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Redefining leadership: Examination of African American women serving as presidents in institutions of higher education

A dissertation submitted to the

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by

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Abstract

There is an apparent dearth in the leadership literature of African American women when juxtaposed with race, gender and social class. This scarcity appears to be connected with the small percentage of African American women who hold the position of president in institutions of higher education. Additionally, recent reports have noted, that the growth they saw twenty years prior has reached a standstill. This research scoped the range of leadership for African American women presidents, giving them the opportunity to self-define. In addition to self-definition, the study was based on the belief that leadership development happens over a lifetime. Thus, the purpose of this research was to examine what factors contributed to and define the leadership for African American women presidents. Defining and understanding their leadership will lead to greater opportunities in the academy.

This study used a qualitative approach that triangulated interviews, biographical questionnaires, and campus observations to gain perspective and insight for the women who participated in this study. The study relied on several frameworks that served as a guide, Black feminist thought, critical race theory, and the Bolman and Deal leadership lens. What the research discovered is that African American women tend to have different path towards to the presidency than the traditional model. Various events that transpire in an individual's life provided a foundation for their leadership philosophies and ideologies. Furthermore, when given the opportunity to self-define their leadership, they were incongruent with research that indicates women including African American women identify with a transformational leadership model. Lastly, race, gender, and class have had some affect on the African American women who participated in this study.

The findings in this study can be used by institutions to develop leadership programs that are tailored to the needs of African American women desiring to hold senior leadership positions in the nation's institutions. It is imperative that the bodies of literature being amassed show diversity, thus creating better understandings throughout the academy.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wonderful mentor Mrs. Germaine D. Jackson. Words can never express what you did for me. I thank you for taking a little girl from a small town and telling her the world is big and I had a right to discover it. It is because of you I now walk with purpose and expect nothing but excellence in life.

If at first a task begun
Never leave it until it is done
Be the labor, great or small
Do it well…or not at all

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Chapter One

Introduction to the Research

The top office in higher education is now occupied by more African American women than ever before (Bates, 2007; Chenoweth, Stephens, & Evelyn, 1998; Moore, 2003; Nealy, 2008). As their leadership reveals itself at a growing number of institutions, African American women are still conspicuously absent in much of higher education leadership literature. This noticeable omission in the literature may be the result of the overall population. Although more African American women currently hold the position of president in higher education when compared to past years, the number is still dismally low. According to the U.S. Department of Education, considering both two-and-four-year institutions, there are approximately 4000 colleges and universities in the country (2008). The American Council on Education (ACE) has reported that, of that larger number, only 69[1] institutions are headed by African American women. Leatherman (as cited in Tobe, 1999) stated, "When describing the quintessential college president, female is not an adjective that comes to mind. Neither is Black, divorced, or Jewish." (p. 16) Taking into consideration the aforementioned quote, it became apparent that it was time to reevaluate our perception of the office of the president. Yes, the research found more African American women were in charge, but, it also concluded that more were needed in order to close the racial and gender gap that has marked the office of president in higher education in American institutions.

This research began as an inquiry about leadership, but after discovering the paltry number of African American women presidents, it morphed into a pursuit to examine the

[1] The number is approximation due to inconsistent reporting by institutions to ACE. However, the true number is believed not to exceed 85.

leadership development of several African American women in the pinnacle role of president. This research captured their self-defined view of leadership when faced with daily obstacles of race, gender, and class. According to Jackson (2002) previous research on African Americans was directed toward improving retention of students and faculty with little emphasis given to the senior level position. This research tackled the development of African American women president's leadership in order to understand why they have been slow to rise to presidency positions at colleges and universities.

Lastly, this study served as a platform for African American women to encourage diversity, articulate differences, and share their leadership development, thus adding to the small body of literature that explores the African American women's experience in the academy from tender beginnings to their ascension to the role of president. The voices of African American women have been missing from both the experience of leadership and the discussion of its meaning. Eventually, people must find a way to directly include this absent voice, both through fostering participation in traditional leadership arenas and learning from their leadership development (Suyemoto & Ballou, 2007).

Social Inquiry

Leadership Inquiry

In the literature, leadership ranks among the most intricate of human phenomena (Birnbaum, Beusimon, & Neuman, 1989). Jablonski (2000) conducted a study on women college presidents and found that the literature yielded over 350 definitions of leadership. With an abundance of definitions, it was imperative to identify one that embodied the research. The definition by Peter Northhouse offered legitimacy; he defined leadership as a process by means

of which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal, emphasizing process or a transactional event over the traits or characteristics residing in the leader (2004). In addition, he defined three competencies of leadership: problem-solving skills, social judgment skills and knowledge (Northhouse, 2004).

All three are characteristics that African American women leaders learn to embody in their leadership development. According to Hall, Garrett-Akinsanya, and Hucles, race and gender form the foundation for African American women's leadership (2007). Clearly, the subject of leadership has been studied by many scholars (Lott, 2007; Peters, Kinsey, & Mallory, 2004; Stogdill, 1974; Van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008); however, in a vast majority of the research detailing leadership, African American women have been left out of the equation (Cohen & March, 1974; Stogdill, 1974; Van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008). These scholars have not adequately represented the voices of African American women.

Scholars, such as Patricia Hill-Collins, who has been on the vanguard for Black feminism, and bell hooks, who has written with great passion about the social paradigm of being a Black woman, understood the importance of bringing African American women to the forefront of research in a variety of ways. This includes but is not limited to politics, self-definition, family life and activism. Leadership is another critical facet that requires attention from the academy and is parallel to the writings of Hill-Collins and hooks. The leadership of African American women should be addressed and examined from the significant interplay of race, gender, and class. It would have been unreasonable to research African American women who aspire to be leaders without exploring the juxtaposition of all three. In higher education the three play an integral role for African American women on every level, of leadership especially

the presidency. It is was expected that race, class, and gender together would help explain how African American women navigate the treacherous waters of the academy and rise to the presidency.

Race Inquiry

Racism has played a role in American history for over 400 years; moreover, the limitations that it has imposed on the African American community have been astonishing. Many stereotypes plague African American woman and often, they are a direct result of racism in America. Steele (as cited Peters, Kinsey, & Malloy, 2004) developed a theory to explain how social stereotypes of stigmatized groups avoid activities that cultivate leadership. In the past 20 years there have been several studies conducted by feminist scholars that have examined both leadership barriers and leadership characteristics of African American women. These studies have consistently found that racism and sexism inhibited the goal attainment of African American women leaders, with racism being the predominant factor (Bell, Denton, & Nkomo 1993; Bettera-Reed & Moore, 1992; Delany & Rodgers, 2004: Gilkes, 1991).

Race/Racism has played a significant role in higher education as well (Howell & Tuitt, 2003; Trow, 2006). Historically institutions had policies that forbid the education of African Americans. Institutions in the twenty-first century have enabled terms such as diversity and multiculturalism to address issues of racism and explicate the advances being made. Prior to the new terminology consisting of multiculturalism and diversity was *Affirmative Action*, a term that encompassed "pro-minority" policies perceived to benefit only racial and ethnic minorities (Trow, 2006). The presence of *Affirmative Action* can be seen in higher education more than any other sector (2006). Policies implemented by the government mandate were supposed to alleviate

issues of equality that beleaguered racial minorities. However, Patitu and Hinton (2003) found that African American women still have wrestled with their race in the academy for the last four decades since the *Affirmative Action* policies were instituted.

Significant numbers of African American women have reported that race was their largest hurdle (Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Hughes & Howard-Hamilton; 2003). The impact of gender and social class status is also present but generally goes unnoticed because the cries of racism are so predominant. According to Hughes and Howard-Hamilton (2003), "Black women often are treated like second-class citizens who must meet different demands than their White counterparts" (p. 99) such as working harder and giving more time. They have generally been concentrated in the lower policy-making positions where they serve as *worker bees*, carrying out policy and seldom operating in the capacity of law making (Smith, 1982). For all intents and purposes, racism has left social, physical, and psychological scars that have become a part of the academic world (Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003). It certainly can be argued that race/racism has been the most detrimental social construct in America.

