their birth lineages
(Bass, 1990). Traits under this approach, such as assertiveness, ability to motivate others, high
intelligence, physical vitality and stamina, courage, high morality, and trustworthiness were
noted as identifiable attributes of effective leaders. The philosophy focuses heavily on the
following principles: leaders are born, not made; nature is more important than nurture; and instinct is more important than training (Carlson, 1996, p. 124).

Early studies were developed, explored, and tested only on White males. Given the time period, people of color and women were automatically excluded from this line of research (Cawthon, 1996). Not until much later in history were Black men such as Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Nelson Mandela noted as great men.

Today, trait theorists continue to test the various traits and skills unique to effective leaders. This line of research is commonly observed in studies on political and historical leaders. Despite its prevalence use, the theory has proven to be limited and misguided due to the lack of understanding of how the environment and situational circumstances impact leaders and followers (Yukl, 2010, p. 77). Further, theorists have failed to establish a correlation between leaders’ traits and characteristics, and followers’ motivation. The next perspective, the Behavioral approach, attempts to address the gap between the various traits displayed by leaders and their impact on followers.

**Behavioral Approach**

The second perspective, the behavioral approach, is managerial-focused; it seeks to examine the roles, activities, and impacts of managers (Yukl, 1989). The behavioral perspective is a theoretical shift from observing innate traits to closely examining behavioral patterns and their effects on followers. The methods in this type of approach rely heavily on direct observations, personal notes or diaries, job descriptions, and anecdotes obtained from interviews (Yukl, 2010). Much of the research involves ways of classifying behaviors that help readers understand various management roles, behaviors, and practices. Three different management styles are examined to assess group performance: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire
(Carlson, 1996). These styles represent a continuum of decision-making processes and organizational functions across various leadership and management techniques.

First, the autocratic management approach is considered the classic approach to management. In this approach, managers independently make decisions with limited input. This single point of power precludes direct influence in the decision-making process and establishes a set of expectations based on punishments and rewards (Yukl, 1989). Commonly viewed as dictatorship, this approach is believed to stifle innovation, resulting in high employee turnover rates. While the method can seem ineffective in some environments, it can also be highly effective in organizations with an inexperienced workforce, or with employees who appear motivated only by punishments and rewards, and functions well in tightly structured organizations.

Second, the democratic approach, or what is more commonly known as the participatory approach to leading, allows for a more collaborative environment in which decisions are derived from a consensus of the larger group. Cooperative relationships between managers and their workforces permit employees to be stakeholders. Corporate feedback, input, and collaborative participation from a diverse group shifts power and ownership to a larger group of people.

This second approach is viewed as a valuable tool for leaders who want to engage and expand organizations, and develop future leaders. This participatory management style, which requires leaders to actively engage subordinates in a meaningful and collegial manner, is more apt to produce a high degree of trust and corporate accountability. While the democratic approach is highly favored by researchers (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Razik & Swanson, 2010; Yukl, 1989; 2010), scholars also caution the use of this approach in organizations with an
inexperienced workforce or in situations where time constraints dictate that immediate decisions are inadvisable.

The third and final management approach, laissez-faire, is most commonly referred to as a hands-off approach. Yukl (2010) described it as a passive and indifferent method when assigning tasks to subordinates. It often fosters an unstructured and autonomous environment, and is generally highly ineffective and unproductive in obtaining results (Razik & Swanson, 2010). On the other hand, this approach can be effective in environments where creativity and self-motivation are encouraged.

Behavioral management research explores how leaders connect, interact, and motivate followers towards organizational change (Yukl, 2010). This perspective serves as an impetus toward a more holistic evaluation of individual leadership and management styles within organizational structures. Despite the significant contributions of behavioral research, the methods used in this approach have not yielded a high correlation between leaders’ behaviors and subordinates’ overall performances (Yukl, 2010). As noted previously, the three management approaches can be seen as highly effective or ineffective, depending on the organizational culture, workforce demographics, or a leader’s style. Situational leadership theory, covered in the next section, looks at this phenomenon.

**Situational/Contingency Approach**

The situational approach, or contingency theory, looks at how leaders cognitively or intellectually process situations, key variables, and others’ behaviors during times of change (Yukl, 1989; 2010). The situational model requires leaders to be flexible, respond to differing environments, and cope with demands and constraints from subordinates, peers, superiors, and outsiders (Razik & Swanson, 2010, p. 91).
Situational theory differs from the trait and behavior approaches to leading in that it is primarily concerned with how individuals work through the problem-solving process to resolve matters instead of examining leaders’ various traits and behaviors (Yukl, 1989). The model is predicated on the fact that some leaders are thrust into leadership positions not because of their unique leadership abilities, but because of unforeseen circumstances that call for strong leadership in the face of challenges (Watson & Rosser, 2007). This approach broadens the concept of leading beyond the rigid, value-laden, leader-centered models by incorporating flexibility into how leaders are defined, how influential their scope can be on various situations, and how they use power and influence. This non-prescriptive, nonlinear model incorporates a more inclusive and diverse leadership style (Watson & Rosser, 2007). Given its differing way of approaching leadership and management styles, the situational leadership approach is often seen as an ambiguous one, difficult to assess (Yukl, 2010). The next section zeroes in on power dynamics, and how leaders exert, gain, or lose power in a number of situations and environments.

**Power-Influence Approach**

Effective leadership is defined as exerting influence or power over others (Yukl, 1989; 2010). The power and influence approach is concerned with how leaders possess, gain, or lose power; how it is disseminated; and the impact of power on subordinates, peers, superiors, and other people, both in and outside the organization (Yukl, 2010). Most of the surveyed literature breaks the power-influence leadership approach down into three primary areas: (1) positional power, (2) personal power, and (3) referent or political power (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Positional power is often observed in leaders and followers’ motivations to adhere to perceived authority (Razik & Swanson, 2010). In certain situations, this kind of power fosters both explicit
and implicit hierarchical structures and possibly unrealistic expectations for both leaders and followers. Whether led by effective leaders (or not), most followers possess a basic understanding of and respect for authority figures in positions of power. While some levels of positional power impact how leaders and followers initially interact with one another; this type of power does not mean that subordinates are necessarily motivated or inspired by leaders to fulfill organizational goals.

The second area of power, personal or expert power, is established when leaders exhibit high levels of expertise in particular subjects (Yukl, 1989; 2010). Yukl (2010) added that expert power can be found in leaders’ ability to perform skilled tasks believed pertinent to solving problems for subordinates, peers, and superiors in organizations (p. 208). This kind of power require that leaders be knowledgeable about their crafts, make good decisions, provide sound advice, and complete challenges successfully.

Personal power also comes through in charismatic leadership, which is characterized as connecting to the needs of followers (Razik & Swanson, 2010). By demonstrating high levels of skill and knowledge in certain subjects and displaying a personal interest in others’ needs, leaders are able to develop personal relationships that result in greater influence over subordinates, peers, and superiors.

The final type of power, referent power, is seen in situations where subordinates express high feelings of admiration or loyalty toward their leaders (Razik & Swanson, 2010; Yukl, 2010). Referent power depends on followers’ perceptions of and beliefs in leaders’ characters, their integrity, knowledge of subject areas, and ability to model expected behaviors. It is based on a relational concept in which leaders build a bond through mutual friendships, esteem, and
respect. Although referent power can be a powerful tool, it can also be ineffective, subjective and emotional which may result in short-lived and co-dependent working relationships.

Successful leadership is based primarily on leaders’ ability to influence followers’ attitudes and behaviors (Yukl, 2010). Whether power is derived from a position of authority, personal or charismatic encouragement, or high degrees of reverence for leaders, a thorough understanding of the basic conceptual framework behind this power-influence distribution allows researchers a glimpse into the motivating factors that affect the leader/follower dynamic.

The previous four leadership theories (trait, behavioral, situational, power-influence) looked at leaders and leadership from in a non-holistic viewpoint. More recent leadership theories move toward a more integrative and convergent model of leading (Yukl, 1989). One such theory is called Transformative leadership. The progressive theory examines the roles of leaders, followers, and outcomes for organizations through interpersonal relationships.

**Transformative/Charismatic Leadership Theory**

Transformative leadership is one of the leading theories in educational leadership. Yukl (1989) defined transformative leadership as “the process of influencing major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of organizational members and building commitments toward organizational objectives” (p. 204). Yukl’s definition of the theory links organizational outcomes to leaders’ professional and personal advancement.

Transformative leadership is sometimes associated with a form of charismatic leadership. Charisma, translated from Greek, means a divinely inspired gift. Charismatic leaders are said to be visionaries with insight into followers’ needs, hopes, and values. Until recently, this godlike description was included in research on social movements or religious cults. This is now changing.
According to Yukl (1989), charismatic leadership theory integrates various approaches to leadership, such as traits, behaviors, influence, and situational conditions. The theory explores leadership using the following principles: (1) followers’ trust in the leader’s beliefs; (2) similar beliefs shared between followers and leaders; (3) unquestioned acceptance and affection for leaders; (4) willingness to obey leaders; (5) emotional connections or involvement in the mission organizations, and (6) self-efficacy of followers (p. 205). These principles assist leaders in establishing personal connections and motivational techniques, which generally result in an increase of power and influence over subordinates. While charismatic leadership continues to be an important theoretical approach to leadership, Bass (1990) contended that charismatic is subjective, making followers’ co-dependent upon leaders.

Transformational leadership goes far beyond charismatic leadership. Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as an event or process by which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation. Transformational leadership is divided into two perspectives—transactional and transformative leadership (Yukl, 2010). Transactional leadership involves the interactions and exchanges of goods for specific services or performances (Razik & Swanson, 2010). Both leaders and followers agree on clear rewards, and service agreements in which compensation or punishment is commensurate with performance. Leaders motivate followers by appealing to their self-interest. This value-laden approach shares characteristics with bureaucratic models in which systematic incentives, punishments, and processes are utilized (Carlson, 1996). Both managers and employees operate under a system of disciplinary practices that motivates, or in some cases, discourages employees from conforming to organizational needs and expectations.
Moving further away from the transactional approach, Burns (1978) in his theory of leadership, emphasizes transformative leadership, shifting the approach to a dynamic, global model that includes collaboration and social responsibility for both leaders and followers (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Yukl, 2010). The idea is to raise followers’ consciousness by appealing to their high ethical morals, and recognizing their motivational needs (Eckel & Kezar, 2011; Mulla & Krishnan, 2011). Burns noted that leaders rely on followers’ articulation of a collective purpose, vision, and charisma to spur institutional change. This perspective frames leadership holistically as the development of individual leaders, followers, and organizations.

Bass and Riggio (2006) identified four key attributes that transformative leaders exhibit: (1) charisma, or idealized influence; (2) inspirational motivation; (3) intellectual stimulation; and (4) individualized consideration. Under the first tenet, leaders described as charismatic or idealized influencers serve as role models. These leaders are admired by followers, often emulated, and described as visionaries who display a sense of purpose. Under the second, inspirational motivators, leaders display enthusiasm and challenge others to achieve at high levels. These leaders effectively communicate expectations and commit to set goals and shared visions. Under the third, intellectual stimulation, leaders actively seek new ideas and different ways to explore concepts. They encourage and motivate others to be creative in a relatively safe environment. Finally, in the fourth, individualized consideration, leaders are assumed to be attentive to others’ needs, desires, and development. Leaders create supportive environments in which individuals’ differences are encouraged and supported. Burns (1978) stated that transformative leadership requires leaders to demonstrate moral character and communicate visions so that followers can be actively involved in social, political, and organizational processes (p. 20).
Research on leadership continues to expand and evolve. The most recent leadership theories are denoted as dynamic, highly interactive situations which rely on the environment and relational interactions by a variety of people (Yukl, 1989). Kirk and Bolden (2006) stated that leadership as a theoretical framework can be summarized in three distinct genres: modernist, post-modernist, and constructionist. Examples include Authentic and Valued-centered leadership which stretches the paradigm from a focus on innate traits and behaviors to an examination of leaders’ self-awareness or value-consciousness and how their skills, values, and core competencies influence change (George, Sims, McLean & Mayer, 2007). Other examples are the Relational and Collaborative models. These models advance the leadership scholarship in the areas of power and influence, transactional and transformative leadership, and the use of effective management methods.

Given the sheer amount of literature on leadership, the review above, narrows the discussion to only the five leadership theories. This body of knowledge represents just a fraction of the total amount of information available on the social construct. The goal of this discussion was to cover baseline leadership nomenclature (i.e. common terms), theories, and theoretical principles in order to narrow the exhaustive paradox of leadership. This melting pot of ideas, ideologies, and diverse ways of looking at leadership sets the stage for the next section which examines more closely African American leadership.

**African American Leadership**

Defining Black leadership is difficult. Just as the conceptualization of effective leadership leaves many scholars perplexed, the study of African American leadership is entangled in the longstanding racial degradation of people of African descent. Gordon (2000) defined the critical elements or principles of Black leadership: “it involves goal setting, goal
achievement, and group organization while focusing on the advancement of the Black race, ranging from the struggle for freedom to civil rights, economic self-sufficiency, and the realization of the American Dream for all Black Americans locally and globally” (p. 23). Smith (1984) stated that the purpose of Black leadership is “to provide the strategic assistance in strengthening the common frame of reference and common resources based in Black communities in order to help individuals and groups to achieve objectives perceived to be of value” (p. 12). Finally, Du Bois (1903), in *Souls of Black Folks*, outlined four principles of Black leadership: (1) leadership as the primary responsibility of the college-educated; (2), Teachers as primary members of the black leadership structure; (3) the responsibility of Black leaders to prepare, guide, and direct the African American masses, and (4) the distinctive role of African Americans leaders in a racial society (p. 430). These definitions of Black leadership make clear the complex nature of studying African American leadership, and how race, culture, and a global perspective affect how Black leadership is studied.

While the study of Black leadership can be traced back to the days of slavery, African American leadership was not examined seriously as a theoretical concept until the Civil Rights movement (Smith, 1989; Watson & Rosser, 2007). Walters and Smith (1999) noted that Black leadership literature by design has not been concerned with formulating generalizations of a theoretical nature (p. 86). Jones (1972) called the examination of Black leadership ‘atheoretical,’ meaning that the few theoretical studies of African American leadership have been largely ignored. He added that underdeveloped hypotheses, unformulated regularities in the research, and a heavy focus on case studies lead to frequent criticism causing some scholars to question the validity of Black leadership.
Two significant typologies in one form or another have persisted in the study of Black leadership over the years. Black leadership has been examined or judged in terms of acceptance, or rejection of the culture of racism (Smith, 1984, p. 61). Essentially, Black leadership is explored through the degree of resistance to a racial society, resulting in the depiction of Black leaders as protesting liberals, or conservatives. Depending on the characterizations of leaders, the pendulum of Black leadership swings to either passive persistence or militant.

In the passive persistence role, Black leaders understand their roles in a racialized hierarchical system built on racism, classism, and sexism (Smith, 1984). Smith stated that passive Black leaders are successful by allowing concessions or accommodating the White establishment in order to achieve small gains. Conversely, Black leaders who resist or oppose the White establishment are often labeled militants or confrontational (p. 101). This kind of thinking narrows the discourse and scholars’ understanding of the intricate value and complex nature of Black leadership. Thus, additional research is needed. As mentioned previously, theories such as the Great Man Theory, the situational theory, and, to some degree, the transformational leadership theory has been developed by, and studied from a White male perspective (Watson & Rosser, 2007). Dantley (2002) articulated this notion, stating that “educational leadership has historically been grounded in empiricist, positivist and structuralist paradigms that celebrate a fantasized notion of the monolithic nature of organizations and principles of leadership that supposedly found them” (p. 335). His critical insight confirms a void in the literature, leaving unsaid the voices of people of color.

Despite this void, people of color have served as change agents throughout U.S. history (Murtadha & Watts, 2005). The authors noted that the struggle for knowledge, social justice, and equal opportunities through education has played a significant role in how African
Americans and other minorities fight to overcome poverty, classism, institutional racism, and inequities in a democratic society (p. 592). Educational leaders such as Richard Allen, a former slave who formed the first independent Black Methodist church and night school for adults, understood the value of education. African American women such as Mary McLeod Bethune, Lucy Laney, and Nannie Helen Burroughs built schools that served the educational and personal needs of Black children, and their families, and made possible their dreams for a better future. And Fanny Jackson Coppin, a slave, later assumed the role of principal at Philadelphia’s Institute of Colored Youth (ICY), the highest educational appointment for any Black woman in the nation at that time (Murtadha & Watts, 2005). These extraordinary leaders represented just a small fraction of the educational freedom fighters that helped to create social movements that altered the educational, economic, and social landscapes for many Blacks in America. Possessing little or no power in majority communities, these Black educational leaders utilized strategies to leverage political, social, and economic advancement, and expand coalitions. Such grassroots efforts included the formation of fraternal orders and literacy groups, and the organization of church congregations to promote collective interests and community strengths to bring forth change (Murtadha & Watts, 2005, p. 606). Marable (1998) put it this way:

Leaders do make history, but never by themselves, and never in ways that they fully recognize or anticipate. The social forces that define all historical conjunctures create the opportunities or spaces for talented individuals to make themselves heard above others. But it may be the measurement of our ability to achieve a full redefinition of America’s democratic project, if over time Black Americans should move away from the charismatic, authoritarian leadership, and paternalistic organizations toward the goal of group-centered leaders and grassroots empowerment (p. xvii).
To move away from Marable’s assertion of the charismatic, authoritarian, and paternalistic perspectives of leadership, I will conduct a review of literature in Chapter II, which focuses on an African humanistic philosophy, Ubuntu.

**Dissertation Overview**

Chapter I provided a brief overview of the general principles and common leadership nomenclature. The section pointed to the absence of a specific theoretical model encapsulating the leadership style of some Black leaders and illuminated the need to further explore the indigenous African philosophy, Ubuntu.

A review of the literature in Chapter II examines the current underrepresentation of African American faculty and staff in higher education and explores the indigenous African philosophy, Ubuntu. These two areas of research anchors the reader’s attention to the embedded racial environment in higher education and how a humanistic leadership approach might increase understanding of, and appreciation for minority leaders contributions.

The methodological design is presented in Chapter III. Using Yin’s (1984) single-case approach, this qualitative study presents narratives that bring across the leadership style and characteristics of a midlevel African American leader at a Midwestern research university. Eleven individuals, information derived from participant questionnaire forms, and a review of archival data shaped a rich narrative and allow for the critical examination of traditional leadership theories and the core concepts of Ubuntu.

Chapter IV presents the analyzed data results obtained from qualitative interviews, a participant questionnaire form, and an archival data collection. Using a single case subject, the analysis provides an in-depth examination of the case subject’s specific leadership competencies,
traits, behaviors, and transformative approach to leadership. In addition, the narratives were
analyzed through the theoretical lens of Ubuntu.

Chapter V discusses the research findings, implications of the study, and
recommendations for future research.

**Definitions**

*Ubuntu*-- A South African term meaning “humanness” or “being human.” In the Zulu
language, it is called *Ubuntu*; in Swahili, it is *Utu*; and in Kiswahili, it is *Ujamaa* (Broodryk,
2006).

*Umuntutu ngumuntu ngabantu*- An expressive definition of Ubuntu, commonly translated
as “the person is a person through other persons” (Bekker, 2007)

**Conclusion**

Effective leadership is key to successful organizations. The institution of higher education
is no different. Given the myriad of challenges facing higher education, particularly its changing
demographics, Murtadha and Watts (2005) emphasized that “the current ways of examining
leadership leaves absent the narrative voices and contributions of underrepresented minorities
and creates a theoretical vacuum which limits the academy’s ability to frame problems and
produce viable strategies that transform higher education globally” (p. 606). To address this void
in the literature, this chapter outlined the various leadership perspectives, setting the stage for the
inquiry in this study. Finally, this chapter emphasizes the fact that there is limited research on
the theoretical underpinnings of African American leadership and the need for more culturally
diverse leadership perspectives.
“The purpose of any leadership is to build more leadership. The purpose of a spokesperson is to speak until the people gain a voice.”

(Giovanni, 1988, p. 135).

African Americans in Higher Education

African Americans and the institution of higher education share a precarious history. The institution of higher education has been pictured as the intellectual hope for social and economic advancement in America, yet for many African Americans, the hope and dream to gain equal access to White research institutions has not historically come true (Boyer, 1997).

In the current global economy, these institutions are finally engaged in active conversations about recruiting, retaining, and promoting a more diverse faculty, staff, and student population, given the economic, social, and educational benefits diversity can have on future generations (Allen, Epps, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000; Iverson, 2007). Despite Affirmative Action policies that have been in place for some years, recent employment data on the hiring of faculty of color show a continued pattern of underrepresentation in racial and ethnic hiring and retention rates, particularly among African Americans in higher education (Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999).

According to 2010 Census data, African Americans (the oldest and largest minority population) comprise 12.6% of the entire U.S. population. In the Fall of 2009, African Americans were reported to make up only 7% of the faculty at universities according to the National Center of Education Statistics (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). In comparison, 79% of the faculties are White, with 42% White males and 39% White females. The same report brought out the fact that African Americans represent only 5.5% of professional staff, 9.4% executive
staff, 9.9% other professional staff, and 1.6% nonprofessional staff. While these numbers seem on par with industry hiring practices, some critics point out that many African American faculty and administrators are employed at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Darden, Kamel, & Jacobs (1998) stated that only 2.8%, a far lower percentage of African Americans were employed at historically White institutions.

A 2009 NCES (National College Education Statistics) report found that faculty racial stratification was prevalent at large White research institutions according to the institutions’ sizes, research classifications, and prestige (Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder, 2010). The additional disaggregated data suggested a more dismal picture for African Americans in the professorate who serve as adjunct instructors, administrators, and professors with limited tenured contracts. In other words, the higher up on the academic hierarchy, the Whiter the institution.

According to the literature, the underrepresentation of African Americans in higher education is the result of an exclusive culture of racism, elitism, and institutional traditions, all of which contribute to low employment opportunities, high turnover rates, and decreased promotional opportunities for African American faculty and staff at predominately White institutions (PWIs) (Allen et al., 2000). African American faculty and staff allude to feelings of isolation, disparities in the tenure process, perceptions of token hire, a disregard for ethnic research interests and cultural differences, and an indifferent environment that does not recognize or reward non-research activities (Allen et al., 2000; Simmons, 2010; Turner et al., 1999). In addition, minority faculty express serious concerns about the enormous pressures they face to produce solid research while serving on various university committees, and maintaining both informal and formal mentoring leadership relationships with students and other faculty of color. Studies have shown that these barriers foster burnout which in turn, can lead to high
turnover rates and further exacerbate already declining retention rates in African American
tenured appointments (Allen et al., 2000).

Despite these challenges, new opportunities have cropped up in the 21st-century. Current
hiring practices are changing how institutions recruit and retain more racially and ethnically
diverse faculty, staff, and student populations. These strategies have produced significant gains
in the number of minorities and women who currently can enroll in American university systems
(Murtadha & Watts, 2005). Initiatives such as targeted searches and hiring strategies directed at
women and ethnic minorities and diversity and inclusion action plans positively impact student
learning, faculty and staff engagement, and the institutional culture.

Also on the rise is the development of culturally relevant curricula that prepare students
for our global society. Research has revealed that a diverse faculty is more likely to utilize a
wider range of pedagogical techniques and provide extra support and mentoring for students of
study of the faculty at 134 universities, found that faculty of color had a positive effect on
student learning and their diverse interactions, and provided more leadership and mentoring
opportunities for other minority faculty and staff. Umbach added that a more diverse faculty
increased active learning among students and engagement of faculty in more relevant educational
practices than did those in institutions with a less diverse faculty.

Some scholars have pointed out that recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff
can prompt higher retention rates in students of color (Cole & Barber, 2003; Umbach, 2006).
Finally, many scholars have contended that faculty and staff of color provide support by creating
more comfortable and inclusive environments, and mentoring opportunities that support
increased academic performance and career aspirations (Cole & Barber, 2003; Smith, 1989;
Umbach, 2006). Umbach suggested that universities identify, develop, and expand minority representation at every level, given their positive contributions. Kezar, Gallant, and Lester (2011) noted that leadership studies should address new ways to conceptualize leadership, explore the explicit power dynamics embedded in leadership processes, and look critically at ways to expand leadership dialogues. To add further to this idea, the final section of this review of literature outlines the philosophy of Ubuntu. This addition expands the leadership discourse from traditional hierarchical, highly structured, and value-laden models to a more dynamic, global, and process-oriented model that emphasizes cross-cultural understanding of collaboration and social responsibility.

**Ubuntu: An African Perspective**

The principles and teachings of Ubuntu trace back to the first African Homo sapiens, used then to settle disputes and conflicts (Nabudere, 2008; Ncube, 2010). Known and practiced widely by Africans in most parts of the country, especially in the regions stretching from the Nubian Desert, the Cape of Good Hope, and Zanzibar (Nabudere, 2008), the term *Ubuntu* is derived from the Bantu Nguni language spoken by the Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, and Ndebele people. The word *Ubuntu* means “humanness,” or “humanity to others” (Nabudere, 2008; Ncube, 2010). Ubuntu derives from the aphorism, *Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu* which means, “A person is a person because of, or through others” (Bekker, 2007; Ncube, 2010). The literal English translation for Ubuntu is “I am because you are, and you are because I am” (Mapadimeng, 2007, p. 258). Ubuntu is viewed as a cultural philosophical perspective that espouses the oneness of being human.

The philosophical teachings of Ubuntu emphasize an African commitment to build compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity, and mutuality, and maintain communities of justice.
According to Karsten and Illa (2005), Ubuntu’s view of the world is anchored in the African people, their culture, and ethical values (p. 613). More than a mere descriptor of African values, Ubuntu is seen as a social philosophy deeply embedded as stated before, in the African culture. It is a belief system in which people reflect on their daily lives as they struggle and survive in society.

Over the last three decades, the principles and ideology of Ubuntu have resurfaced with the emergence of postcolonialism in South Africa (Kirk & Bolden, 2006). As remnants of apartheid plagued the economic and social infrastructures, African leaders vowed that they would return to traditional values in order to rebuild a democratic society. Bekker (2007) pointed out that gaining this revitalization requires a management system that stands in sharp contrast to the individualistic and competitive leadership approaches of the past.

The reintroduction of Ubuntu as a leadership philosophy stemmed from a call by President Mbeki for an “African Renaissance” in which Africans were urged “to be true to themselves” (Louw, 2002, p. 14) and become liberated from colonial and postcolonial thinking. President Mbeki’s call spurred a re-commitment to school-based, African-centered leadership models to train future leaders (Kirk & Bolden, 2006). Thus, this call for social change zeroed in on the incorporation of indigenous teachings and knowledge via systematic educational programs designed to train the next generation of leaders. Ubuntu has thus been resurrected as the future theoretical leadership perspective in some of today’s African societies. Its newfound importance is evident in the amount of information available.

An initial search of the terms Ubuntu, management, leadership and philosophy resulted in over five million entries which covered a diverse collage of scholarship, ranging from spirituality, global management, and school-based curriculum to health care, conflict resolution,
job training, arts programs, and community organizations. Given the scope of this study, the search was narrowed to only those entries that looked at the theoretical attributes of Ubuntu as a leadership or management philosophy.

Over the past few decades, various scholars have examined Ubuntu as a leadership philosophy and found it a viable perspective in the context of postcolonialism in southern Africa. Past studies here explored the effects of leadership on revitalizing Africa’s infrastructure and economic stability (Asante, 1987; Karsten & Illa, 2001, 2005; Mangaliso, 2001; Ntibagirirwa, 2009; Prinsloo, 2000; Ramose, 1999; Van der Merwe, 1996). More recent studies (Bekker, 2007; Karsten & Illa, 2005; Kirk & Bolden, 2006; Malunga, 2009; Mbigi, 1997; Msila, 2008; Ncube, 2010; Sigger, Polak, & Pennink, 2010) have probed the theoretical underpinnings of Ubuntu as a leadership model and managerial prototype. The following studies were the most recent studies to examine Ubuntu as a leadership and management approach.

*Bolen and Kirk Study*

Bolen and Kirk (2009) looking into the nature of African leadership, interviewed 300 African participants across 19 sub-Saharan countries. They addressed this issue of Afrocentric knowledge or leadership can be (re) discovered, captured, and conveyed. They also examined to what extent Afrocentric models resonate with the lived experiences of modern Africans, both across and beyond the continent. A mixed-methods approach that included conversations, documentary analyses, participant observations, small-group interviews, and an online questionnaire, yielded in-depth discussions which showcased a humanistic leadership style. The study drew from participants a deep desire for a more inclusive and participatory form of leadership that values individual differences, authenticity, and community service (p. 80). Findings from the study highlighted the need to delve more closely into alternative theoretical lenses, such as relational, critical, and constructionist approaches. Bolen and Kirk concluded
that this relational or humanistic approach represents a welcome alternative to the more heroic and individualist leadership type and offers a powerful frame of reference to connect individual leadership with society.

*Bertsch Study (2012)*

Operating from the same premise, Bertsch (2012) compared Ubuntu to various leadership models, using research studies conducted by the consortium called GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness). GLOBE leadership studies span a collage of disciplines such as business theory and practices, democracy, communications, technology, and religious conversions (Bertsch, 2012, p. 81). Bertsch found considerable evidence of the use of highly competitive, individualist, or heroic American style of leadership compared to the humanistic approach of the Ubuntu philosophy. Using eight dimensions of leadership (Performance Orientation, Future Orientation, Gender Egalitarianism, Assertiveness, In-group Collectivism, Power Distance, Humane Orientation, and Uncertainty Avoidance), Bertsch’s (2012) concluded that American leadership models tend to focus more on individualism, egalitarianism, and elitism, while the Ubuntu philosophy espoused characteristics, such as compassion and solidarity, unbiased consideration and regard for the rights, values, beliefs, and property of the community. Bertsch’s gap analysis revealed that many of the Ubuntu characteristics were absent in current American leadership models. Although Bertsch’s study alluded to distinct differences within the American and Ubuntu approach to leadership, the author cautioned against glorifying Ubuntu, reminding readers that the purpose of his study was not to reform American leadership practices or traits, but to draw attention to the need for further improvement.
Both studies alluded to a new phenomenon in American leadership. The study and exploration of indigenous systems of knowledge in South Africa are blossoming as new and valid academic disciplines (Bekker, 2007). This continued trend opens dialogues for their application into the field of educational leadership.