Gender Inquiry

"As the number of women increase in the workforce and in leadership roles, it is important to have models to understand the intersection of gender and leadership" (Chin, 1997, p.1). When identifying applicable models for gender issues in higher education, some foundational questions arise: (1) What are effective leadership styles among women leading in higher education? (2) What is the influence of perceptions about women on their leadership styles? Clearly, the awareness of perceptions and expectations influence how women lead (Chin, 2007). In addition, it is imperative to understand the masculine assumptions in higher education

and the difficulties they pose for feminine leaders. For African American women, it is impossible to look exclusively at gender because there is no way to disentangle the social construct from race.

The social phenomenon of race and gender are salient factors in the academy and they compel African American women to navigate leadership roles differently than others. According to Meyers (2002) race and gender has worked together to oppress African American women in the work place because both are grounded in stereotypical beliefs and myths about African American women in the academy. Where many White women face sexism, African American women face the combination of racism and sexism (Rusher, 1996). This duality of oppression forces the African American woman to look at leadership patterns differently.

Purpose of Study

The researcher believed that leadership development evolves over a lifetime. Various events that transpired in an individual's life provided a foundation for their leadership philosophies and ideologies. The purpose of this research was to examine what factors contributed to and defined leadership for African American women presidents.

Clearly, the past has not been fair towards African American women; therefore, undoubtedly, history and life experiences are inextricably linked to their view of the world and their development, leadership and goal attainment. Highlighting these key issues helped to illustrate the point that African American women define, approach, and inevitably lead differently than others. The study employed a qualitative methodology that assisted in shedding light on a collective definition for African American women presidents. Given the current literature, it was evident that more research must be conducted in order to identify the nature of

African American women's climb to top leadership positions. This study added to this knowledge base.

African American women have not shared equal representation in the literature. According to Amey (2006), "The representation of these voices can most often be found buried within large text, as stand-alone chapters or paragraphs of data analysis" (p. 56). The scope of the research has generally focused on affirmative action, recruitment, retention, racism, and achievement (Alfred, 2001; Baraka, 1997). Benjamin (1997) expressed that African American women remain virtually invisible in literature and in senior level administration in higher education. Moreover, the existing literature on African American women presidents has consistently been merged with broad statistical categories, such as women, minorities, or African Americans (1997). It is challenging to attempt to disaggregate the data. The scarcity of African American women presidents in the literature and statistical outputs was daunting. For more understanding, it became apparent that researchers studied the connection between their personal and professional lives in order to understand how their leadership has developed over a lifetime. After examination of their leadership development, issues of divergent leadership between African American women and their counterparts can then be addressed to add necessary substance to the literature.

Statement of the Problem

This qualitative study sought to understand the experiences of African American women college and university presidents. Literature was scarce on female presidents. African American women presidents were barely mentioned. This can be attributed to the limited number of African American women who occupy this esteemed position. The American Council on

Education reported that there are approximately 69 African American women presidents out of approximately 4000 institutions (2008). This list illustrated the disheartening reality for African American women presidents. The office of the president over a 20 year period showed promise in diversification; however, after entering into the new millennium, progress slowed with the American Council on Education calling it a "standstill." This research study tapped into the small percentage of African American women presidents and allowed the personal narratives of leadership, race, class, and gender to flow from each woman.

Previous dissertations have looked at the leadership of African American presidents through the lens of a Multi-Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) using their scores to categorize each president (Moore, 2003) . This research joined the ranks of other scholarly analysis that has used a true qualitative approach. The research told the stories of the African American women presented, forgoing rigid standardized questions.

It is imperative that the academy look at the leadership of African American women. As society becomes more multicultural, leadership should also reflect heightened diversity. If we neglect to look at the leadership of African American women in the academy then they will continue to be marginalized as they have been in the past.

Research Questions

"A central criticism of leadership in postsecondary education has been that it has focused only on presidents and, therefore, given the demographics of higher education, that the stories, ideas, philosophies, and 'truths' have been those of older White men" (Amey, 2006, p. 56). The intent of this qualitative study was not to test a hypothesis but to use the information gathered to give a voice to the experiences of African American women leaders in higher education. By

using their own personal narratives the researcher built on stories of the past and looked into the future of their leadership, furthermore, allowing them to voice their own stories, ideas, philosophies and "truths." This research examined African American women in an element far above the traditional role as "middle management" in institutions of higher education, enabling the following questions to be addressed: (1) What is the self-identified leadership model for African American women college presidents? Research has found that African American women and women in general tend to display characteristics that identify them as transformational leaders. According to Jandaghi, Matin, and Farjami (2008), transformational leadership helps its followers look at old problems and help them find new ways to address them. In addition, transformational leaders are credited with inspiring their followers to think about the whole organization, being fundamentally grounded in group think as opposed to an individualistic perspective (2008). This question suggested addressing transformational leadership fundamentally by using the participating presidents' personal views of leadership. (2) Is there a connection between race, gender, and class in leadership development throughout the lives of African American women as they rise to the position of president in the nation's colleges and universities? Due to the lack of research on African American women in leadership positions in higher education, these questions were formed to serve as a window into the leadership formation of African American women presidents.

Contributions to the Field

Verbal testimonies concurred that legislative strife, racial inequality, and gender opposition have historically defined the experiences of African American women. They have been the victim of multiple oppressions. The research presented will help institutions better

understand the experiences of African American women in order to produce more effective ways to enhance their leadership. In addition, this research brought notice to how African American women handle the duality of racism and sexism in their rise to the presidency and their tenure in the position.

African American women have dealt with adversity unique to them alone, which chapter two will explore more thoroughly. Research endeavors like this will help the academy to realize their contributions, understand their approaches, and help recruit and maintain them in senior leadership positions in higher education. Furthermore, this research will help future aspirants of the presidency to find valuable information through personal narratives of race, gender, and class of accomplished African American women presidents.

Definitions

For the purpose of clarity, the following terms are defined for the reader:

Academy: refers to an institution of higher education in which research, teaching, and service are the primary functions (Aguirre, 2000).

African American: occurs interchangeably with Black [in this study] to describe people of African descent in the United States.

Biological Sex: refers to the physiological and anatomical characteristics of maleness and femaleness with which a person is born (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997).

Gender: refers to socially constructed roles of behavior and activities that society deems appropriate for male and female behavior (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997).

HBCU: refers to Historically Black Colleges and Universities - institutions that historically serve the needs of African Americans in higher education.

Leader: describes someone who sees a goal, articulates that goal, and mobilizes others to move to that goal (Kotter, 1990).

Leadership Development: The knowledge and skill acquisition that happens through jobs, personal experiences, activities, other, and so forth, that broadens one's perspective, expands one's vision beyond a particular position or institution, and integrates information and experience to shape the course of institutions (Green, 1988).

Leadership: the process by means of which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal, emphasizing process or a transactional event over the traits or characteristics residing in the leader (Northhouse, 2004).

Person of Color: used to describe Non-Whites but including African Americans.

President: refers to a person who serves as the chief executive officer of the educational institution or campus (Moore, 2003).

PWI: is a Predominantly White Institution, - Institutions whose main population are people of European descent (Laird, Bridges, Homes, Morelon, & Williams, 2004).

Race: refers to a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997).

Racism: refers to the systematic subordination of members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power in the United States (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997).

Sexism: refers to a cultural, institutional, and individual set of beliefs and practices that privilege men, subordinate women, and denigrate values and practices associated with women (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997).

Voice: is a metaphor that refers to a person's point of view (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldgerger, &

Tarule, 1997).

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Waring (2003), Hill-Collins (2000), and Giddings (1984) contended that there have been increasing calls to understand the experiences of African American women from their own perspective. They maintained this can be done by exploring the beginning of their plight in higher education through the tribulations of advancement. The purpose of this chapter was to review what the literature states regarding the leadership of African American women presidents. It explored current and past literature as it specifically related to race, gender, social class and leadership for African American women presidents.