**Ubuntu: Core Concepts**

The core philosophy of Ubuntu centers on leading through a humanistic perspective. The philosophy emphasizes community, collective solidarity, and human interdependence. The theoretical perspective espouses five core principles: (1) caring for one another’s well-being in a spirit of mutual support; (2) honoring the humanistic value of every individual and acknowledging that leadership cannot exist without actively involving humans; (3) recognizing leadership as a way of life; (4) incorporating servant leadership principle, and (5) viewing leadership as a means to secure economic, social, and environmental sustainability (Karsten & Illa, 2005, p. 612). These core principles stand for a way of life and a belief system that espouses individual humanity are inextricably linked to one another. This ‘humanness’ perspective emphasizes leadership as a relational correlation, not a specific behavior or trait.

After probing Ubuntu from a leader-focused perspective, Ncube (2010) outlined six core leadership characteristics or behaviors seen in leaders who espouse Ubuntu principles: (1) modeling the way; (2) communal enterprise and shared vision; (3) change and transformation; (4) interconnectedness, interdependency, and empowerment; (5) collectivism and solidarity, and (6) continuous integrated development (p. 79). These six core concepts encompass the social, spiritual, and co-dependent nature of the humanistic philosophy.

**Modeling the Way**

The Ubuntu philosophy requires leaders to set good examples in their behavior, morals,
and ethical conduct. Personal traits, such as honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, compassion, empathy, dignity, and respect increase a leader’s personal influence within the community (Malunga, 2009). It is only by committing to leaders personal ethical behavior and self-management that people become empowered on personal and community levels.

When viewed on a deeper level, modeling the way can be perceived as a spiritual core concept. Leaders understand their ancestral, personal, and global accountability to uphold learned values and morals, and personal actions or behaviors. In Ubuntu, these attributes are signs of respect for past and future leaders, and current followers. Modeling transcends individual actions or behaviors; it is steeped in the idea that individual actions and responsibilities have an impact on the larger community.

**Communal Enterprise and a Shared Vision**

The achievement of communal enterprises and shared visions requires that leaders motivate others to share in mutual agreements from which ideas and outcomes are devised to improve the group’s social, economic, and spiritual outcomes. Maintaining a respect for differences, tolerance, and principles of mutuality keep leaders reminded of their shared humanity with followers (Bekker, 2007). Leaders value others’ needs over their own. It is a core concept that permits cross-cultural differences, breaks down the hierarchical barriers between leaders and followers, and fosters the construction of caring communities. Communal decision-making and visioning processes are circular and inclusive, allowing diverse perspectives and non-monolithic viewpoints.

**Change and Transformation**

Under the change and transformation concept, Ubuntu leaders search for opportunities to change and transform organizations through people, not of people. Ncube (2010) stated that
“rather than being forced on people, change comes through a process of openness and transparency by which people come to accept change through the natural process” (p.79). Therefore, decisions to change and transform organizations are accomplished through agreements which are reached through mutual consensus.

As a transformative concept, Ubuntu is much more than a theory for building relationships among leaders and subordinates to maximize personal and organizational goals (Karsten & Illa, 2005). The principles of Ubuntu become entrenched in the ways members interact and share experiences in and outside organizations. Through these interactions to move beyond a purely managerial approach, Ubuntu leaders strive towards the promotion of open conversations, storytelling, inclusive decision-making, and participatory communications, all of which transforms organizations, people, and global systems.

**Interconnectedness, Interdependency, and Empowerment**

The essential core principle of Ubuntu is human interconnectedness and interdependency. It espouses the idea that the survival of each individual is dependent on help from others. In other leadership perspectives, this type of relationship building is called networking, and its goal is to expand one’s personal power. In the Ubuntu perspective, interconnectedness and interdependency thrive on building an atmosphere where there is trust, collaboration, and self-empowerment (Ncube, 2010). Leaders operating under these principles recognize that individual power and influence come from their followers. This perspective represents a major shift in the power dynamics of leadership, one which requires leaders to adhere to a dependence on followers.

**Collectivism and Solidarity**

In Ubuntu, collectivism and solidarity underscore the interconnectedness and
interdependency of the whole. This core principle espouses the idea that the needs of the collective community are greater than those of individual leaders. This collectivist mentality promotes a spirit of working together toward common organizational and universal goals. Such examples of common efforts include rural African traditions of storytelling, inclusive decision-making, and participatory group meetings (Karsten & Illa, 2005). These meetings or ‘wisdom circles’, as Karsten and Illa (2005) termed them were used to achieve collective solidarity within communities. The researchers added that in these wisdom circles, majority opinions did not count in the council of elders; unanimity was the rule (p. 613). Through such cooperative decision-making processes, leaders and followers collectively seek ways to solve problems and develop new ideas. The principle shifts from an individual leadership model to a group consensus approach.

**Continuous Integrated Development**

Under the sixth Ubuntu principle, continuous integrated development, leaders are obligated to expand human capital and devise innovations that move the organization and people toward improved economic, social, and personal outcomes. Continuous integrated development involves such traits as professional development, self-empowerment and affirmation, and personal and collective recognition of achievements.

Leaders who demonstrate the traits of continuous integrated development understand the value of developing human potential. Starting from within, leaders pursue a higher level of self-awareness. In this process, leaders learn to affirm their intrinsic value, their limitations, and their dependence on others. Leaders come to understand that their personal development is connected to others’ development. In Ubuntu, the key principle of humanness, or “I am, because you are,” expresses this core value. As leaders improve in this area, they share in a deeper level of intimacy with followers.
In addition to the six principles, Ubuntu incorporates the essence of spirituality. The spirituality component emphasizes a deep respect and regard for all religious beliefs and practices beyond traditional ceremonial practices, and Christianity and Islamic theology (Nabudere, 2008). Based on an African philosophy, Ubuntu stresses the idea of continuous oneness by honoring, respecting, and paying homage to all humanity, including the unborn, the dead, and living humans (Nabudere, 2008 p. 3). This trilogy of humanness is believed to be the total spirit man.

This spirituality aspect of Ubuntu is of particular interest to researchers studying African American leadership. Historically, spirituality has been deeply embedded in the African culture. As Smith (1984) pointed out, early literature on African American leadership included studies about pastoral or spiritual leaders. Ubuntu allows the realm of spirituality to be critically examined as a leadership component. The Ubuntu perspective rejects the idea of separation of church and state by espousing the oneness of leaders’ spirituality. Dantley (2002) argued that “perhaps the joining of the body, mind and spirit is what African Americans most benevolently offer the field of educational leadership” (p. 350). Dantley noted that by incorporating spirituality, the authentic voices of Black educational leaders become more actively involved in critical reflections, which may lead to the deconstruction of racism, and sexism.

The six concepts of Ubuntu, along with spirituality, alter the discussion from an individualist form of leadership to a more global perspective of leading. The Ubuntu philosophy shifts the emphasis from leader-centered models, to a model that emphasizes leaders’ interconnectedness with followers’ (Ncube 2010). This subtle yet distinctive way of thinking about leadership alters the power dynamics espoused in most Western leadership theories, toward a more integrated model where power is collectively shared.
Ubuntu is different from Western leadership philosophies in three ways. First, Ubuntu is a cultural value system that remains an emerging perspective. Second, Ubuntu is indigenous and Afrocentric. Finally, Ubuntu invokes traditional cultural values. Ubuntu holds promise as a tool to bring about a more inclusive way of thinking that balances the past, the present, and the future (Ncube, 2010). Van der Colff (2003, p. 258) called it a postcolonial paradigm of leadership built on strong relationships, participation, responsibility, and spiritual authority. Mandela, the former president of South Africa was quoted, describing Ubuntu as “the idea that people are empowered by other people, that we become our best selves through unselfish interactions with others” (Gini, 2012). His eloquent description put the stress on collectivism and relationships rather than on personal material gains. This way of thinking emphasizes the importance of a participatory, transparent, and democratic leadership.

The philosophical teachings of Ubuntu should not be romanticized. In fact, not all African people or tribes accept Ubuntu’s teachings and practices. Van Binasbergen (2001) for example, was against globalizing Ubuntu as an African perspective. He condemned the philosophy’s historical denial of “ubiquitous conflicts and contradictions, the oppressive immanence of the world view, and the misappropriation of representing only the bright side of Ubuntu” (p. 13). The goal in is paper is not to glorify the bright side of Ubuntu, but to offer another perspective and acknowledge the historical contributions African philosophies can make. Diop (1974) explained that while Africa has lagged behind Europe in technological and economic advancements, it is more advanced in its social and political philosophies and systems (Nabudere, 2008).

Ubuntu is not intended to replace Western leadership philosophies but to add diversity to existing leadership theories by incorporating other traditions and potentially dismantling the
ideology of superiority and dominance inherent in some Eurocentric leadership theories. The philosophy is important because it draws on the humanistic values of the African people.

**Conclusion**

As more African Americans and minorities advance in higher education, the studies of leadership in marginalized groups have increased (Murtadha & Watts, 2005). Bisbee (2007) suggested that one way to transform higher education is to recruit, cultivate, and identify potential leaders, providing the necessary support, training, and programs to foster their professional development (p. 78). Given the minority-majority status of African Americans of universities, it is crucial to understand the roles, the contributions, and ways of leading exhibited by African American leaders.

The current study focuses on an African humanistic philosophical concept. Bekker (2007) argued that there is a desperate need for an indigenous, innovative, value-based leadership approach that can encourage the mobilization of a wide variety of participants around a common goal (p. 1). Future leadership theories such as Ubuntu can contribute authentic insights to help resolve various challenges facing leaders in higher education. In order for future leaders to gain a more thorough understanding of their roles, some scholars have suggested that postmodernist leadership theories incorporate that humanistic style of leadership (Kirk and Bolden, 2006).
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGICAL PLAN

Educational leadership has historically been grounded in empiricist, positivist and structuralist paradigms that celebrate a fantasized notion of the monolithic nature of organizations and principles of leadership that supposedly found them (Dantley, 2002, p. 335).

The methodological strategies and analytical procedures used to conduct this qualitative research study are presented in Chapter III. Using the theoretical framework of Ubuntu, I employ a single-subject case approach to examine a midlevel leader at a Midwestern university. The following questions guided my inquiry to uncover a new way of conceptualizing African American leadership and explore whether the theoretical framework of Ubuntu adequately explains the leadership style of the designated case subject. The following research questions were explored:

1. In what ways do current leadership theories inhibit or expand our understanding of a designated case subject?

2. Using the theoretical lens of Ubuntu, what specific traits or tenets of the Ubuntu philosophy adequately capture the leadership style and behaviors of the designated case subject?

In order to investigate the two guiding questions, I designed fifteen open-ended, semi-structured questions, and a participant questionnaire form, and reviewed archival documents to facilitate an expressive dialogue that captured the personal and composite details about the leader. Beginning with a theoretical framework, Chapter III is divided into six segments: (1) Yin’s Case-Study methodology, (2) Participant Selection, (3) Primary data collection, (4) Data analysis, (5) Validity, and (6) Study limitations.
Theoretical Framework

I used the theoretical framework, Ubuntu to examine the case subject’s specific behaviors, traits, and leadership style. The six core principles of Ubuntu: (1) modeling the way; (2) communal enterprise and shared vision; (3) change and transformation; (4) interconnectedness, interdependency, and empowerment; (5) collectivism and solidarity; and (6) continuous integrated development were compared and contrasted to current leadership theories often used in educational settings. The application of Ubuntu provided an analytical framework in which to examine the following questions: (a) How current leadership theories inhibit or expand our understanding of African American leadership, and (b) What specific traits or tenets of the Ubuntu philosophy adequately capture the leadership style of the case subject.

Yin’s Case-Study Method

Yin’s (1984; 2009) case-study approach and methods were applied in this study. According to Yin (2009), case studies arise out of a desire to understand complex social phenomena, and to investigate real-life events, such as individual life cycles, small group behaviors, organizational relationships, and industry maturation (p. 4). This approach is usually employed when (a) “how” or “why” questions are posed; (b) the investigator has little control over events, or (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon that is examined within a real-life context (p. 2). This systematic approach was used in this study to investigate real-life narratives, current leadership theories, and Ubuntu. This approach served three primary functions: (1) provided insight into the complex nature of understanding individual leadership, the institutional culture, and how the sequence of events impact the larger community; (2) offered an in-depth look at the institution through multiple types of analyses, and (3) explored the experiences of individuals who are often absent and outside the normal ways of perceiving (Lester, 1999; Yin,
2009). The research design brought forth more enriched data than would have been possible otherwise were it applied to a multisite research study.

**Participant Selection**

Purposeful sampling and a criterion-based selection process were utilized in the study. Purposeful sampling when a particular setting, person, or activity is purposefully selected to provide information not accessible from other sources (Maxwell, 2005, p. 89). Participants were selected using the following criteria:

1. Individuals who represent the setting, the case subject, or within the timeframe the case subject served in a leadership position at the university.
2. Participants who adequately captured the heterogeneity of the university population. This includes tenured faculty members, university staff, and various community leaders who served directly under or with the case subject.
3. Participants who demonstrate intimate knowledge of the case subject’s specific leadership style

Participant referrals were also integrated into the study to expand the participant pool. Preselected participants were asked to contribute internal and external resources, including names and contact information for other possible referrals. The final participant selection process yielded a diverse group of people, spanning the university and the community at-large.

**Participants**

Eleven individuals participated in the study. Participants were solicited from three distinct categories: (1) family members and close unrelated acquaintances; (2) direct subordinates, employee supervisors, and university officials, and (3) local, national, and international community leaders. The differing categories permitted a holistic examination of
the various leadership roles and responsibilities demonstrated by the case subject.

The participant pool included two immediate family members, one former supervisor, three direct reports, two professional colleagues, one community leader, and two former students. Each participant had had a significant working or personal relationship with the subject. A significant experience or relationship was defined as a period of at least five years. Participants ranged from 30 to 70 years of age.

Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant. Participants included two family members, Birdie and Don. These participants provided intimate details concerning how the subject demonstrated leadership in multiple roles (mother, wife, and friend). David, Cathy, Rick, Angie, and Bre were former/current university employees who worked directly for or with the subject. These participants gave a wealth of information about the subject’s leadership style and specific behaviors in the workplace. Finally, Willie, Walter, and Netty were all former students. Jen, the final participant, served as a community representative. Additional pseudonyms were attached to local organizations, the university, and other personnel that could be traced back to the subject or the participants themselves. Last, in lieu of university identification, the institution was given the name, Central University. Table 1 describes each participant, their relation to the case subject, and the number of years the relationship lasted.
Entrée

Entrée was gained via formal requests to immediate family members of the case subject. Private meetings were scheduled to seek permission and discuss the scope of the research project. Family members, long-time acquaintances, and professional colleagues were solicited to participate in the study. Participants were vetted using information from various family members, colleagues, and archival data. This process expanded the participant pool, lessened the time needed to gather contact information, and created connective paths between participants and
Participants were informed of the volunteer nature of this study. Only consenting adults who agreed to participate in an audiotaped interview, complete a participant form, and contribute memorabilia and artifacts, were considered for the final pool. Consent forms were provided to each participant (see Appendix A). The consent agreement informed participants of their right to decline participation in the study at any time. Given the limited risk involved in this study and the use of the snowball technique, the identity of consenting participants were not kept private. Individual names and identifying information were necessary for probing the working and personal connections between the subject and participants and assisted me in gaining intimate knowledge about the case subject.

**Primary Data Collection**

An initial inquiry into the study began with a preliminary investigation into the subject’s life history. A review of various university documents aided me in understanding the case subject’s scope, direct and indirect influences, and her community involvement. The primary data collection incorporated biographical information, qualitative interviews, participant questionnaires, and archival resource materials.

**Qualitative Interviews**

A 90 minute, in-person interview was conducted for each of the eleven participants. Interviews were coordinated, scheduled, and confirmed directly by telephone. Times, facilities, and dates of interviews were determined, based upon the availability and request of participants. In accordance with Institutional Research Board (IRB) requirements, a thorough review of the consent protocol was completed prior to the start of each interview. An adequate amount of time was set aside for questions or concerns. Upon request, each participant received a copy of the
signed consent form.

Fifteen open-ended, semi-structured questions facilitated open dialogues about African American leadership in higher education, individual leadership in minority communities, and the leadership capacity of the subject (see Appendix B). Participants were not provided specific information about the various leadership theories, or Ubuntu prior to or during the interviews. This method of inquiry minimized participant bias, or any propensity to characterize the case subject by using a specific leadership theory.

**Participant Forms**

Participant questionnaire forms (see Appendix C) provided information concerning the subject’s professional and personal relationships. The forms were used as a resource to identify the participants used in the study, and to fact-check information. The data was cross-referenced to identify specific traits and leadership characteristics displayed by the case subject and garner a better understanding of participants’ descriptions of an effective leader. Finally, these forms connected individual narratives across the entire participant pool.

**Archival Data**

Archival data included a scan of local and national electronic news outlets, using various search engines such as Google and Bing as well as various community organization publications. The information contained in these documents provided information about the subject’s personal and professional interests, specific leadership behaviors, and her local and national presence in the community. In addition, such historical documents as personal artifacts, memorabilia, and documentation relating to her leadership were examined to confirm participants’ narratives, and verify the case subject’s professional and community leadership positions.
Family members, colleagues, and community leaders contributed personal artifacts, memorabilia, and personal relics. Over 80 documents, including local and national news clippings, private notes, local and national awards, and honorarium salutes were examined. The amount of information collected spoke to the subject’s leadership capabilities and her impact on the local and university community. The following archival resources (see Table 2) were used in the study.

Table 2

*Archival Document Resources*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Document</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Community Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Correspondence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Memos/Writings</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports/Announcements</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards/Tributes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
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**Data Collection Limitations**

Notwithstanding the 11 participant interviews, questionnaire forms, 87 archival documents, and over 200 hours of web-based searches, the overall data collection included some limitations. Some of the limitations included limited access to internal university computing systems, or business-related e-mails and a heavy reliance on family, friends, and colleagues to donate personal memorabilia. Thus, valuable insights may have been lost or inflated to depict more positive attributes of the case subject. In order to combat these limitations, I asked
clarifying follow-up questions during participant interviews in order to thoroughly and critically examine the case subject. In addition, I read over 80 internet articles written by the case subject in order to gain greater understanding of her personal philosophy of leading, professional development, and community engagement.

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative studies are often used to explore new areas and advance theories. To analyze and arrange data into an organizational flow Miles & Huberman (1994) stated that its best conducted by beginning with a text to establish coding categories, identifying themes and trends to delineate the deep structure, and integrating data into an explanatory framework (p. 91). This analytical approach used in the two-phased data analyses answer the research questions.

The first phase of the analysis examined the five approaches to leadership reviewed in Chapter I. Each participant interview transcript and questionnaire form were scanned and divided into one of five leadership approaches. Specific core competencies and leadership traits were used to identity themes, similarities, and particular behaviors closely associated with the various theories.

Similar to the first phase, the second phase of analysis sorted the six core concepts of Ubuntu: (1) modeling the way; (2) communal enterprise and shared vision; (3) change and transformation; (4) interconnectedness, interdependency, and empowerment; (5) collectivism and solidarity, and (6) continuous integrated development. Written notes and participant transcripts were color-coded into categories that corresponded with the appropriate Ubuntu concept. Depending on their length, depth, and scope, some passages were coded into two or more categories and analyzed further. Participant interviews revealed the presence of spirituality as an essential component of leadership, as evidenced by the subject. Because the Ubuntu philosophy
incorporates the role of spirituality, this theme was integrated into the Ubuntu data analysis. The organizational framework allowed for an intentional examination of Ubuntu as well as additional leadership traits and behaviors not captured in the previous leadership theories.

Participant questionnaire forms (see Appendix C) and archival data analysis followed a similar protocol. Data from participant questionnaire forms were sorted, coded, compared, contrasted, and diagrammed to assess the subject’s varying leadership styles. Archival documents were sorted and divided into three categories: personal, professional, and community engagement. Personal archival data included photos, handwritten notes, and the subject’s personal collection of books. Archival documents were analyzed to craft a biographical sketch of the subject. They included hiring and promotion announcements, and university, local, and national articles regarding the various positions held by the subject. Finally, quick scans of a variety of community organization publications were utilized in order to understand her local and national presence and degree of leadership involvement. This data analysis was intended to depict a thorough variety of narratives, which could more easily generate a larger vision of her leadership style. This approach helped me to conduct an in-depth examination through multiple types of analyses.

Validity

Triangulation was employed to assess internal validity. The methodological triangulation involved in-depth interviews, participant questionnaire analyses, and a review of institutional and national archival documents. The application of multiple strategies, such as close reading, active listening, repeated listening, viewing of audio and video recordings, and formulating personal relationships with participants were all used to assess validity and potential research biases present in the study (Seidman, 2006, p. 118). This type of data analysis allowed the
researcher to make judgments while maintaining the integrity of the participants’ narratives. These techniques were also combined to identify any internal and skewed data by expanding the narrative and counter-narratives.

One of the biggest threats to the validity in this study was the need to guard against informant biases based on existing personal and professional relationships and participants’ inclination to recall only positive memories of the deceased case subject. As mentioned previously, the research design required a review of external resources to minimize personal biases. In addition, I conducted an independent historical overview of the case subject’s life using information from university archival documents, local and national news outlets, and informal conversations with various community leaders. These extra measures were crucial, and I applied them when appropriate in order to accurately depict the case subject’s life.

**Study Limitations**

The limitations of this study were the use of a single site and the examination of one case subject. While the use of a single case study allowed for an in-depth look at an African American leader at a White institution, this study did not adequately reflect a generalized view of African American leadership in higher education.

According to Yin (2009) there are four main limitations associated with single-case studies: (1) the perception of lack of rigor and an unsystematic procedural process that accounts for unequivocal evidence of biases or influence of findings and conclusions; (2) concerns about the ability of case studies to provide scientific evidence that can be generalized to a greater population; (3) the length of time to conduct a case study and unyielding narratives; and (4) concern about whether the case study method adequately explains a causal relationship between a particular treatment and effect, or whether this method designed can be labeled as a true
experiment (p. 14-15). While the case study approach possesses certain limitations, the positive contributions of this study outweighed the limitations by allowing for a greater understanding of the complex social phenomena of African American leadership. It also permitted for an in-depth investigation into the real-life events and meaningful narratives of an individual leader, small group behaviors, interrelated relationships, and organizational and managerial processes (Yin, 2009, p. 4). Given the limited examination of Ubuntu in educational leadership, the single case approach established a fundamental backdrop for future research in this area.

**Conclusion**

The study of African American leadership is an inadvertent consequence of the underrepresentation of African American faculty and staff in higher education. This inequitable acknowledgement of the inherent leadership skills as evidenced by Black leaders limits our theoretical lens to traditional leadership perspectives. The opening quote by Dantley (2002) references this void in the literature, which leaves absent the narrative voice of people of color. Jones (1972) stated that much of the research on Black leadership in America is conducted in non-theoretical manner. Consequently, what is needed is a fundamental way of categorizing a theory of Black leadership and politics in America (as cited in Smith, 1989, p. 101). This systematic, qualitative research design attempts to fundamentally categorize Black leadership by examining a single subject. The study design was intentional in its efforts to examine the omission of the Black leadership narrative in higher education and explore a cross-cultural perspective on leadership through the theoretical lens of Ubuntu.

Stinchcombe (1968) and Rapport (1958) cite three major functions of theory: (1) to serve as an aid to the inventory and codification of existing knowledge of phenomena; (2) to serve as a guide where further research is required; and (3) to contribute to the development of the capacity
to invent explanations of phenomena and how they are interrelated, verifiable, and verified propositions (as cited in Smith, 1989, p. 9). While this study does not propose to adequately fulfill all the above criteria, it does add to the inventory of the existing knowledge about current leadership theories, serves as a guide for future research, and expands the current theoretical lens by which to examine Black leadership.
CHAPTER IV: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

“In sustaining it, it has sustained me.
And so, as I have given, so I have received.”

(Case Subject)

The first three chapters detailed the challenges facing higher education in the 21st century and the need to develop a more diverse workforce. I examine the underrepresentation of African Americans and the inherent value of diversity and cultural capital held by minorities in higher education. A review of the literature in Chapter II covered the social constructs of leadership. The discussion broadened the current monolithic leadership models by investigating an indigenous African philosophy, Ubuntu. Chapter III outlined a single-case methodological design that was applied to investigate (1) How current leadership theories inhibit or expand our understanding of African American leadership, and (2) What specific traits or tenets of the Ubuntu philosophy adequately described the subject’s leadership style and behaviors. The methods employed in the study were qualitative interviews, participant questionnaire forms, and archival data. Displays of the data extracted from the methodological design are included in this chapter. Three primary themes emerged from the data:

2. Effective African American leaders create community in higher education.
3. The case subject displayed the core competencies in the Ubuntu philosophy.

Participant narratives offered stories concerning the case subject’s behaviors.
Bibliographical Portrait of Case Subject

The subject was born in an urban city in the Midwest. Understanding the value of education, she worked diligently to earn a scholarship to attend a regional university. Greatly appreciative, she walked the halls of the academy and earned her way to a Fortune 500 company where she served as the first African American female manager. Soon after, she began her work at a local university where she spent 39 years creating local, national, and international leadership opportunities for thousands of people. Her legacy includes distinguished awards and honorariums, including multiple awards for Woman of the Year, and an editorial position for a national college magazine. Described as a visionary and creator, she designed programs to raise racial awareness and self-efficacy for African Americans, and economic initiatives for underrepresented populations. Affectionately dubbed “Ma,” she was a strong leader with true convictions, a scholar, a conscience for the community, and a collaborative thinker. Most importantly, she was a loving wife, a mother, and a friend to many. In the fall of 2009, although the subject passed from this earth, her legacy lives on in her family, friends, and the university community.

Display of Data: Leadership

The first data section presents the specific traits, behaviors, and management techniques derived from the five theoretical models of leadership outlined in Chapter II (trait, behavioral, power-influence, situational, and transformational) and Ubuntu data taken from participants’ interviews, questionnaire forms, and archival documents. All of these were coded and sorted to identify traits, behaviors, and management styles for each theoretical model.
Trait Approach

The trait approach to leadership proposes that great leaders possess innate traits, such as intelligence and action-oriented judgments, easergerness and responsibility, courage and resolution, trustworthiness, decisiveness, self-confidence, and assertiveness (Yukl, 1989). Data results from the trait analysis revealed descriptive terms found in the Great Man Theory, and terms used to describe the subject. Participants listed such terms as authoritative, strategic, intelligent, risk-taker, flexible, assertive, revolutionary, hard worker, visionary, organized, very strong, strong in spirit, direct, dogmatic, consensus orientation, creativity, nurturing, compassionate, thinks outside the box, gets the job done, freedom fighter, nurturer, empowering, fearless, always attentive, champion, mentor, and grounded. Additional passages included the following:

- “Loved you beyond your failure point and pushed you to greatness.” (Netty)
- “She was consensus-orientated and caring.” (Rick)
- “Tenacious and courageous visionary dedicated to the development of others.” (Cathy)
- “Open, consultative, intuitive style that was results-oriented.” (David)
- “Direct, but fair and thorough.” (Angie)
- “Purpose-driven leadership through humility and recognition of individual skills/gifts.” (Jen)

The above descriptions supported a picture of the case subject and established a conceptual framework for examining her specific leadership traits and core competencies.

Behavior Approach

Three management styles were analyzed under the behavioral approach: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. Of the three, only two emerged in the data results: autocratic and
democratic. The subject’s style or management techniques seemed to be situational. The data indicated that her style preference differed according to specific situations in order to meet organizational goals. Participants described the subject’s leadership style as demanding and autocratic, one that challenged employees to share in the decision-making process.

**Autocratic.** The autocratic management approach emphasizes a single-power leadership model that bars direct influences on the decision-making process and permits limited shared governance. Expectations are often based on punishments and rewards (Yukl, 1989). This leader-dominated approach is dictatorial. Participants described the case subject as very direct and decisive. Such passages as, “She was dogmatic and direct” (Rick, 303), and “If you didn’t get your stuff done, you would get sat down and dealt with” (Willie, 127-128) made clear that this was an intense leader who harshly condemned employees who underperformed or failed to complete tasks. Cathy stated that, “She was no nonsense. I mean, not just with me, but also with anybody. She’s no nonsense and candid. To a fault” (123-124). This passage brought forth the image of a focused leader, willing to give decisive instructions and take command of situations. This approach was not her dominant leadership style.

**Democratic.** The democratic or participatory management style was displayed prominently throughout the data results. Thirty-three passages contained descriptions of a group-consensus leader who relied upon and encouraged the contributions of others. Participants provided testimonials about the subject’s ability to build relationships and networks, as well as engage the community. Active listening, personal encouragements, and a calm temperament were identified as the core attributes of the subject’s leadership approach. Statements, such as “She was open to our suggestions, you know, we worked as a team (Angie, 170), or “She would come up with suggestions and we would sit and we’d talk about it, then we would carve out who
was going to be responsible for what. And then we made it happen” (Angie, 157-159). Willie put it this way:

> When she would give you a task to complete, she would give you ample time. She would ask you, ‘Was this enough time?’ So she was, in her collaborative nature, she was developing… an agreement with you. I need this by this date. Can you do that? You’d say yes. We’re in agreement. She’d repeat it a couple of times, different ways (123-127).

In the passages, the term ‘we’ was repeated to emphasize her involvement and democratic leadership style. This approach emphasizes personal connections and group accountability. Jen stated that the style was effective and empowering:

> It was a matter of recognizing where they were, and what she saw as the need. A good leader is always able to determine what’s needed. If you’re going to lead people, it can’t be what you think. It’s what you witness. It’s what you observe. It’s what you experiment with, OK? It’s what you consult with other people about. A good leader brings together great minds. And a good leader is able to step back and hear what other people have to say. And then pick and choose from that and use it. And the case subject was good at that. She had no ego. Let me put it like this; she was so comfortable with herself that ego was never the challenge. So, she was real comfortable laying ego aside and saying what do you think? A good leader allows other people to have opinions and not only to hear them but to respect them and recognize [them] (268-277).

Jen’s description of a good leader perfectly matched the subject’s willingness to listen to others and establish a democratic process in the workplace.
Power and Influence Approach

Power is a force that dictates intentional behavioral outcomes involving human interactions (Abbott & Caracheo, 1988). The theoretical approach of power and influence helps explain (1) how leaders possess or lose power; (2) how power is disseminated, and (3) how power influences subordinates, peers, superiors, and people in and outside the organization (Yukl, 2010). The data analysis revealed the case subject’s reliance on all three sources of power—positional, personal, and referent.

**Positional Power.** Positional power is derived from the hierarchical structures in place. The leaders at the top use their authority and control of resources to reward and punish. As the director of a large support unit within the university, the subject maintained a high degree of positional power within the university’s structure. Despite that, participants talked about the subject’s personal struggle over whether to accept or reject promotional advances within the organization. A passage from David revealed her struggle:

She rejected me three years in a row as I tried to promote her. And she said to me she did not want to be in a position where she would have to make decisions that would alter the lives of people in a negative way, and that was motivated specifically by some budget cutting and staff that were subsequently eliminated were persons of color. And I know their names. I won’t call their names, but she did not want to be in a position like that and knew that taking a step up would put her in a position of having to make judgments about professional staff at that level. And was unequivocal in her motivation, having nothing to do with ‘I don’t think I’m capable or whatever.’ Her passions were very focused, and she did not want to be in a position where she had to make those kinds of decisions (63-73).
Bre cited the case subject’s fear of losing autonomy and freedom as potential reasons for declining additional promotional opportunities:

And she had the freedom to exercise her power. You know what I mean? She just, she was where she was and because of where she was, she was able to reach out and do more of those things that she enjoyed doing, whereas if she would have taken these higher-up positions, I think it would have maybe put more restraint on her and that was, you didn’t want that. She did not want to ever be restrained. She pretty much had free reign to do what she wanted, when she wanted, and how she wanted (299-313).

This passage raised questions regarding the perceived limitations of positional power, and whether minority leaders view positional power as a liability or asset. The narratives brought out the subject’s willingness to forgo positional power to retain her personal power. Rick stated that, I think the higher you go, the less you really can demonstrate your consciousness. [The subject] knew the next level. What it would be. What would be expected and who she’d be dealing with. She already was dealing with buzzards just at the director’s level. As the leadership changed, then she didn’t feel the support that she needed. It was never an issue of her going up any further. [The subject] would rather have a month to go to the Bahamas and set up her Black woman state. I know in our conversation, she never wanted to move up any further than where she was. A part of that was she’d have to give up her freedom. She never had to worry about giving up her Blackness. No. See, I’m this way. I believe she, the higher she would have gone, the more she would have compromised (425-434).

The possession of positional power in higher education is a powerful asset. The data narratives portrayed her intentional decision to turn down promotions for personal and political reasons.
Though it is considered important, positional power can both broaden and narrow leaders’ power and influence in organizations. Willie stated that, “Her abilities to influence people did not require her to possess a leadership position in order do it. She didn’t need it” (261-262).

**Personal Power.** Personal power is observed in the demonstration of expert skills and the ability to connect with followers. The case subject’s demonstration of personal power influenced participants. Their narratives conveyed the image of an exceptionally skilled employee committed to personal and professional development. Participants, in portraying the subject as an intellect, a skilled expert, and a conscientious strategist, made clear how her specific skills added to the personal power and influence she held at the university. When asked how he thought the subject would like to be remembered, David said that,

> She would say you have to be expert at what you do. There is no substitute for that. You can’t retreat in culture. You can’t retreat in the Lord will take care of me, religion or spirituality. All those things are important, but first you’ve got to speak the language, and you’ve got to do what is expected of you at a very high level. You don’t get, you can’t underperform and be viewed in a positive way with her. Always high expectations and that would be first (272-277).

Participants’ descriptions pointed to an intellectually disciplined leader who stayed abreast of current topics, and who continually refined her skills and bank of knowledge. In addition, the narratives revealed how the subject built networks and personal relationships. Bre noted that,

> She just, she read. She kept up on current events. She, like I said, and through her network, she kept in touch with people in different organizations, asked their input, would get directors from different schools together and brown bag and brainstorm on different things. Well, are you having this kind of a problem? Oh, really? Well, how are
you addressing it? And she would bring people in and get the feel and the thoughts from all over (220-228).

In a separate section, Bre summarized the case subject’s personal power:

You know, there are people [who] were afraid of her. She had, she had almost too much power. She never backed down. If she knew she was right, there’s no way in hell she would ever back down and it didn’t matter who it was. She stood up for what she believed in. She had no problem [with] speaking her mind. And again, she was very well-read, very well-educated, and she knew her battles to choose and by God, when she was on a roll, you stood back and you let her go because she would not take ‘no’ for an answer (171-176).

Not fully understanding her use of the word afraid in the passage, I asked Bre for an additional explanation and to put afraid in a context:

Not afraid, but they knew they weren’t going to win. They knew that if they were going to win, they would have to do a whole lot more research and background stuff and everything because she was, like I said, she didn’t take things lightly (284-287).

Razik and Swanson (2010) stated that along with demonstrating expert knowledge, leaders must also develop personal connections with followers. The subject’s expertise and personal power came through in several narratives, all of which conveyed her genuine affection and respect for, and personal attention to other’s needs. David fully articulated this point:

With her staff, they’d walk through fire for her. What I didn’t know was how other professionals, or what other professionals knew of that side of her managing. I got to see it because I was her manager, her boss. And oftentimes, I wondered who was the boss. And that didn’t trouble me. Because she had this power that others, quite frankly, didn’t
have, and I was attracted to that, or I never would have offered her a step up on three different occasions. I never really quantified that in a way that I fully understood… but when I saw it, I knew the power of it (119-125).

Overall, the data results highlighted the case subject’s exceptional interpersonal and expert knowledge of her profession. Her ability to manage both informal and formal relationships with colleagues and subordinates helped the case subject garner additional power and influence in the university.

**Referent Power.** Participants conveyed deep feelings of admiration, respect for, and loyalty to the subject. Participants noted her charismatic personality, expert knowledge, and her extensive networking. They obviously held her in high regard. As Bre put it:

I’ve never respected anyone like the case subject. I never have admired anyone with the knowledge, the respect that you saw from people that knew her. My other bosses, I mean I respected them. I did the job. I was always so proud to introduce the case subject as my director. And I, actually I couldn’t wait to be able to do that. This is my director. This is the [case subject]. And so in the back of my mind, I’m saying this is my friend. Oh. There was just, like I said, no one like her. She would take you in, and it would be up to you how much of her you wanted. So, she, whatever you wanted, she was there to give you. She would always have a shoulder for you if you needed it (233-241).

The passage linked personal power, a commitment to intellectual rigor, and a genuine connection that positively affected others. It was that type of power David referred to when he said, “I never really quantified that in a way that I fully understood, but when I saw it, I knew the power of it” (125).
Situational Approach

Under the situational approach, good leaders adjust their behaviors and responses in order to solve organizational problems. Participants used such words as flexible, creative, and visionary to describe the subject. These passages depicted a leader comfortable with change and new ideas. In fact, the terms innovation, innovate, and creative were used 37 times in various narratives and in the archival data. For instance, Jen noted that, “She knew how to step out of her role and be the kind of leader that was needed at that moment” (251-252). Jen declared that, Well, that same naivety and willingness to think outside the box was what made [case subject] special because she knew no limits. You know? If she said I’m going to do this, it was just a matter of creating a plan. And I, I think that’s what made her leadership so special was that it was never, it was never about [the case subject] first of all. That’s real leadership. When you see a need, you address it. And that was her style of leadership, was to identify a need and convince other people that that was the best way to do it. It was a matter of recognizing where they were, and what she saw as… the need, and a good leader is always able to determine what’s needed (111-114; 263-269).

Situational leadership requires creative and flexible leadership. The preceding passages showcased a leader who was willing to take risks, create visions, and engage others to find solutions.

Transformational Model

Change and transformation are common buzz words used in educational leadership research. As noted in Chapter II, transformational leadership is described as the process of effecting major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of the organization’s members and building commitment for the organization’s mission or objectives (Yukl, 1989, p. 204). Leaders
create professional and personal relationships with followers; making connecting and helping the latter realize their personal and professional aspirations.

One of the prominent themes that surfaced from the narratives was the importance of personal development and interest in colleagues and staff members. To connect this idea, the data was analyzed, using the transformational principle called, Individualized Consideration. Individual consideration is defined as someone who is attentive to other’s needs, desires, and development. This type of leader establishes supportive environments where individuals’ differences are encouraged and supported. This core concept can be found in many of the narratives detailing the case subject’s transformative nature and genuine interest in supporting others. The following passage from Cathy illustrated the case subject’s transformational leadership style:

Oh my gosh, yeah. I, one of the things and I wrote this in my dissertation because I did do a part of a dedication to her, and I said that she was someone who encouraged me to and do more than I thought I could ever do. Someone said recently that she could help you see things, you didn’t think were possible. She would encourage you. She saw something in you that you did not see in yourself. I always call myself a country bumpkin because I came from Kentucky, small town, small college. Getting to know her, and the way she encouraged me was special, specifically regarding professional development. She sent me to a leadership program for women in Phoenix. It was that kind of support. She was always doing those kinds of things. She encouraged me to write, to speak, and she encouraged me to get my doctorate, because that was not on my radar at all. She said, ‘I think you need to work on your doctorate. So she was the one who encouraged me to get my doctorate…It was one of the ultimate professional
development experiences. She also wanted me to be on regional and national boards. She wanted me to assume leadership, regional and national positions, which I did. That eventually led me to a board position with the NACE. When I came back from the conference, she was sick and came into the office. She was pretty frail. And you asked me why she did it. I think it’s just in her spirit. I mean, I remember she came in my office and sat down and I showed her my cards that said— NACE, Board of Directors, she took one of the cards in her hands. She was just so proud. She was always so proud. I was trying not to think about her little feeble hands, you know, she was taking this card, she was putting it in her purse. That’s just the spirit she had. She just cared like that. I don’t know if she had a big spirit, but she cared, and she was genuine about it. I think it was just her calling. I can get on the spiritual train here, but I think that this was this woman’s calling on the earth. A big part of it was when she could show people or help people grow, I think it was really important to her (189-204; 206-217).

The above passage detailed the case subject’s transformational leadership style. Attributes such as charisma, inspiration, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration all came through. Bre described the case subject’s transformational leadership style this way:

In her type of leadership… she would have no troubles steering you in the right direction without you really knowing you were being steered… and the amount of work and the end result that came out of it was unbelievable. It was amazing that, I wish I could put into words much better than what I’m saying to you, but she had a way of bringing out the best in you. You wanted to achieve your best, if not better. You never felt like… I don’t like to use the word dumb, but you never felt that you were incapable of doing something. She gave you the pride and the feeling that you could do it, and she just gave
you the strength to want to achieve your highest goals (96-104).

Netty stated that,

She never let up. She was always working to improve your professionalism. She was always teaching us how to be professionals and relational. She was also set on transforming Black women. Wherever you were in your personal development, she knew what you needed (227-229).

Finally, Willie noted that, “She was always pouring into you, pouring herself into people in a transformational way” (115).

The preceding passages emphasized the case subject’s transformational leadership style. The passages portrayed her as a leader who is attentive to others’ needs, desires, and development.

**Display of Data: Ubuntu**

Using the six core concepts of Ubuntu as covered in Chapter II, I used qualitative interviews, participant questionnaire forms, and archival data to indicate the prevalence of the case subject’s core traits, behaviors, and humanistic leadership style. The following analysis outlines the narratives for each of the six concepts.

**Modeling the Way**

In the Ubuntu philosophy, the core principle, *modeling the way*, comes through in such traits as honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, compassion, empathy, dignity, and respect for others (Malunga, 2009). Leaders are expected to uphold the values and morals that pay homage to their ancestry and that make them accountable to the larger society. Several of the narratives highlighted the case subject’s personal desire to model professional and personal behaviors for followers to emulate. Participants talked about how the subject modeled behaviors. The
narratives emphasized two themes: (1) The importance of passing down moral teachings and principles to family members and close associates, and (2) The demonstration of model behaviors as a core skill competency in the workplace.

Family members discussed how model behaviors were passed down through the generations. In addition, 10 participants related stories from the case subject’s childhood that later determined her leadership style. For example, her daughter, Birdie, stated that,

She led by example. I think very loving, even though my mom would be dead tired when she came home, she was always diligent about making sure that we had something to eat on the table, and that we ate as a family. And then any help we needed in terms of trying to do our studies or supporting… in our activities, she was always there. So, leading by example, loving, and a person who always encouraged you to be yourself, to talk to her and that she talked to you. Oh, I think, my grandmother’s the same way. She worked very hard, and she tried to do the best for her kids. But you know, my family started in humble beginnings. I remember my mom saying she never felt like they were poor, growing up. Because my grandmother would do whatever it took to make sure they had the best. And so, as my grandmother would say, I work hard for my money, I’m going to spend it. Save some, but I’m going to spend it too. So she kind of passed it on to us. But my grandmother had a good work ethic. She never missed work unless she was really, really sick which was very unusual. My grandmother was very healthy and she never drove. She rode around on the bus. She’d get on the bus and go all the way up to the County. Couldn’t be concerned. But, I mean, she’d get around even if she never drove. She taught me how to ride the bus down to Markets, get groceries when I was like 6, 7 years old. She made us all very independent. Capable of doing things at an early age.
And she basically made sure that we were responsible in our actions and that rubbed off, I think, on my mom as well (29-33; 53-67).

In another passage, her son, Don, talked about the subject’s core principles of hard work, preparedness, and academic prowess, all of which were embedded in her teachings and practices.