Background

It was not surprising that there were inconsistencies in the literature when discussing race, gender, and leadership. Some studies found that there were no differences between how women and men approach leadership (Butterfield & Grinnell, 1999; Klenke, 1993; Van Engen, Van Der, & Willemsen, 2001; Vinkenburg, Jansen, & Koopman, 2000). Other studies have found that the overall ideology of leadership varies between the sexes (Bass, 1998; Bensimon, 1989; Euster, 1994; Morgan, 2004; Waring, 2003). The aforementioned articles indicated a paucity of literature that exists that explains the lived experiences of African American women who hold the position of president and those seeking the position of president as well.

When examining the literature the key theme that emerged was the interpretation of leadership for African American women. It became evident that through socialization, African American women acquire their unique views of the world around them. Further, African American women lead from a different perspective because of their roles in society and the

barriers that they have faced institutionally upon entering into leadership positions. In an interview, Johnetta B. Cole, President Emeritus of Bennett College, epitomized the experiences of African American women in the academy when she stated, "I know that in the academy, like in America the sister is caught between the rock of racism and the hard place of sexism" (Springer, 1999, p. 44). Dr. Cole's sentiment highlighted African American women in the academy who face unique professional pressures associated with working in a historically White, middle- and upper-middle class, male-dominated profession (Andrews, 1993). The duality of race and gender is at the core of how African American women lead. As cited in Holmes, "Research suggests that the vestiges of the past linger such that race and gender-related issues make mutual respect and full participation in all areas of the academy difficult for African Americans and other administrators of color to achieve" (Holmes; Turner & Myers) (2004, p. 22). This lack of full participation was seen in the massive amount of leadership literature that failed to take into account the social trajectories of African American women.

Leadership

The current field of leadership is inundated with leadership definitions, styles, and theories. In 1974, Stogdill stated that "There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it" (p.7). Researchers throughout the 20th century spent a considerable amount of time defining leadership and the characteristics associated with it (Eddy & Van Der Linden, 2006). Some scholars have comprehensive definitions such as Davis (2003), who stated, "The term leadership implies movement, taking the organization or some part of it in a new direction, solving problems, being creative, initiating new programs, building organizational structures, and improving quality" (p. 4). Jago (1982)

suggested leadership is a property and a process and detailed certain characteristics that are applicable. For lack of consistency among definitions and the arbitrary nature of the leadership, Birnbaum (1992) commented, "Any comprehensive consideration of academic leadership must be able to accommodate both the strong leader and the weak leader views, because evidence suggests that while both may be incomplete, both are in some measure correct" (p. 8). Clearly, leadership has produced myriad definitions and there is no definitive characterization.

For research in higher education, defining leadership is no different, the task remains cumbersome. While researching women college presidents, Jablonski, (2000) discovered that the literature yielded more than 350 definitions of leadership. The majority of these definitions were written by White men and included masculine language. Some of the language included *force*, *subordinate, influence*, and *comply,* words that suggested power and control and reflect masculine socialization in Western societies (Caldwell-Colbert & Albino, 2007). The literature failed to include women in rendering these definitions. Rosener (1995) reported a study conducted by the International Women's Forum that found women define leadership differently. With respect to African American women and the presidency, the definition written by a White male, Peter Northhouse, offered the most precise view that leadership is a process by means of which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal, emphasizing process or a transactional event over the traits or characteristics residing in the leader (2004). Moreover, "Leadership must be conceptualized as a constantly changing negotiation of context, goals, and social interactions unfolding within and reflecting shared values." (Suyemoto & Ballou, 2007, p. 42). This portion of the literature review spoke to the leadership deeds of African American women and addressed the primary leadership style employed by them.

Gaining perspective about leadership for African American women institutional presidents relied upon the spectrum of various leadership theories coveted in the academy overtime and across disciplines (Eddy & Van Der Linden, 2006). Many of the scholars mentioned in this section have written extensively on leadership and are well known in the area but none have defined it for African American women.

Early Leadership Theories

There was a paucity of information that addressed characteristics of women in past leadership theories. A critical examination of early leadership theories provided a foundation for this study on the leadership of African American women serving as president of the nation's colleges and universities. It was critical to understand the historical context of leadership because doing so aided in defining current leadership theories that African American women most commonly used when approaching leadership. Some scholars believed that leadership is best examined when set in distinct categories (Banks, 2001; Bass, 1981; Gardner, 1997). The major early categorizations were the "great man theories", "trait theories", "behavioral style theories", and "situational or contingency" theories.

The great man theories served as the predecessor to all of the aforementioned categorizations. From the mid-1800s through the late 1900s, scholars believed strongly in it. This theory held stock in the idea of great leader though means of birth right. This was very simple; leaders are born, not made (Moore, 2003). The very title of the great man theory exemplified gender bias. It has been criticized for neglecting gender and leadership styles of great women (Chin, 2007). Furthermore, great man theories precluded women from leadership.

The trait theory approach held a firm foundation regarding personality characteristics. During the early 1900s through the 1940s, researchers supported the belief that leaders had special qualities that made them effective leaders (Moore, 2003.) Furthermore, many early leadership studies focused on identifying those qualities that made great leaders (Chin, 2007). According to trait theory, leaders can be distinguished from followers by their personality traits such as confidence, high energy, and skill of verbal persuasion (Northhouse, 2004). Trait theory used the belief of innate characteristics to make followers embody phrases such as "He is born to be a leader" (Northhouse, 2004). Trait theory was used to make a clear distinction between leaders and followers.

While many personality traits correspond with leadership, scholars agreed that personality alone represented a poor paradigm of leadership (Lott, 2007; Stogdill, 1974; Yukl, 1981). Therefore, a new approach identified as behavioral style theory followed trait theory. This new theory explored leaders and behavior instead of personality characteristics as in previous theories. This led to the idea that leaders could be trained and furthermore, made. This theory serendipitously gave researchers access to women and racial minorities.

In 1939, a group of researchers led by Kurt Lewin out of The Ohio State University sought to further develop the construct of leadership. Their theoretical paradigm closely identified with behavioral theory but Lewin and his associates explicated the idea of behavior and leadership more than previous attempts. They introduced an approach to leadership that attempted to identify a style of leadership that would have an impact on faculty and staff. This early study identified three specific types of early behavioral paradigm leadership: "democratic",

"autocratic" and "laissez-fair" (Manning & Curtis, 2002). Intense work conducted by Lewin and associates became known as "The Ohio State Leadership studies."

An alternative approach to all previous research theories was to look at leadership as situational, presuming that anyone can become a leader given the situational context. Situational or contingency theories became popular during the late 1950s through the 1980s. Scholars who took up the responsibility wanted a more comprehensive approach to understanding leadership (Moore, 2003). Scholars like Burns and Stalker, Woodward, and Pennings believed that "The essence of the contingency theory paradigm is that organizational effectiveness results from fitting characteristics of the organization, such as its structure, to contingencies that reflect the situation of the organization (as cited in the Donaldson Contingency theory of organizations 2001, p. 1). According to Northhouse (2004), behavioral and situational theories were closely related. Situational and contingency theories amplified behaviors and observed the context in which they occur.

The aforementioned studies have held tremendous stake in leadership ideology. The early theories neglected women and persons of color, so in the past previous theories failed to define their contributions to the field of leadership. New leadership theories have begun to take into account gender differences in leadership. The most notable are transactional leadership and transformational leadership.

Prevailing Approach to Leadership

With a plethora of research on early leadership theories, it is clear that modern approaches are more pragmatic than their predecessors. The modern theories take into consideration power, authority, and context, whereas previous leadership theories considered

lineage, manhood, and personality traits. The current style of leadership that is most closely associated with women is transformational leadership. Transformational leaders motivate employees by getting them to identify with the interest of the group (Bass, 1985). Transformational models of leadership strive to accentuate the leader's vision while empowering subordinates. Furthermore, there is a de-emphasis in hierarchal control. The transformational style of leadership affords women the opportunity to think divergently when it comes to leadership (Hamilton, 2004). In addition, women can be more open to individuals who do not necessarily agree with them and individuals who are culturally different. For women leaders, even those things that might be considered irrelevant or insignificant in leadership ability for men are apt to become important factors in others' perceptions of their effectiveness (Manzo, 2001). Women are often viewed as more effective leaders because of their willingness to try to include subordinates in decision-making and to empower them to do more for the group. In an interview conducted by Hamilton (2004), Jonhnneta Cole stated that," At this point of history and herstory – because I am a feminist – I'm convinced that the leadership style most associated with women is the one that I think will have the greatest advantages in the future" (p. 64). Many scholars argue that the leadership models necessary for educational transformation are more often adopted by women who also more frequently display transformational leadership (Brungardt, 1998; Chliwniak, 1997; Richart, 2002; Young, 2004).