Uncompromising. Ma had, my mom was not a person [who] was interested in excuses. However, as one of her children, I supplied many. I supplied her with many excuses, but she was not interested really in excuses and, and if something needed to be done or needed to be accomplished, it simply needed to be accomplished. The methodology of how you did it was how you did it, but it needed to be done, that as Black people, we needed to understand nobody was going to give us a shot or a fair shot and if they did, you better deliver. You don’t have the luxury of not performing because the person [who] stuck their foot in the door to help get you in, his job may be on the line, his reputation may be on the line, the trust that other people have in that individual might be on the line. So it was a sense that in order to get the job done and complete what needed to be done, you needed to exhaust all the possibilities. Turn over every rock, and that you’re never finished. There’s always some work to be done. She was uncompromising in that. I used to go and see my mom and she’d be working on her bed which is where she would be, pen in hand, reading, writing with her glasses on, and I’d say what are you working on? She would say ‘I’m so tired; I’m doing this for a conference.’ I would ask... ‘Why are you doing all the work? You’ve got [a community organization] you’ve got all these women working with you, what are they working on?’ And so she said, ‘Yeah, I do, but they can’t do what I do.’ I said what do you mean by that? And she said I could task this to somebody else to do, but I know eventually, I would just tear it apart
in terms of critiquing it and wanting it to say particularly what I want it to say the way I wanted to say it. It’s easier for me to just do it myself. And I, when I started my home business, that’s what ended up happening with me (52-73).

The term *uncompromising* in the text referred to her deliberate desire to model appropriate behaviors and set clear expectations. Family members and colleagues stressed her desire for professionalism. The Ubuntu principle of “I am, because you are” confirms the importance of family traditions and teachings. These latter two came through clearly in the narratives cited.

The second theme in *modeling the way* was related by professional colleagues and community leaders. Participants described the case subject’s professional conduct in a variety of situations. David explained it well:

And the best example is when you asked me what are the two major attributes and that is that she lived what she expected from others, and they saw that behavior modeled in her. The Gandhi philosophy, be the change that you want to see in the world, but you can’t retreat from it. You have to master it, and then you have a legitimate voice (269-273).

Walter pictured the principle of modeling as a living mantra:

And it was just she wanted things to be perfect. So she was a perfectionist… I have a pin on right now that says ‘Better Your Best.’ That was her motto, and it actually has her name on it. I got this from an advisory board member for the Forward program. He works for Staples, and he was able to get these pins created for us. Her mantra or motto was always ‘Better Your Best.’ It had to deal with leadership, if it had to deal with being in a classroom, if it had to do with getting up in front of an audience or group, always study your craft. Always be the best at what you do; go beyond your best. ‘Better Your Best.’ And so, we’ve adopted this with Forward as one of our mantras. There are two
mantras with Forward. There’s the Mark of a Leader and Better Your Best. And so it’s always stuck with me as well as the students over the years (92-102).

The data analysis revealed her humanistic obligation to model behaviors, as noted previously. The mantra Better Your Best stressed the pursuit of exceptional professionalism, intellectual rigor, and personal commitments. This mantra was incorporated into both the subject’s personal life and her professional career, and positively affected students, colleagues, and community leaders.

One of the most poignant narratives about the subject’s modeling behavior came during a conversation with Bre. Bre talked about a time when she felt disappointed by the case subject. Deeply embedded in the narrative is a personal message about relationships between co-workers, and about profound respect for human success or failure. Bre’s narrative spotlights the subject’s willingness to reflect and remain humble during difficult periods:

She disappointed me only once. And that had to do with my position evaluation. [The subject] did not take the time to direct me on how it was done. In past situations, I would see her write things out because she had the right words. She had done them so many times. She did not help me, and I didn’t get the position, and I knew I was qualified for it. I should have gotten it, but I also realized that I didn’t have the correct words that they were looking for and how to really put it down on paper. And she got the notice and wrote me a note, ‘Sorry, it didn’t come through. Can we talk about it?’ And at the moment, no, we couldn’t. And then my evaluation came up, and we were talking. She just was asking me my feelings and all that. I told her that this was the one and only time I can ever say she let me down. I said she let me down on that position evaluation. She said ‘I don’t really have anything more to say right now.’ And I said, ‘that’s fine.’ And I
got up and I walked out. And we didn’t talk for about two days. And I thought well, any moment I’m going to be getting my walking papers. And I thought that’s OK. I would hate the relationship, being a friendship, to end that way, but I had to voice my opinion. Later that week, she called me in. She said ‘Bre, do you have a minute?’ I said sure. She said ‘Close the door’, and I thought well, here we go. She said I thought about what you said about me letting you down. And I just looked at her and I said, yes. And she said you’re right. And that was something about her. If she was wrong, she would admit to it. And she apologized, and she said is there anything I can do? Well, once you’re denied, you’re denied. And I said no, not really. She said is this going to affect our friendship and our working relationship? I said no, not now. It’s behind us. And it was. And so we carried on from that moment. So, she wasn’t infallible. But when she made a mistake, she would own up to it. And if she could right it, she would (398-423).

Jen was asked to compare the case subject’s leadership style to that of other leaders. She noted that,

And while it wasn’t that different from everybody else’s, I mean you could name other leaders. But talk about modeling the way, the case subject modeled the way. She encouraged the heart. She did all of those things, but she did it in her style because she knew how (249-251).

*Modeling the way* is not unique to the Ubuntu philosophy. Under the transformational leadership model, a charismatic or idealized influencer shares similar characteristics to those found in role modeling. In both Ubuntu and transformational leadership, idealized influencers must demonstrate a degree of morality, trust, and personal accountability. In addition, certain behaviors, decisions, and organizational outcomes can be resolved or interpreted through
leaders’ personal discipline or specific actions. While transformational leadership puts emphasis on leadership that produces organizational outcomes, the Ubuntu philosophy stresses a holistic approach to leadership development. Ubuntu espouses a humanness connection that goes beyond employment output or individual advancement. Don shared one of the case subject’s favorite quotes about this: “There are two ways to shed light, to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it” (367). In a follow-up question, Don was asked to explain just how the case subject was the mirror or the candle to the many lives she touched. He said that,

Some may say she was the candle, but if you look at the examples of the students that she invested time in and effort into pulling what was in them already out, maybe she was just the mirror and what was there was inherently there all the way. And that’s what I believe (370-373).

Communal Enterprise and Shared Vision

The second core principle, communal enterprise and shared vision, champions the idea that the outcomes for groups are more important than those for individuals. Intrinsic to the Ubuntu philosophy is the idea that leaders cannot be effective without others’ participation (Nabudere, 2008). This core concept stresses the idea that leaders and followers are partners or co-laborers in the change process in an inclusive decision-making process which encourages diverse perspectives and non-monolithic viewpoints. The case subject’s display of such skills as a calm temperament, sharp listening skills, and a democratic leadership style assisted her in fostering working environments in which diverse ideas and outcomes were welcomed. David noted that,

She was very gracious in allowing you to have your opinion. And could let you know that you were wrong without knocking you down. This is very important. It’s like Mr.
Vonn Barron in my fifth-grade math class. I was staring out the window and watching the clock. And he walked up to me and said, ‘Time will pass David, but will you?’ I’ll never, ever forget that. He didn’t humiliate me. I’m going to kick you out of here. You can’t come back to my class, all of the nasty things that he could have done. He just saw a dilemma and very skillfully and artfully got my attention in a way that I will never forget. That was the [subject]. She’d let you do whatever you’re doing, and then she would provide a perspective that would register. She wouldn’t beat you up. She wouldn’t say, ‘Stop doing that’. She would say, ‘What’s going on?’ And that was [her] (331-344).

In another passage, Don detailed how she engaged with others via active listening:

She would listen. She would, she was a good listener. She wanted to know all the variables, get all the information. She was very, very set on getting all of the information in order to make a decision. And so she would let a person explain, explain yourself, explain the situation, tell me what you were thinking, or what your approach was so that she could understand. At the end of the day, she was trying to get you to understand why the decision process may not have been the best process at the time. Not that you were completely wrong, but given the circumstances surrounding it, and when you chose to do it, and why [your decision] may not have been the appropriate timing for it (241-251).

Birdie added that,

I’m talking about in professional situations as well as personal situations. And figuring out career options, all that. She was really good at seeing the big picture and having you look at things in a different way. Giving you something else to consider when you tried to make decisions. She was a very patient person with other people. In a professional
setting, she was very patient. She was a good listener, for sure. She encouraged your participation in a conversation. The conversation was never one-sided (239-243).

The narratives revealed how the case subject fostered environments in which mutual respect, tolerance, and honest dialogue were expected. The case subject’s participatory nature promoted cross-cultural differences that went beyond hierarchical barriers.

Getting around hierarchical barriers in majority communities can be difficult. The participants suggested that the subject’s effective communication skills and calm temperament helped her relate to those in diverse communities. Her temperament surfaced repeatedly when participants described her ability to create inclusive environments. The word temperament is defined as a person’s character, disposition, or personality. Many participants noted that her calm leadership approach proved to be a vital asset, allowing her to maneuver through politically charged environments. As David put it:

She was very comfortable with who she was at the time. She had a very open style of communicating that had some amount of formality in it, but a good deal of informality in it as well. When you came into how she handled conflict, she didn’t battle with people.

She worked with them to get where she wanted to go (21-24).

The case subject clearly understood the importance of creating a communal environment in order to produce results.

In another narrative, Rick termed the subject’s calm temperament as ‘revolutionary.’ Rick’s description of her temperament shifted the discourse from a shared vision to a set of tactical skills needed by Black leaders to change majority systems. Rick put it this way:
That’s her leadership style. Her leadership style was revolutionary because she was not afraid to challenge the system. She was smart enough to know that the higher I go, the more I’ve got to play the game and temper what I’m about (614-616).

Rick also added that,

She was accepted. See, I never have been accepted into the university club. The university of ‘White Club.’ I can have maybe an affiliation every now and then, but I was never accepted, never. No one had ever pulled me into that club. She probably got as close as you can get with consciousness. And she was smart enough to know how to deal with it. She was smart enough to make the right allies (526-531).

The case subject’s acceptance of a diverse constituency combined with her calm presence expanded the communal shared vision that included the advancement of minorities across the university community. Communal enterprise emphasizes among other things, the principles of mutuality, accommodation, and respect for differences. Leaders exhibit behaviors which acknowledge common traits they share with others. Participant narratives depicted a leader who demonstrated mutual respect by listening and collaborating with others. Both core competencies were useful in building extended networks and assimilating into the dominant culture. Her skills assisted in effecting change for other minority leaders.

**Change and Transformation**

Ubuntu and transformational leadership share values, as mentioned in Chapter II. Transformational leadership is defined as a relational process in which leaders motivate followers toward a collective purpose and vision to achieve changes (Burns, 1978). Similar to transformational leadership, Ubuntu emphasizes leaders’ obligations to understand followers’ personal and professional motivation and how the manager/subordinate relationship impact
organizational change. However, the change and transformation in Ubuntu are considered universal core competencies instinctively linked to the way leaders and followers interact and share in experiences, in and out of professional organizations.

Participant narratives and archival documents revealed the case subject’s global perspective on transformation. The display of data reinforced several themes that captured the case subject’s commitment to improving the social and economic advancement of African Americans. The case subject sought to combat social inequities by envisioning and creating international organizations that transformed the lives of many people. Narratives connected the subject’s strategies and the professional resources and position she used to combat social inequities. For instance, David explained how she used her professional and positional power to change the African American community:

She had a very focused passion for the experience of students of color, and African Americans in particular. Much of her work satisfied all that was required of a career professional, but she also put a special touch on the African American students she touched. So, she was doing the big job, but within that, she had defined a particular passion where she provided support services that were career-related for students of color. And wanted me to know so that I understood how she spent her time. She and I talked about [a student organization], and how she helped create the program to assist Black students to get a better sense of who they were, and what the work world would look like. So she integrated that into her office and into her work (26-37).

This passage is significant because it showed clearly a leader who understood her personal passions and professional responsibilities to aid other minorities.
The case subject’s global view of change leadership was not confined to her duties within the university. Archival data revealed that the case subject created and organized two international conventions designed to provide economic opportunities to African American leaders in Africa and Caribbean regions. In addition, she planned several trips to Africa, designed to help African American leaders learn more about their ancestry and additional economic opportunities. David’s narrative made clear the case subject’s personal desire to understand her own ancestry and assist in connecting others to the international community. David noted that:

She traveled a lot and she incorporated a lot of different cultural perspectives into the work she did. She’d made trips to Africa. Often, she went to South America to understand the African experience. She seemed to be on a journey. I would even say that she was driven not to lose that aspect of her identity and the identity of other students of color (212-215).

In another interview, I asked Bre why the case subject felt an insatiable desire to help African Americans. Bre explained it this way:

She was always a very proud lady. She wanted others to be proud of themselves. She wanted Black people to be able to stand up with their heads up, not looking down, and to be something. She wanted them to be willing to work hard, and to achieve what they wanted to achieve. She wanted to give them that ambition and understand that they are someone. If there’s anything she could do to help them attain it, I mean she was there, pushing all the way.

These passages spoke to her global understanding of leadership, and the impact it can have on organizational change. The case subject’s focused leadership approach seemed to
surpass a sense of pride in and commitment to the university, or the others’ professional development. Her personal commitment to change and collective transformation relied on having a global perspective, allowing her to seek a greater understanding of international business relations and her African heritage. I conclude this section with a quote from her son, Don:

Mom and I used to recite quotes all the time. One of her favorite quotes was--‘Man’s knowledge strives to new horizons to never return to the same dimensions or Man’s knowledge once expressed to new horizons can never return to the same dimension’. I know I’m messing that quote up, but basically the whole idea behind it, is that once the knowledge has been discovered, you can’t go back to being ignorant. You have a duty now to carry that forward. And she was very much about that. She would say… ‘Now that you have the knowledge, you’ve got to give back. You’ve got to tell someone else who doesn’t understand. You don’t have to necessarily expose 10s of 100s of 1000s of people, it could be just one person. But it’s your duty to do so’ (382-388).

The case subject’s desire to bring about change demonstrated her commitment to global leadership as well as to personal, social, mental, and spiritual advancement of others that exceeds transactional or managerial leadership.

**Interconnectedness, Interdependency, and Empowerment**

The idea of human interconnectedness and interdependency is central to the Ubuntu philosophy. This core concept is steeped in our primal understanding of the connections among human behaviors, power and influence, and the global impact of leaders. Thirty-four narratives pointed to the importance of building networks and relationships. The following narratives brought out the subject’s humanistic leadership style.
Cathy, for example, noted that,

Well, you know, she was a friend, too, besides just being a leader to me. You know, because most of the people who have been my bosses have not been friends of mine, either. I counted myself as a friend. She was a friend to me. Because over the years, I can think about it, I’ve done some things for her too, as she did for me. What makes her different? Wow. She’s just, like I said, one extraordinary person. I think one of the things that made her different is that I think there was a genuine need for her to see other people succeed. I mean, she genuinely reveled in it. And she was so happy, and she said such positive things about people. You know, she was like complimenting them. I mean, and she’d go over the top with what she’d do for you. When I retired, the whole day was devoted to me. I had flowers. She gave me clothes. She had people come. That’s what she does for you. I mean, just almost over the top, she would just overwhelm you with her love for you. I have never known anybody like that. She had a vested interest in you. She wanted to see [you] succeed. And that was with everyone from the person who swept the floor. She was good to them and talked to them. And she was the person at the top of the heap. She was an extraordinary person (465-484).