African American women utilize the transformational leadership style far more than any other approach (Kezar, 2000; Nance, 2006; Watson, 2004). This style has been called "visionary" and "inspirational." In a study conducted by Stout-Steward (2005), the author found that African American women presidents lead with their hearts, which makes them more

believable to their followers, and allows followers to display their ingenuity.

Gender and Leadership in Higher Education

The American Council on Education (ACE) serves as one of the leading organizations in research on gender. The following is their most recently published data concerning women in the higher education:

- Women were most likely to head two-year colleges, where 29 percent of presidents were women in 2006 compared with 8 percent in 1986.
- Women were least likely to be the president of doctorate-granting institutions despite a number of recent appointments at high profile institutions. The percentage of women presidents at doctorate-granting institutions was 13.8 percent in 2006, up slightly from 13.3 percent in 2001 and 13.2 percent in 1998.
- One-quarter of all recently hired presidents were women, compared with 23 percent of all presidents. The percentage of women among newly hired presidents has not changed appreciably since these data were first collected in 1998.
- Only 63 percent of women presidents were married compared with 89 percent of male presidents. Twenty-four percent of women presidents are either divorced or were never married compared to only 7 percent of men.

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Obviously, from the above mentioned statistics women hold more positions in upper-level leadership in the academy than in the past however; the numbers are still much lower than their male counterparts. Women still face adversities that prevent them from breaking the glass ceiling

and isolate them in particular institutions. These adversities can be seen in hiring practices and the old boys' network. This ceiling has not allowed women to enter the highest levels of doctorate-granting institutions without tough scrutiny. The statistics also showed that women are mostly concentrated at two-year institutions. ACE's analysis of women in the academy leaves scholars with more questions to answer: 1) How do women lead? 2) What styles are mainly employed by them? 3) Lastly, are there gender differences? There are gaps in the literature when attempting to answer these questions, specifically for African Americans.

Bensimon (1989) argued that studies and concepts of leadership in the academy have been based mostly on male experiences and that the widespread leadership theories do not take into account the basic foundation of feminist theory. She further stated that there is a need for a theory that supports the idea that women experience the social world differently than men do, understanding that this translates into a particular epistemology which explains why women lead differently. Scholars such as Belenky, Clinchy, Goldgerger, & Tarule, (1997) and Helgesen (1995) share the same position as Bensimon (1989) that men and women place value on their social experiences. The experiences subsequently impact the way they lead.

The literature suggested that there were three prevailing arguments regarding gender differences and leadership: (a) women as disadvantaged leaders (b) women as equal leaders and (c) women as better leaders (Bass, 1990; Chliwaniak, 1997; Tedrow & Rhoads, 1999). This research concurred with scholars who supported the idea that women lead differently than their male counterparts. These arguments served as the contextual setting for their differences.

Other researchers have concluded that differences in the leadership move beyond gender. They argued that individualistic experiences shape a leader's perspective (Astin & Leland, 1991;

Dillard, 2000; Kezar, 2000). This paradigm focused more on individual relationships and diversity in experiences as related to race, gender and social class. Both arguments shape gender leadership research and pose new questions, vying for the academy to address issues specific to gender.

The words of Johnnetta Cole speak to the differences of men and women in leadership settings. She affirmed most theories by professing there was a difference between how the two genders lead. "The style [women] is generally one that stresses building consensus and collaboration, closing the distance between the leaders and led, manifesting power "through" people rather than "over" them. Some call this leadership style "inclusive"; others use the terms "participatory" or "distributed" (Hamilton, 2004, p. 62).

Over the past ten years, a growing body of research has addressed the participatory leadership style. The research provided evidence that women exhibit and think about leadership differently from traditional leadership models in higher education (Kezar, 2000). Helen Astin and Carol Leland (1991) expounded on the idea that women's leadership is associated with a more participatory, relational, and interpersonal style as well as with different types of power and influence strategies that emphasize reciprocity and collectivity. Women of color tend to describe leadership as collective, collaborative and empowerment-based. Kezar (2000) implied that

> Participatory leadership models, which rely on interdependence and collective efforts, necessitate that campus participants feel included in the leadership process and emphasize communication throughout the organization as critical for organizational success…Moreover, women leaders tend to conceptualize leadership as collective rather than individualistic…they [women] emphasize responsibility toward other and empower

other to act within the organization and they de-emphasize hierarchical relationships. (p.722)

Six presidents were interviewed for the story entitled *Lonely at the Top?* The common thread among them was their awareness of their own leadership styles; they all agreed it is different from men's, "The glass is half full" for women's leadership. It is an inclusive model that generates a great deal of excitement and promotes educational change; however, it has not been widely accepted in the academy. People have tended to praise female presidents for the model until they get in trouble (Hamilton, 2004; Young, 2004). Shakeshaft (2006) contended that there will be more women in leadership positions in the future and we must begin to address their social issues in order to help alleviate adversity. Parker and Oglive (1996) asserted that the current models of leadership are inadequate for creating environments conducive to growth for culturally distinct groups because gender alone does not operate similarly across racial/gender groups. Further, these models ignore the unique socialization process by assuming that racism and sexism are a parallel process.

Socialization

Grimmes (2003) suggested that the majority of early literature indicated that women lead from a different frame of reference due to the socialization process. Merton (as cited in Tierney & Rhoads, 1994, p. 6) wrote that socialization is the process through which individuals acquire the values, attitudes, norms, knowledge, and skills needed to exist in a given society." Socialization is a process wherein individuals learn about cultural norms. This process generally labels men and women early in life and assigns them specific gender appropriate roles. Bernard (1985) wrote:

> Women have been socialized to remain in the conformist stage of character development, consciousness preoccupation, and cognitive style, and…the dependent stage of interpersonal style. The sex socialization of girls has been counter-developmental in the sense that, far from emphasizing autonomy and independence, it has emphasized the achievement of dependency. (pp. 260-261)

African American women are not spared from this process (Carey, 2002). Young girls are taught at an early age overtly and covertly, that race and gender are inextricably linked, thus socializing them to believe in stereotypical thoughts and images that plague the nation (Bagnato, 2005; Collins, 2000; Holmes 2004; hooks, 1984; Malveaux, 2005). "No other group has had their identity socialized out of existence like Black women" (hooks, 1984 p.7). The process of socialization for Black women stands as their testimony.

Moreover, for African American women, more research is needed to understand the socialization process and how it shapes their leadership development. Previous research ignored the impact of race (Moradi & Huang, 2008), concluding that a majority of previous literature only addressed women as a whole, ignoring the social underpinnings that young African American girls and African American women face. In higher education, both men and women have been socialized prior to their arrival into the academy. Thus, both operate on a system that does not support the advancement of women. Higher education has been a retreat for many women; however, many times they have reported that their voices go unheard and are often misjudged (Edwards, 1998). Much of this can be attributed to the socialization process. Socialization remains a silent adversary in the academy that hinders the progress of education in its entirety. Gender and racial socialization are equally problematic to African American women

in the academy.

Race and Leadership in Higher Education

Just as the American Council on Education (ACE) reports on gender, they also have reported extensively on race in higher education. Holmes (2004) suggested that only a few national indicators such as the ACE and Black Issues in Higher Education (now referred to as Diverse Issues in Higher Education) consistently provided relevant information on the status of African American college and university presidents. The following are the most recent statistics reported by ACE on race and leadership in the academy:

- In 2006, 6 percent of all presidents were African American, 5 percent were Hispanic, 1 percent was Asian American, 1 percent was American Indian, and 2 percent were identified as "other."
- Minority presidents were more likely than White presidents to be women. More than one-third of Hispanic presidents and nearly one-third of African-American presidents were women, compared with only 22 percent of Whites.
- Minority presidents were highly represented at public master's, baccalaureate and special focus institutions, where they led more than 20 percent of institutions in those categories. Minorities were least well represented at private doctorate-granting and master's institutions, where they led only 5 percent of institutions.
- When historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges are excluded, less than 10 percent of colleges and universities were led by people of color.
- The share of new appointments from racial/ethnic minority groups is unchanged since

1998.

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http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=News_Room&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=20430

Persons of Color have seen small growth but their numbers are still disproportionately underrepresented to their White counterparts. Similar to the aforementioned gender statistics, ACE has exposed the challenges persons of color face in the academy. With numbers analogous from 1998 to 2007 it is clear that growth is stagnant. People of color largely serve at minority institutions and like women; they are not heavily favored to head a doctoral degree granting schools. For African American women, the numbers are even more dismal. They comprise only a tiny percentage of the statistics. It is imperative that race research on leadership continues in the academy exploring the intersection of issues related to race.

Intersection of Race and Gender

"In recent years, more research has been conducted about how gender might influence leadership. However, rarely is race considered and even less frequently is there a discussion of how one's race and gender might influence one's conception of leadership" (Waring, 2003, p. 31). Although there are scholars who have researched both social paradigms to a certain extent, they are not at the forefront of top social journals. The vast majority of research that examines leadership in higher education has focused on the experiences of White males, leaving out women and persons of color (Amey, 2006; Shakeshaft, 2006). Moreover, research overlooks clear differences in leadership dynamics between race and gender (Hardy-Fanta, Lien, Pinderhughes, & Sierra, 2006; Waring, 2003). By neglecting to observe the differences, research in the past has developed a skewed view of leadership from the women's and persons of color's

perspective. Omissions of race and gender have led to an inconsistent representation of African American women in the academy.

According to Cobb (1969), Black women learn the difficult lessons associated with racism and sexism early in life. Black women are confronted with this unique duality that frequently stifles their success. According to Hudson-Weems (as cited in Bush,1999), African American women face "a tripartite form of oppression-an oppression based on racism, classism, and sexism" (p. 19). Prior to Hudson and Weems, Stimpson (1974) suggested that, "If both women and Blacks have been members of an inferior class, even outcasts, then Black women have been doubly damned" (p. 264). Taking into account Hudson and Weems tripartite, they are triply damned. To attempt to understand the leadership experiences of African American women, it is important to take into account life experiences, academic background, oppression (race, gender, and class), stereotypes, and history. "Examinations grounded in male-dominated theoretical foundations, but conducted in an attempt to understand female experiences, do little to further an understanding of women's behavioral patterns in organizational and leadership capacities" (Edwards, 1998, p. 9). According to Edwards (1998) "issues associated with racism, sexism and tokenism creates an often chilly climate for African American women leaders in post-secondary institutions" (p. 31).

Racism and sexism play an integral role in leadership for African American women. Race and gender have a unique combined effect for African American women, the two issues lead to adversity. African American women confront the double oppression in many facets of their lives. According to Meyers (2002), race and gender work together to oppress the African American woman in the work place because both are grounded in stereotypical beliefs and myths

about African American women in the academy. In addition, both rely on physical traits that for the majority are non-negotiable. The social phenomenon of race and gender are relevant factors in the academy and compel African American women to navigate leadership differently. Racism has played a role in America for over 400 years and the limitations that it has imposed on the African American community have been astounding. Many stereotypes have caused affliction for the African American women and many are a result of racism in America.

Peters, Kinsey, and Malloy (2004) developed a theory to explain how social stereotypes of stigmatized groups like African American women avoid activities that cultivate leadership. Their theory addressed how the stereotypes create barriers that take on characteristics such as insecurity. As mentioned in Chapter One, in the past twenty years, there have been several studies conducted by feminist scholars that have examined leadership barriers and leadership characteristics of African American women. These studies have consistently found that racism and sexism inhibited Black women leaders goal attainment, with racism being the predominant factor (Bell, Denton, & Nkomo 1993; Bettera-Reed, & Moore, 1992; Delany & Rodgers, 2004; Gilkes, 1991; Hall, Garrett-Akinsanya, & Hucles 2007). Steele and the feminist scholars both addressed a major concern in the academy. With the prevalence of race and gender in the politics of the academy how do Black women surmount these covert barriers? More monetary outreach must be invested in programs that at their foundation work on eradicating racism and sexism while maintaining individuality in addition, issues of marginality.

Marginalization Background

The African American woman by way of birth is marginalized in modern day society; her race and gender proscribe a world of oppression. According Hall, Garrett-Akinsanya, and Hucles

(2007), Black women have always lived on the margins of society. Shorter-Gooden and Washington as cited in Stephens and Phillips (2005) contended that for most African American women, race is the most significant construct in their day-to-day lives. African American women are faced with a unique situation often referred to as the **"**double whammy**"** where they face dual oppression (hooks, 1984; Smith, 1982; Waring, 2003). Andrews (1993) went further, writing that "The double whammy of race and gender, being Black and female, compounded by the attainment of a high level of education, predictably creates problems on both a professional and personal level." Many African American women have accepted their marginal status as a benefit and have used it as a source of creativity to create opportunities for other African American women, women and African American men (Hall & Fine, 2005; Hill-Collins, 2000; Lorde, 1984). Accepting this status allows them to address issues pertaining to social advancement and these researchers have made significant strides in eradicating the "double whammy" by simply acknowledging its existence.

African American women have been disadvantaged because race and gender obstacles remain profound, preventing them from being fully involved in the academic process. Moreover, higher education has historically been uninterested in learning about the leadership experiences of minority women (Nance, 2006). Gayle Stevens Haynes, the first African American woman to serve as Provost at a Brooklyn institution, stated, "There is a need to encourage and cultivate women in higher education; she said the key is to get more folks in tenure-track positions and to build a sufficient cadre" (Watson, 2004, p. 49). This is how you overcome race and gender obstacles. Nealy, (2008) concurred by suggesting that expanding the number of minority college presidents will begin when expansion happens at the faculty level. For African American women

cultivation for faculty positions or presidential appointments do not begin in the academy because African American women's development starts at home and depending on their social economic status, it can have serious repercussions on their success and ability to assimilate.

Social Class

Leadership development is fine-tuned through many various life experiences: family background (which includes social class), childhood, formal leadership training, work experiences and of course, actual positions in leadership. These life lessons are a part of the major social factors where leadership development may take place (Tobe, 1999). What makes the social development distinctly different from socialization for the purpose of this research is that it does not have a gender-specific agenda and it includes family, jobs, and socio- economic status.

Family Background

Prom-Jackson, Johnson, and Wallace (1987) believed that family support and family structure are both vital to achievement. In many accounts, successful people credit their family for their success. Cantor and Bernay (1992) identified this phenomenon as internal motivation; in their writings they referred to this as the internal applause. Internal applause referred to the need for people to know that no matter what obstacles they face, someone else hopes for their success. For African American women, internal motivation can be connected to various life-experiences and people. It can stem from within and outside the home. An old African Proverb proclaimed "It takes a village to raise a child". For many successful African American women this appears to be true.

According to Hill-Collins (2000) "Normal families should consist of heterosexual racially

homogenous couples who produce their own biological children. Such families should have a specific authority structure namely a father-head earning adequate wage, a stay at home wife mother and children (p.47)." She concluded by saying everything the normative family is supposed to be the African American family is not. The family structure could include grandmother, aunts, uncles and cousins (through blood and association) all assisting in the rearing of a child. The African American women who served as president of colleges and universities are a part of the African American family structure.