As Walter put it:

It was just her presence, in terms of just being able to connect with her. Like I said, she was an individual who could communicate with you on any level and have that nurturing type of relationship with you. It was the relationships that people talked about from individuals knowing her on a personal, business, and professional standpoint. Because there were different individuals who talked about how they got introduced to her, or how they connected to her, and how they continued to stay connected to her over the years
Netty added that,

I still am amazed by how she found time to have these relationships with everyone. She knew everyone’s name. She knew everyone’s major, all the students. She knew the personal circumstances that were going on in each one’s lives. One of the things I thought was really powerful was that she always sought to connect you with other people. If she couldn’t help you at that very moment, she would say -- Netty, I want you to get in touch with Kammy, and I want you and Kammy to meet because you and Kammy have something in common. She still would sit down with you and listen and help you through whatever. Whether it was grieving, academic or financial, she’d work you through it. She also understood networks and support systems, and how they can catapult you to the next level. She would always say things like—‘You never know who you’re going to run into. You never know who you’re going to meet, and you never know how you’re going to need this person one day’ (139-155).

David added:

But she did something that others didn’t do, and that was to bring this experience in a more personal way than others would (96).

Don summed it up:

I don’t necessarily know that it’s different. I think certainly, we all have different emotional responses to different people. If, for example, I say the name Martin Luther King, that evokes a different emotional response than say a loved one, or a family member who has passed on. Or someone like Tupac versus someone like Heath Ledger. I mean the emotional response depends on the circumstance and the relationship that an
individual has or connection that they feel with that particular person. What I can say is that because she cared enough about her fellow human beings, even if it was for a short period of time, a person could ascertain that this is someone who actually cares. People held on to that feeling. That was the mystique of her. So it was not necessarily who she was, but more so what people took from the interaction, whether it was 10 years or 10 minutes. And for some people, that makes all the difference in the world. That someone actually cared enough to listen (550-561).

In attempts to quantify this humanistic perspective, participants conveyed an elusive set of principles, behaviors, and emotional connections which cannot be measured with quantitative measuring tools. Willie observed that these connections were a “personal calling or mission.” The term calling brought to mind the case subject’s spiritual power and influence.

Under the spiritual realm, participants frequently mentioned mystical characteristics or traits commonly associated with deep connections to others and visions for a better world. The spirituality framework was not linked to any specific religious doctrine, teachings, or beliefs, but to her humanistic leadership which placed value on the sanctity of life. Jen viewed the case subject’s spiritual nature as a faith walk:

Her walk of faith was a walk where she took the responsibility for providing people with something they didn’t even know they needed, and that was a family (314-316).

Bre added that,

She just, couldn’t be as great a person as she was and not be spiritual. Because I mean, it just can’t happen. It wasn’t a fluke that she turned out the way she did. God had reasons for her, and she knew it, and she made Him happy. Definitely (494-496).
Spiritual leadership is often viewed as a central component of African American leadership. Participants’ narratives displayed clearly the powerful nature of her spirituality. While not commonly covered in the traditional leadership models outlined in Chapter II, the spirituality tenet in Ubuntu is connected to personal ethics, ideal behaviors, and a humanistic leadership style.

The case subject’s level of intimacy (or humanistic perception) was manifested in her nickname, ‘Ma.’ Participants said that the subject’s nurturing style appeared to be spiritual in nature. David, for example, stated that,

People called her “Ma.” And I was always intrigued by that. But it was that informal side of her management that brought people in even closer to her where it was not the director, but it was more “Ma.” Some people found that offensive. Others of us found it to be frankly more. Charming at first, and then I discovered it’s more than charming; it’s pretty powerful in terms of embedding yourself in relationships with others. She seemed to have that best with students of color because that was a niche she had carved out and poured her heart and soul into. It created a different kind of bond and relationship. With her staff, they’d walk through fire for her. What I didn’t know was how other professionals or what other professionals knew of that side of her management. I got to see it because I was her manager, her boss. And oftentimes, I wondered who was the boss. And that didn’t trouble me. Because she had this power that others, quite frankly, didn’t have. I was attracted to that, or I never would have offered her a step up on three different occasions. I never really quantified that in a way that I fully understood but when I saw it, I knew the power of it. And you have to ask yourself the question—“Ma,” where does that fit within the nomenclature, within the management of a place like this?
I simply made my peace with it by saying everybody has their own way. Everybody has their own gifts. This was indeed her gift. And it even had a language (112-129).

This narrative displays how David grappled with her informal leadership style. Coming from a hierarchical profession such as academia, David appears mystified by the co-existence of her formal and informal relationships. He finally reconciled the two paradigms by acknowledging her special talent or gift.

In an effort to identify the case subject’s distinctive leadership characteristics, each participant was asked to describe her leadership style in detail. The following narratives give a picture of a leader who relied on personal connections and others’ skills. Specifically mentioned were traits, such as collective visioning and networking, providing professional opportunities for others, and a global view of effective leadership.

**Collectivism and Solidarity**

The collectivism and solidarity philosophy stresses the ideas of interconnectedness and interdependency and the community over individual interests. This principle represents a shift in focus from individual leadership to a collectivist view that fosters unity and a common purpose in achieving organizational goals. Leaders are responsible for building sustainable economic and social communities.

Participants’ narratives and the archival data illustrated how the case subject created several programs, organizations, and leadership initiatives aimed to transform individuals and institutions. The data results underscored several themes about her personal and professional plans to alter African Americans economic and social environments.

One of the programs participants mentioned in their narratives was her formation of a racial awareness program for students. The case subject crafted the program in order to give
students forums in which to discuss, understand, and appreciate racial differences. Willie, a student at the time, detailed how the program started:

And so she saw what had happened with me, and what was happening with other students, and the racial tension that was jumping off. And so she decided that it was important for students to come together and to have a forum by which they can dialogue and begin to have an understanding or gain an understanding and appreciation for differences and so forth and so on. And out of that was formed the racial program… which was awesome, and that’s a story in and of itself. Because it was a program that went on to receive national recognition. NBC News did a special and came to the campus, filmed us. We would take students on retreats. It was completely phenomenal what happened (80-86).

Other programs she developed included an African American student career development program, an educational summer program for African American boys, a Career Development program for women, and an international economic development program for Black business leaders. The narratives portrayed this leader’s ability to perceive a social inequity, create a vision, and implement programs and organizations to bring about changes. Narratives linked the case subject’s strong feelings of social and personal responsibility to her desire to help others. They outlined the strategies she applied, and how she leveraged her professional resources to influence others to share in her vision to change the community. Jen stated that, “It was about what she could do to create a better environment for other folk who looked like her, be it Black women or Black men. It was about creating that space, if you will, where Black folk could deal with their issues. And feel safe in doing so” (111-117).

In another passage, Jen provided a picture of a visionary leader who created opportunities that
advanced other people. Jen also noted that:

She would say--*if the sisters can do it, you can do this.* She was always showing young black women the possibilities in life. Yeah. It wasn’t all about career development for those who had careers. It was about working with the girls who didn’t have careers, who had little hope, who had few role models. That is my point. She was about women having an opportunity. Because she was about women having an opportunity, she was as highly regarded and respected in other circles of women as well as among Black women. Her focus was not limited. It was more about women’s issues than it was about being Black women, even though Black women were the priority (269-273; 597-601).

The core concept also linked about to the case subject’s global perspective of leadership. She understood her role as a leader to impact and transforms the lives of others. As Jen put it, “That’s what made her leadership so special; it was never about her” (114).

**Continuous Integrated Development**

As noted previously, from the Ubuntu perspective, leaders are obligated to expand human capacity and implement initiatives that will move the organization and its people toward economic, social, and personal advancement. The principle incorporates capacity building, self-empowerment, self-affirmation, and collective achievements. The core concept, continuous integrated development, covered in Chapter II, was one of the case subject’s leading traits in this area. In the first narrative, Jen describes the subject as a strategic leader who is tactical and understands the importance of continuous development. Jen put it this way:

That was the thing. She just knew what to do. You know, and everybody you talk with is going to make you think she walked on water. She did not walk on water, she had just studied the waves, and she knew where the rocks were. OK? But she didn’t walk on
water. She had invested the time in her own personal development to know where you can walk on the water, where the rocks were, and if you should wait until the tide goes out. You don’t jump in when the tide is coming in because it’ll pull you back out. OK? I use that as the analogy, but that’s what she was good at. Again, she was a strategist.

She was able to figure the stuff out before she stepped out there in it (402-408).

The case subject’s personal commitment to professional development set a critical standard for others to emulate. The case subject’s hard work ethic and personal accountability encouraged others to work harder. Netty said that,

She never let up. She would just work on your professionalism. Yeah, that’s a department, just learning, teaching you how to be professional and relational. She was dead set on transforming black women in that department. Wherever you were. And all of us needed different things and she knew what you needed. Like I needed that grooming, OK? I’m thinking of another student she worked with, Charlie. Charlie came in groomed. So, now she needed to teach Charlie who is a business major, how to fight for that raise that she wanted in her department. You know, in her job. She didn’t have to work on that with me. So whatever was needed, or you needed, she would teach you how to do that (226-236).

This passage pointed to the case subject’s strong dedication to her staff’s continuous development. The narratives revealed the case subject’s display of several Ubuntu principles, such as modeling the way, change and transformation, and interconnections. She demonstrated a clear ability to understand others, establish standards, accept differences, and empower others. A close listener, she displayed a talent for building in-depth relationships which required intimate knowledge of the individuals involved. This fundamental concept of ‘knowing’ is at the center
of the Ubuntu philosophy. Bre alluded to the case subject’s usage of these concepts in the final passage:

Like I said, she is there for you to take from her whatever you want. She was giving. She was a loving and compassionate person. She had a wealth of knowledge. She enjoyed making you better or making you want to better yourself. I mean, you never felt like you were nothing. She made you want to be even better than you were (251-255).

**Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, participant interviews, questionnaire forms, and archival data revealed specific core competencies, behaviors, and the preferred leadership displayed by a single case subject. The analyses of the five leadership theories brought out similar core skills and attributes associated with the case subject, but appeared deficient in capturing her intricate style. Narratives alluded to leadership traits and management techniques linked to Ubuntu’s humanistic approach. The next chapter will discuss the findings, and implications, and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

A rooster may belong to one household

but when it crows, it crows for the whole village.

(African Proverb)

The discussion began in Chapter I which outlined the social constructs of leadership. General principles and common nomenclature of leadership were outlined to highlight the absence of a specific theoretical model that speaks to the cultural, social, and spiritual nature observed in some African American leaders. A review of the literature in Chapter II underscored the underrepresentation and, oftentimes, underutilization of African American leaders in higher education. In addition, the chapter detailed the African traditions, principles, and ancestral teachings in Ubuntu. The methodological design was presented in Chapter III. The use of Yin’s (1984) single-case design facilitated central narratives which described the characteristics displayed by an African American leader at a Midwestern research university. Data results were displayed and analyzed in Chapter IV. Finally, this chapter will summarize the research findings, explore the implications of this study, and offer recommendations for future research.

The following questions guided my inquiry into this new way of conceptualizing African American leadership:

1. In what ways do current leadership theories inhibit or expand our understanding of the designated case subject?

2. Using Ubuntu as the theoretical lens, what specific traits or tenets of Ubuntu adequately capture the leadership style and behaviors of the designated case subject?
Discussion of Findings

Under the five leadership approaches (trait, behavior, power and influence, situational, and transformational leadership), I found results that detailed a rich narrative of the case subject’s core leadership competencies, behaviors, and preferred management styles. Concerning the first question, the study results confirmed that the case subject utilized characteristics, behaviors, and management tools commonly associated with each leadership model, including the Great Man theory, autocratic and democratic management techniques, and situational leadership tenets. Identified traits, such as authoritative, strategic, intelligent, risk-taker, flexible, assertive, revolutionary, hard worker, visionary, and consensus builder revealed the case subject as a charismatic leader who leveraged her political influence to motivated individuals around her and change organizational structures.

Under the behavioral leadership approach of leadership, the findings indicated the subject’s use of both autocratic and democratic management approaches to leading. Her democratic or participatory approach was noted to be a preferred management style. Participant narratives pointed to the case subject’s keen skills in creating inclusive and collaborative working environments. Core competencies, such as active listening, a calm temperament, and a direct commutation style helped the case subject build personal and professional relationships in and outside the organization. Participant narratives detailed the case subject’s use of three sources of power (positional, personal, and referent). Her ability to develop personal relationships with colleagues, build networking systems that connected people and resources, and display interest in others’ development, garnered deep levels of respect and reverence for her throughout the community.
Finally, the data results revealed a transformative leader who was steadfast in her desire to create local, regional, and international programs to advance social, economic, and political conditions for people of color. Narratives alluded to the case subject’s exceptional ability to innovate, empower, and develop organizational structures to alter the lives of people and institutions. Willie put it this way:

She truly believed in collaboration. It was a collaborative, transformative, and visionary leadership. It’s almost like she took all the various leadership paradigms and was a student of all of them, and would use them accordingly to fulfill whatever objective she might need to fulfill (97-99).

Narratives from the first research question provided a basic framework for leaders and leadership. The five approaches captured a linear and hierarchical paradigm into the different typologies of educational leadership. Starting with the study of specific traits and behaviors, intrinsic motivation and power dynamics, and organizational management tools, the current leadership models enhanced my knowledge about the core competencies of both leaders and followers by merging the varying aspects of transactional and relational leadership. The five leadership approaches are structured from a leader-centered perspective. While they are essential, I found the models to be limited in understanding the complex nature of the designated case subject. The leader-centered models focus heavily on specific traits or behaviors while failing to capture the interconnectedness and humanistic attributes displayed by leaders. The introduction of Ubuntu as a theoretical framework shifts the discourse from a leader-centered perspective to one that accounts for the emotional, social, and community needs of both leaders and followers.
To address the second question, the principles and philosophy of Ubuntu more fully explained the case subject’s leadership style. A full display of the data uncovered her core competencies and characteristics, all of which matched those of a humanistic leader. Every narrative, questionnaire, and individual archival document revealed her humanistic or people-centered philosophy, characteristic of Ubuntu. The narratives highlighted the case subject’s principle belief in people and relationships over mere possessions. These attributes embodied the subject’s belief in collective ownership, personal responsibility, and participatory decision-making.

Ubuntu core competencies displayed by the case subject included modeling behaviors, continuous personal development, collectivist ideology, and a reliance on interpersonal connections and communal shared visions. The results revealed a leader who understood the legacy of learned behaviors and core values, and the importance of imparting these values to others. Colleagues described her modeling of behaviors as a gold standard for professionalism, preparedness, and success. Participants detailed the case subject’s insatiable desire to see others perform at their highest professional levels. The Ubuntu translation, *I am because you are, and you are because I am* lies at the core of modeling the way.