In 1993, Touchton conducted a study on women college presidents and found that of 230 respondents, 44% reported that their mothers worked outside of the home at some time. According to Touchton (1993), this shaped how they viewed women's roles in society, their own self-reliance and abilities. Touchton's research, although not exclusively on African American women, falls in alignment with Hill-Collins' (2000) argument that most do not fit into the normative family structure and can still achieve success.

Socio-Economic Views in School

It has appeared that students who are impoverished do not get the same chances to develop leadership skills as students who are in the middle to upper class social stratum due to stigmas that plague the lower or working class. Many educators have been socialized to view those in poverty as morally and culturally deficient (Tutwiler, 2005). As a result, rather than viewing poverty from a sociopolitical perspective that considers systemic influences and social class privileges, these educators often believed that poor people are inherently inferior because of some innate individual flaws such as a lack of motivation or poor decision making (Tutwiler, 2005). When teachers subscribe to this mindset for their students, their chances for success in

school are low; their chances at formal leadership are nonexistent. Many researchers have found that children from various cultural and economic backgrounds learn in diverse ways and these differences are not treated equally in school (Amatea, West-Olatunji, & Cirecie , 2007) Where the teacher sees lack of motivation, the child sees a different way of processing (Woolfolk, 2006). Students' families in poverty generally do not share social class with their teachers; therefore, a level of understanding is hard to reach. According to the Children's Defense Fund (2005), data revealed that the number of children in the United States who live in poverty has increased significantly over the past five years. These data indicate that 13 million children in the United States were reported to live in poverty in 2004, an increase of 12.8% from the number of children in poverty reported in 2000. As a result, in 2004, more than one out of every six American children was poor (Children's Defense Fund, 2005). Although financial need is one defining characteristic of poverty, it may be defined more globally as "a condition that extends beyond the lack of income and goes hand in hand with a lack of power, humiliation and a sense of exclusion" (Raphael, 2005, p. 36). It is imperative to face these numbers so that this portion of America gets a fair chance at leadership. Programs must be put into place to support this demographic and then identify their skill sets.

Family background, socio-economic status, and childhood all play significant roles in the lives of leaders; however, literature on their positioning when it comes to African American women presidents was miniscule. The current literature supported family birth order, attention by adults, and support that drives the hunger for leadership. Much can be attributed to personal motivation too. More understanding can be reached through the personal narratives of African American women presidents.

Reflection on the History of Women in Higher Education

In 1834, Oberlin College pioneered the joint education of the sexes by opening its doors to the female population of American society (Lasser, 1998). Oberlin allowed women to enter into the rigors of academia, a world dominated by men on every level; however, the privilege to attend did not guarantee equity. Women were only allowed to enter into specific majors, were granted little social freedom, and they were not taken seriously as scholars (Watson, 1977). Women were stifled in their careers and were pushed into the direction of educating children. Professions such as clergymen, lawyers and doctors were off-limits. The thought that a woman could be president of a college was even more preposterous. The oppression of women in higher education transcended race in many aspects. It was understood that the women who did manage to attend college primarily became elementary and secondary school teachers. This idea was mainly due to early overt pressures of colleges and universities for women to enter into early childhood teaching or "ladies departments." Later in the nineteenth century, women were pressured into nursing and secretarial jobs (Watson, 1977). Historically, the education of women was centered upon servitude, not leadership.

Gender Divide in Higher Education

African American women who attempted to enter into various career fields could not do so because of segregation; American segregation forced the racial divide of the gender (Evans, 2007). Where White women were granted privileges, African American women faced barriers. White women shared racial privileges with White males and undoubtedly used it to their advantage (Sanchez, Hucles, Sanchez-Hucles, & Mehta, 2007). African American women shared privileges with African American males, which included discrimination on a multitude of levels.

Although colleges like Oberlin gave African Americans opportunities, this was not the norm around the country. African American Americans were denied education at many institutions. This unfortunate adversity spawned the development of Black colleges. For a thirty-five year period, America experienced an increase in the number of Black institutions (Pearson, Shavlik, & Touchton, 1989). This also initiated the development for African American women institutions of higher learning. Two of the most successful were Spelman College, established in 1881, and Bennett College in 1873. Both offered a unique opportunity for African American women to be educated in a time when it was unfavorable in society.

By 1890, only 30 African American women had college degrees in comparison to 300 Black men and 250 White women (Faragher & Howe, 1988). It became clear that higher education needed an aggressive approach to educate African American women. Bennett and Spelman had great success because they attacked the division of gender and race at the core. The two institutions gave African American women the tools needed to succeed in society. The college environments fostered self-determination and resiliency. Although African American women who went to college were theoretically positioned for success, in reality, they still had many obstacles to overcome.

In the various studies that gauge the experiences of African American women throughout history, many have found that contemporary African American women protest of the same adversities (Watson, 1977). Furthermore, many of the same challenges in American educational history still were cumbersome for Black women today. Stephanie Evans, author of *Black Women in the "Ivory Tower,"* stated in an interview:

Barriers to Black women's college participation included violence, legal discrimination

based on race and sex, and institutional variables like discriminatory classroom or campus policies. There is an eerie continuity in some of historic women's narratives that demonstrates the social embarrassment, academic harassment, and unbridled hostility visited on Black women (as students and faculty) was consistent and persistent. Some of the pressures that I felt as a student and often am faced with as a Black woman faculty member (issues of credibility and authority) turn up in narratives from the 1850s to the 1950s. External issues of institutionalized racism and sexism exacerbated internal issues of self-esteem present for most college students.

Additionally, Black women college students fought to balance familial roles, church responsibilities, and organizational duties with their desire to access the individualistic privileges of Academy. Black women wanted the right to whatever education might be available for any citizen of a democracy, yet the culture of community service required them to focus on learning what was necessary to secure a good job, usually teaching or nursing to uplift communities, contribute to caretaking of their parents, and raise a family of their own.

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Dr. Evans outlined a history of persistence and adversity that was fought by the foremothers. Today, African American men and women face many of the same barriers only in different forms. In 2004, Fikes found that of the 103 African American presidents to serve at four-year Predominately White Institutions (PWI), since 1873, 77 were men and 26 were female. It is easy to surmise from Fikes that African American talent is not considered to be capable of leading White institutions. With the number of African American women over fifty percent lower than

African American men, scholars must began to address the question of why African American women are not regarded even in the 21st century to lead at PWIs. Evans' recollections, Fikes' findings, and the data recorded by ACE represented a dismal picture in African American advancement to the presidency. In addition, the research indicated that institutions of higher education still have not embraced the need for minority representation in senior-level positions (Holmes, 2004).

Women and the Presidency

Throughout history, African American women have been barred from prominent positions in higher education. There seemed to be no room for them in the "ivory tower." However, in the last thirty years, a small percent of African American women had assumed top positions at renowned and mainstream institutions across the country (Watson, 2004). The *American College President: 2007 Edition* reported that the post of president initially diversified in the last thirty years. However, to many it has reached its peak. In the last eight years, studies have reported slow growth in the highest positions. The *American College President: 2007 Edition* noted the following achievements for women in the ranks:

- The percentage of presidents who were women more than doubled from 10 percent in 1986 to 23 percent of the total in 2006, but women's progress has slowed in more recent years.
- The proportion of presidents who were racial or ethnic minorities saw a much smaller increase, from 8 percent in 1986 to 14 percent in 2006. When minority institutions were excluded, only ten percent of presidents were from racial/ethnic minority groups.

James Renick, the current vice president of ACE, highlighted a startling reality after

examining the current statistics for African American women. He stated that the growth in the number of African American women presidents was no longer progressing. He continued with, "This cuts to the issue of how we educate the next generation of leaders…We need a fundamental understanding of what's going on so we can design programs to address the issue" (ACE Roundtable, 2007, p. 1). Renick's comments invited higher education to take note and addressed the lack of programmatic efforts conducted by institutions. While it is conceded that African American women occupy more positions in the academy than ever before, they are nevertheless, represented in director and assistant director positions; they have seen slower growth in the presidency and faculty roles (Moore, 2003). Their leadership is influenced undoubtedly by race, gender, and class. This research showed the need for more scholarly inquiry to more fully understand leadership, specifically highlighting African American women's path to the presidency.

Women's roles in academia have definitely changed due to their pioneering visions. According to several female college presidents, women have gained great acceptance but still fail to become considered a part of the "old boys" network, perhaps the largest hindrance for women who have sought presidential appointments (Bagnato, 2005; Valdata, 2006). The challenge ahead for women in higher education is to develop strategies to help more women master the challenges necessary to reach leadership positions. Once women do commonly preside in leadership positions at Big Ten schools, Ivy Leagues and Research One institutions, much of the adversity will be worked out (Hamilton, 2004). In order for this goal to be reached, women first must embark on the challenge of thoughtful personal evaluation in order to achieve success in higher education (Manzo, 2001). This is imperative to succeed in a male dominated structure

African American Women Presidential Pioneers

Mary Jane Patterson, Anna Julia Cooper, and Mary McLeod Bethune were among the first African American women to break down educational barriers and pave the way for future generations (Evans, 2007). Mary Jane Patterson received her baccalaureate degree from Oberlin College in 1862 (Bates, 2007). Patterson is considered the first African American women to receive her Baccalaureate (Fletcher, 1943). Anna Julia Cooper was the fourth African American woman in the United States to earn a PhD. She also became the second president of Frelinghuysen University in Washington, DC in 1930 (Cooper, 1988). In addition to Patterson and Cooper, Mary McCloud Bethune also served as a visionary for African American women. Accredited to being the mother of African American women in leadership positions in higher education, founded the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls (now Bethune-Cookman College) in 1904. The school reflected Bethune's beliefs about the role of women in society, morality, and self-reliance (Farnham, 1997). Bethune expressed that women would be trained in head, hand and heart, their heads to think, their hands to work, and their hearts to have faith." (McCluskey, 1989, p. 122) She understood the importance of African American women being educated, she showed tenacity in her leadership and it is this quality that we attribute to most African American women leaders today as they battle the oppression of race and gender daily.

Bethune and Cooper served as early pioneers for women heading institutions. They have been followed by women who seek to shatter myths in the ivory tower that African American women do not belong. The following women can still be considered pioneers in the field of education. African American women holding the office of president in the United States is still

relatively new. Barriers are continuing to be crushed. In the article entitled, *These Hallowed Halls: African American Women College and University Presidents* Bates (2007) composed a list of African American women college and university presidents. The articled detailed the experiences of African American women presidents of four-year institutions taking office from 1970 to the new millennium. (Refer to Appendix A for an interpretive table containing selected names of women who have been the first to lead PWIs, HBCUs, Research One Institutions, and Ivy Leagues) The table was composed in order to grasp the information. It is not a comprehensive list of all the African American women presidents. Bates list was broken down into decadal categories in order to condense the information.

Bates (2007) research did not look at African American women appointed to two-year institutions, however; she noted that the appointments happened only slightly higher in the two-year sector. According to Chenoweth, Stephens, and Evelyn (1998) many African American women presided over community colleges. In their research they found some served where full-time enrollment exceeds 20,000. Although many strides have been made, women still lag at leading, top institutions and this research suggested that there was still a long way to go. Examining leadership trends serves as a bridge to getting more African American women into office.

Service

African American women must wear many hats in order to maintain balance. Unlike men, women are called upon far more by the community. In an article entitled "Powerful Sisters" (1998) one college president stated, "You get called to do a lot of things just because you're a woman. You get called to do a lot of things just because you are African American" (Chenoweth,

Stevens, & Evelyn, 1998, p. 13) Research showed that minority women in upper level administration positions serve their community far more than their male counterparts. African American women in particular feel the need to mentor younger African American women. African American women are called upon to be mothers, mentors, counselors, dynamic speakers, empathetic listeners, and still do their job better than their male and non-minority counterparts (Edwards, 1998; Nance, 2006; Patitu, & Hinton, 2003). This process can be emotionally draining, thus leading to burnout. Regardless, most in this position agree that outreach is important. The service they provide to the campus community, city, and organizations help in dispelling many of the preconceived notions that people have about Black women.

Legislation in Education

"Historically in America, Black people have found dubious victories in the legal system with regards to the right to an education, a privilege recognized in state constitutions instead of the U.S. Constitution" (Gooden, 2004, p. 231). For African American women, they have also been compounded by victories that have not been meaningful to their struggle. Legislation, such as the historic Brown vs. The Board of Education in 1954, The Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX the Education Act of 1972, The Equal Opportunities Amendment, and Affirmative Action were acts approved in order to prohibit discrimination based on race and blatant gender oppression.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy announced an Executive Order calling for *Affirmative Action*, a law to ensure equality in education and the work force with regards to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin (Sanchez, Hucles, Sanchez-Hucles, & Mehta 2007). The law was intended to eradicate bigotry in the public sector has become one of the most unpopular

legislations. Affirmative Action has forced minorities and women to defend their competency and qualifications (Sanchez, Hucles, Sanchez-Hucles, & Mehta 2007). Affirmative Action was put into law out of necessity. It has been used to stop discrimination for many disadvantaged groups such as persons of color, women and persons with disabilities. As of the 2008 electoral season, four states had banned affirmative action. Title IX prohibits discrimination against students and all related educational professionals on the basis of gender: "Title IX is of central importance in prohibiting sex discrimination in educational institutions" (Williams, 1980, p. 152).

Sex discrimination is a persistent and serious problem for women in higher education. Laws that have been put into play in order to counteract racism and sexism are still challenged today. Many who contest these laws use claims of reverse discrimination, failing to realize that without such laws, far fewer minorities and women would be involved in all sectors of higher education. African American woman by default would be extinct in higher education if legislation such as those previously mentioned had not existed. Without these acts, leadership would not be researched; rather, it would be the basic right to an education.

Summary

James C. Renick, ACE Senior Vice President for Programs and Research, stated, "While we are disappointed with the apparent plateau in the percentage of women and minority presidents, opportunities to diversify the college presidency are likely to be widespread in the coming decade" (ACE roundtable, 2008, p. 1). The success of some African American women who have achieved the presidency will help to dispel some of the negative notions based on racist and sexist beliefs (Bush, 1999). Clearly, race, gender and class play an extensive role in

the lives of African American women leaders and having successful images is a first step. Furthermore, Ramey (1995) stated, “There is a need for more research on African American women…it is important that educators know what African American women are doing, the obstacles they are facing and how they are progressing at institutions of higher education” (p. 118).

Chapter Three

Methodology

The methodology section described the research tools employed throughout the data collection process while examining the leadership development of African American women. This section also addressed the guiding questions, conceptual and theoretical frameworks, purposeful sampling, research design, instrument implementation, data collection process, validity, and participant profiles.

Research Inquiry

In 1974, Cohen and March conducted one of the earliest studies on the presidency and wrote about their findings in their book *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President.* This research conducted investigations at over 40 colleges and universities and resulted in a great profile of the college presidency. However, Cohen and March did not include research on gender and race that could help institutions today understand the diverse needs of African American women who serve as president of colleges and universities. Clearly, they did not identify how African American women achieved the presidency. The overall purpose of this research study was to continue to fill the gap in the literature on African American women and the presidency as well as to chronicle the experiences of four African American women who hold the position of president at various colleges and universities. The intent was to discern their view of leadership as it relates to race, gender, and social class. This investigation employed a qualitative research approach similar to scholars who currently study this particular population (Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Holmes, 2004; Waring, 2003). Quantitative or mixed methods approaches were not applicable for this research study. Qualitative, in contrast to quantitative inquiry, lends itself to produce a wealth of detailed information from a small number of

participants (Patton, 2002). Further, qualitative data have been used frequently in researching leadership, according to Bresnen, Beardsworth, Keil, (1988) "The introduction of qualitative research methods into the study of leadership may improve this area of research by facilitating the introduction of a wider range of contextual variables into the investigation of leadership styles" (p.13). This project was designed using a phenomenological method, a cross-source examination that involves qualitative, critical ethnography, grounded theory, and case study. In detail, phenomenology is an examination of human experiences through detailed descriptions of the people being studied. The procedure involved studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning, a triangulation of data consisting of (1) interviews, (2) campus observations and (3) questionnaires were used to explain the data on African American women presidents and their journey toward leadership.