Narrative results portrayed the subject as a conscientious leader who strategically coupled her professional skills and knowledge with her passion for the economic, social, and educational advancement of people of color. More evident was her genuinely personal desire to uphold an articulated mantra, ‘*Better your best.*’ Whether for students, employees, or community leaders, this mantra expressed the case subject’s perpetual desire to connect with the souls of others. These skills and personal characteristics corresponded with Ubuntu’s core concepts of communal
enterprise and shared vision; change and transformation; interconnectedness, interdependency, and empowerment; collectivism and solidarity, and continuous integrated development.

Specific skills, such as the valuing of humanity, networking, and possessing a maternal presence, permeated the data. Her people-centered leadership style fueled interdependent relationships and fostered trust and a sense of empowerment, transforming the entire community. Her global perspective of leadership resonated with the principles outlined in Ubuntu. I asked the case subject’s son, Don, to describe what made her leadership different from other leaders he had encountered. He stated that:

I don’t necessarily know that it’s different. I think certainly we all have different emotional responses to different people. If, for example, I say the name Martin Luther King, that evokes a different emotional response than say, a loved one or a family member [who] passed on. Or someone like Tupac versus someone like Heath Ledger. I mean the emotional response depends on the circumstance, and the relationship that an individual has, or the connection that they feel with that particular person. What I can say is that because she cared enough about her fellow human beings, even if it was for a short period of time, a person could ascertain from her that she was someone who actually cared. I think that is the feeling people held on to. And that’s the mystique of [the case subject]. So not necessarily who she was, it’s what people took from the interaction, whether it was for 10 years or 10 minutes. And for some people, that’s all the difference in the world (550-561).

**Implications for Higher Education**

In Chapter I, I presented a conceptual framework that depicted my personal journey exploring how African American leaders navigate the political, cultural, and social environments
of higher education (see Figure 1). As stated in Chapter I, I believe that institutional culture is constructed from a majority perspective. The images in Figure 1 display a perceived hierarchical paradigm behind the struggles, the legacy, and current leadership opportunities for African Americans in higher education. I conceptually framed these images to depict the legacy of African American leader, and the importance of creating environments that support, value, and train future Black leaders.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

As a result of the study findings, and gaining a stronger understanding of Ubuntu, I now envision a global and circular perspective of leadership (see Figure 3). The Ubuntu conceptual framework represents a circular and inclusive leadership model. I believe the new concept too expresses the idea that--The knowledge of humanity lies in the hands of the collective leadership.
Figure 3: Ubuntu Conceptual Framework

The diagram represents a continuum of leadership in which leaders’ knowledge and skills rely on the spiritual nature of the collective whole. This humanistic perspective is centered around personal and global accountability and responsibility, truth, non-judgmental respect, open, candid dialogues, in-depth personal and communal relationships, and a collective sense that individuals’ stability and success depend on the collective community. It is a model of leadership that embraces cultural differences, and stresses the idea that people are responsible for one another. Unlike the hierarchical diagram of Figure 1, which portrays a linear and dichotomous leadership between African American leaders and the academy, Figure 3 shows an
inclusive circular replica which stresses a collectivist leadership view. The two conceptual diagrams reflect my thinking in the areas of leadership and diversity.

**Leadership**

The institution of higher education is a global which is tasked with developing, training, and producing culturally competent future leaders. The humanistic principles of Ubuntu foster our collective responsibility to humanity and global leadership. Amey (2006) stated that current gender, race, and ethnicity leadership studies lack culturally sensitive frameworks that go beyond the dominant models of leadership (p. 57). This research can contribute authentic insights into the educational values needed in higher education, such as collective shared visions, continuous integrated development, and human interconnectedness. Ubuntu can be used to enrich these principles in universities. As economic, social, and global landscapes change, educational leaders need to embrace a humanistic leadership style in order to maximize financial, human, and political resources, and develop the next generation of leaders.

**Diversity and Inclusion**

Another implication for this kind of research is in the area of Diversity and Inclusion literature. Projected demographics, emerging economics, and increasingly turbulent political and legal challenges have converged, making diversity and inclusion two critical issues that will face higher education (Duberstadt, 2000). Despite this sense of urgency, a close examination of the current underrepresentation of African American faculty and staff draws attention to Iverson’s (2007) policy analysis that revealed how current diversity and inclusion action plans might stifle meaningful dialogue about effective Black leadership in these institutions.

Iverson’s (2007) line-by-line policy analysis of 21 diversity action plans from 20 U.S. land-grant universities brought out the camouflaged micro-aggressions in current diversity and
inclusion policies directed towards people of color. The study highlighted the fact that various
diversity plans add to the discursive dialogue that portray people of color as victims,
commodities, and change agents. This dialogue situates people of color as institutional outsiders
or ‘at risk’ prior to their entrance into and participation in universities (p. 593).

In summary, Iverson’s policy analysis exposed the embeddedness of institutional racism
in higher education. In response to the findings, Iverson challenged university leaders to rethink
their individual paradigms, engage in policy-making processes, and become more aware of the
discursive effects of their efforts to achieve equity (p. 593).

The discourse of Ubuntu could be introduced to shift the discussion from ‘at-risk’ to an
acknowledgement of African American leaders’ inherent abilities and skills. Ubuntu teachings
might assist in expanding the ideology of social and human capital by creating environments that
support multiple and shared experiences. This leadership approach acknowledges the intellectual
attributes of every human, serving as a valuable counter-narrative to the normal discourse of
White male leadership paradigms.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the increasing amount of research focused on Ubuntu, very few have examined
the conceptual principles of Ubuntu outside Africa. Fewer studies still have focused on African
American leaders specifically. The scant and indigenous nature of Ubuntu and the use of a
single case subject are two primary limitations in this study. Notwithstanding this study’s in-
depth look at a case subject, the results should not be generalized to African American
leadership, but rather should spur the proliferation of investigation into African American
leadership and indigenous teachings. Future studies should include an expanded subject pool.
Additional research may prompt deeper levels of engagement with meaningful dialogues about
how to build successful communities. It can give minority groups a voice, opportunities to listen, and space to strategically articulate the ways to frame and express themselves in majority institutions. I hope my grassroots study will help to ignite a new dawn in American leadership theory.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Despite the increasing number of research studies, Ubuntu has not been fully examined outside of Africa. Moreover, fewer studies yet have analyzed or compared Ubuntu through postmodernist or constructivist theoretical contexts. For the purpose of this study, the examination of the five basic leadership approaches helped to narrow the social construct of leadership into its basic principles and provided an organizational framework to analyze the data. While basic, future research on how the Ubuntu philosophy shares, contrasts, or adds value to more advanced or dynamic theories such as relational (Uhl-Bien, 2006), authentic (Gardner, Avolio & Walumbwa, 2005), collaborative (Huxham, 2005), and valued-centered (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999) leadership theories must be explored. The exploration of these various models not only expands our way of thinking about leadership through a Eurocentric perspective; they can also give greater credence to Ubuntu as a legitimate philosophy. For example, relational theory and Ubuntu both infuse the principles of mutuality, interconnectedness, and embedded leadership within environments and organizations (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Rooted in the two paradigms are the principles of humanness and the social construction of power. The two models advance our understanding of the meaning making process of leadership, and the interdependence of relational connections and lived experiences.

Other examples include the examination of authentic and collaborative leadership theories and their connection to Ubuntu’s principles of collectivism and solidarity, communal
enterprise and shared vision, continuous integrated development, and modeling the way. The common threads throughout these models advance diversity, a personal and collective shared responsibility, and a deep appreciation for inherent value of every individual.

As stated before, the study of indigenous systems of knowledge in South Africa is blossoming and opening dialogues into new applications for educational leadership. I recommend future studies examine Ubuntu in its indigenous environment and in the context of post-modern and constructivist leadership theories.

**Final Thoughts**

On a cold wintery night, the case subject passed from this earth, leaving her personal imprint on the many lives she encountered, the university she served, and the community she embraced. When I reflect on the impact of the case subject’s leadership style, I don’t think about a specific theoretical model, but rather a philosophy of both leading and living. The essence of Ubuntu means, “I am because you are, and you are because I am” (Mapadimeng, 2007, p. 258). The philosophy connects both the living and leading principles in such a way that specific behaviors, traits, and leadership styles were integrated as part of the ‘humanity’ of this leader. As stated in her own words: “In sustaining it, it has sustained me. And so, as I have given, so I have received” (Case subject).
References


Appendix A

Consent Form

Title of Study: African American Leadership in Urban Institutions of Higher Education: A case narrative of the social, cultural, and institutional impact of an individual leader at a historically White institution.

Introduction:

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Please read this paper carefully and ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

Who is doing this research study?

The person in charge of this research study is Robin Martin of the University of Cincinnati (UC), Department of Educational Leadership (Urban Education Leadership). She is being guided in this research by Dr. James Koschoreck.

What is the purpose of this research study?

The purpose of this research study is to explore the internal and external impact of individual leadership within minority communities; how individual leadership might impact the social and institutional culture, and how various leadership models address the cultural, social, and political leadership styles of African American leaders in higher education.

Who will be in this research study?

Approximately 6 to 30 people will take part in this study. Selected participants will include, but are not limited to tenured faculty members, university staff, and various community leaders who served directly under, or with the designated case subject at the university. In addition, participants who represent the setting, the individual, and the designated timeframe in which the
designated case subject served at the university in a leadership position will be selected.

What will you be asked to do in this research study, and how long will it take?

You will be asked to participate in a ninety-minute audio taped interview, complete a participant profile form, and provide any relevant artifacts or memorabilia pertaining to the designated case-subject. In order to participate in this study, participants must be willing to be audio taped during the interviews. The research will take place wherever and whenever it is most convenient and most comfortable for you.

Are there any risks to being in this research study?

Given the nature of this study, there is little, to no risk associated with this study. The risk is expected to be no more than you would expect in your daily life. In the event you become uncomfortable answering questions, you can refuse to answer or decline further participation.

Are there any benefits from being in this research study?

There are no direct benefits to participants who take part in this study.

What will you get because of being in this research study?

You will not be paid to participate in this study.

Do you have choices about taking part in this research study?

If you do not want to take part in this research study, you may simply decline to participate. This is a voluntary study.

How will your research information be kept confidential?
Information about you will be kept private by not including your name or identifying information in typed transcripts. Audiotapes will be converted into a password-protected MP3 file and will be saved on my personal computer.

Your information and consent forms will be kept locked for three years in a file cabinet in my office at work. Transcribed interview records will be kept for two years as recommended by University of Cincinnati. Hard copies of documents will be shredded. Digital documents will be deleted.

Agents of the University of Cincinnati may inspect study records for audit or quality assurance purposes.

**What are your legal rights in this research study?**

Nothing in this consent form waives any legal rights you may have. This consent form also does not release the investigator, the institution, or its agents from liability for negligence.

**What if you have questions about this research study?**

If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, you should contact Robin Martin at (513) 377-5522. Or you may call James Koschoreck, the faculty advisor, at (513) 556-6622.

The UC Institutional Review Board reviews all research projects that involve human participants to be sure the rights and welfare of participants are protected.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or complaints about the study, you may contact the UC IRB at (513) 558-5259. Or you may call the UC Research Compliance Hotline at (800) 889-1547, or write to the IRB, 300 University Hall, ML 0567, 51 Goodman Drive,
Cincinnati, OH 45221-0567, or email the IRB office at irb@ucmail.uc.edu.

**Do you HAVE to take part in this research study?**

No one has to be in this research study. Refusing to take part will NOT cause any penalty or loss of benefits that you would otherwise have. You may start and then change your mind and stop at any time. To stop being in the study, you should tell Robin Martin at (513) 377-5522

**Agreement:**

I have read this information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I give my consent to participate in this research study. I will receive a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep.

Participant Name (please print) ____________________________________________

Participant Signature ______________________________________ Date _________

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent ________________________ Date _________
Appendix B

Research Questions

I. Background and Demographics
I would like to begin the interview by asking you some general questions about yourself and your relationship with the designated case-subject (Investigator will use designated case-subject name).

a. Describe your employment or working role at the university. Please state your length of employment and your recruitment or entrance into the university.
b. Have you ever been promoted or served in a leadership capacity within the university? Please specify. Please describe your professional advancement within the university.
c. Describe your relationship with the case-subject. Describe your first encounter and the nature of the meeting.
d. What leadership role did case-subject play in your professional development? Give specific examples.
e. Can you describe other instances in which the case-subject was instrumental in the professional development of other minority leaders at the university?
f. Name any internal or external leadership roles held by the case-subject?

II. African American Leadership

The body of literature on educational leadership is enormous, yet research shows a gap in the history, the purpose, and the consequences of a racialized discourse in school leadership particularly for African Americans. While some of the basic tenets of leadership are shared by many, African American leadership is often characterized differently and oftentimes carries a different meaning. In your own words, describe the tenets/characteristics of effective leadership?

a. Using the same characteristics of leadership outlined in the previous question, how do you view leadership juxtaposed to race? Are there any differences in the characteristics of Black leaders in the academy? If so, explain.
b. Describe the case-subject’s leadership style and how she/he emulated or differed from the stated characteristics or traits?
c. In your experience, do you believe individual leaders can change or have an influence on the institutional culture? If so/ or if not, explain.
d. What impact or contributions do you think the case-subject made at the university? How did these contributions influence, assist or hinder other African Americans? The larger university community?

III. Institutional Culture and African American Leadership

Data suggests that African Americans are underrepresented within the academy.
a. In your opinion, why do you believe African Americans remain underrepresented in the academy? How does this impact minority students, faculty, and staff?
b. Articulate how African American leaders impact the institution? Give specific examples.
c. Examining your relationship and knowledge of the case-subject, explain how the designated case-subject’s role in the university and the community impacted African Americans and other ethnic minorities at the university. Provide specific examples.
d. Describe other African American leaders within the academy that you believe impacted the institutional culture? Are there any similar characteristics or related leadership style of the designated case-subject? In what way?
Appendix C
Participant Profile Form

Contact Information

Full name: _________________________________________________

Title: ______________________________________________________

Street Address:______________________________________________

City/State/Zip: ______________________________________________

Contact Number: ____________________________________________

E-mail address: ______________________________________________

Background Information

Educational Background. Highest Obtained Degree: ______________________________

Last three professional positions. Include professional title:

List any internal or external service boards or community programs in which you actively participate.

List three professional mentors who played a significant role in your professional and personal development.

Relationship with Case-subject

How many years did you know case-subject? Describe the nature of the relationship.
Did you work for or under case-subject? Please describe.

List any internal or external committees/community service projects in which you served alongside the case-subject.

**Leadership**

In less than ten words, define leadership.

In less than ten words, define African American leadership.

In less than ten words, describe the case-subject’s leadership and personality style.

In less than ten words, describe your collective experience in higher education.