The research started with the overarching issue of leadership development that examined leadership over the course of a lifetime. Leadership development was used to pinpoint key interactions and experiences of leadership growth and training in each president's life. Gender leadership addressed leadership experiences unique to women. The childhood social class of the presidents was explored to make a connection to family, social economic status, and leadership. Finally, race leadership concentrated on leadership situations that pertain to the African American community. Looking at leadership for the African American woman through these three lenses helped to develop an understanding of how African American women advance and inevitably lead.

Qualitative Inquiry

The use of qualitative research in the field of leadership has shown growth (Bryman & Stephens, 1996). Qualitative research has been considered a naturalistic, interpretative approach that attempts to understand the reasoning which people attach to actions, decisions, beliefs, and values within their social world; inevitably qualitative research is concerned with how people make sense of and interprets the world around them (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Furthermore, qualitative research methods have been developed in the social sciences to better enable researchers to study cultural phenomena. Qualitative findings grow out of three kinds of data collection: (1) in-depth, open-ended interviews, (2) direct observation, and (3) written documents (Patton, 2002, p. 4). A qualitative approach allows the research to go beyond the surface and explore actions, feelings and engage in the richness of storytelling. Examples of qualitative inquiry are case-study research, ethnography, phenomenology, and, biography. According to McCracken (1988), qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to study "patterns of interrelationship between categories" (p. 16) such as race, gender and leadership.

In the last twenty years, more literature has been produced than ever before in order to explore the experiences of African American women by using qualitative research. Collins and Leedy contended that "A person's reality is shaped within a cultural, social, political, and economic landscape that influences how they perceive themselves as well as the individual events that occur that shape and define their reality" (as cited in Holmes, 2004, p. 25). Moreover, the rationale for doing qualitative work was to give a voice to the individuals in this research. This allowed each woman to frame her own perspective, bypassing statistical data to capture the essence of how the "ivory tower" viewed African American women in positions of leadership at

colleges and universities across the United States. The intent was to understand the evolution of leadership as it corresponded to race, gender, and class for the African American woman.

Theoretical Frameworks

The task of finding and applying a theoretical framework that adequately explained the experiences for African American women was challenging (Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Most theories are very general and fail to take into consideration the multiple identities and roles that African American women take on in higher education and other life endeavors. According to Stephens and Phillips (2005), theory grounds how researchers indentify, name, interpret, and write about the unique experiences of African American women. Furthermore, they contended that it is important to identify a theory that reflects African American females' social location and that of others with whom they interact in their world (2005). The two theoretical frameworks that most appropriately grasp the understanding of Black women in higher education were Black feminist thought (BFT) and critical race theory (CRT). These two approaches allow African American women to define themselves. They both took into account societal, cultural and personal phenomena as they address race, gender, and class. Collins (1990) stated that "Multiple identities of race, gender and class are interlocking components of the identities of most African American women. Furthermore, these multifaceted identities are immersed in oppression and subordinate their statuses" (p. 472).

Black Feminist Thought (BFT)

Black feminist thought is composed of three key elements. It was shaped and produced by the experiences African American women have encountered in their lives. It additionally understood that the stories and experiences of each woman were unique; however, there are

intersections between and among African American women. Lastly, while commonalities exist among Black women, the diversity of class, religion, age, and sexual orientation of African America women as a group are multiple contexts from which their experiences can be understood (Collins, 2000). Black feminist thought is more specific in its integration, validation, and centering of Black women's inimitable realities (Few, Stephens, & Rouse–Arnette, 2003, Stephens & Phillips, 2005). According to Stephens and Phillips, Black feminist thought "…rejects the notion of universal laws of behavior, favoring idiosyncratic approaches by focusing on individual functioning, goals, and meaning within Black female realities" (p. 39), allowing in-depth exploration of the Black female experience.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

"Critical race theory was generated by persons of color in the academy who studied law and legal policy and were concerned with racial subjugation" (Delgado & Stefancic; Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey; Villalpando & Bernal, as cited in Howard-Hamilton 2003). Critical race theory stressed the importance of examining policies in the appropriate historical and cultural contexts to deconstruct their racialized content. CRT uses forms of discussion, archives, and personal testimonies because it acknowledges that some members of marginalized groups, by virtue of their marginal status, tell previously untold or different stories based on experiences that challenge the discourse and beliefs of a dominant group (Delgado & Stefancic; Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey; Villalpando & Bernal, as cited in Howard-Hamilton 2003).

Both frameworks allow Black women to use their own voices to articulate their own experiences. Carroll (1982) wrote, "There is no more isolated subgroup in academe than Black women" (p.17). Today, African American women are still isolated in the academy. BFT and

CRT are unique theoretical underpinnings that allow the researcher to go beyond the rhetoric of the dominant culture (which in American society has exclusively been White males) in order to address issues specific to African American women.

Conceptual Leadership Framework

Bolman and Deal (1984) contended that leaders view their experience through a set of preconditioned lenses and filters so powerful that they operate to keep leaders from questioning their view of how an organization works or might work better. They divided theories of organization into four traditions which they labeled "frames." Bolman and Deal (1984) believed that they exist in the ways that leaders think and act in response to everyday issues and problems. Following are the frames and their definitions:

1. ***Structural.*** Leaders who make change using this approach focus on structural elements within the organization as well as strategy, implementation, and adaptation. Changing institutional structures works well when goals are clear, when cause-and-effect relationships are well understood, and when there is little conflict, uncertainty, or ambiguity.
2. ***Human resource.*** Leaders who approach change from a human resource frame focus on people. This approach emphasizes support, empowerment (perhaps through distributed leadership mechanisms), staff development, and responsiveness to employee needs. A focus on people works well when employee morale is a consideration and when there is relatively little conflict.
3. ***Political.*** Leaders who use a political approach to facilitate change focus on the political realities that exist within and outside organizations. This approach emphasizes dealing

with interest groups (and their varying agendas), building power bases, coalition-building, negotiating conflicts over limited resources, and creating compromises. The political approach is appropriate when resources are scarce or diminishing as well as when goals or values are in conflict.

4. ***Symbolic.*** Leaders who make change using a symbolic approach focus on vision and inspiration. Symbolic leaders feel that people need to believe that their personal work, and the work of the organization, is important and meaningful. Traditions, ceremonies, and rituals are very important to the symbolic approach, which is most appropriate when goals and/or cause-and-effect relationships are unclear.

   Retrieved September 12, 2008 from http://www.dangerouslyirrelevant.org/2007/06/bolman_deal_fra.html

Bolman and Deal's (1984) research attempted to identify how leaders see their worlds and to answer two questions: Are there common patterns in the images or lenses leaders employ? Do leaders fine-tune their lenses to fit the circumstances or do they shape the situation to fit their preferred conception? This framework allowed the researcher to cross-reference and analyze results for African American women in order to address an additional question: What is the self-identified leadership model for African American women who hold positions of authority in higher education?

The Bolman and Deal leadership lens theory has a supplemental questionnaire. The researcher did not utilize the Bolman and Deal questionnaire to categorize the presidents who participated in this study. The researcher used their responses to open-ended interview questions, paying special attention to language to identify each president's particular lens of leadership.

Phenomenological Approach

This research presented the argument that race, gender, and class weather direct or indirect played a significant role in the lives of African American women who obtained the presidency. Women leaders having multiple identities associated with race, culture, gender, class, and sexual orientation faced additional challenges to their leadership roles (Chin, 2007). A phenomenological approach helped to explicate how some women navigated through racism and sexism to obtain the office of the president in the nation's colleges and universities.

Interest in phenomenological research has grown steadily over the last decades as researchers have sought to capture the richness of individual experience (Wilson, 1996). As stated previously, the phenomenological approach is a cross-source examination that involves qualitative, critical ethnography, grounded theory, and case study. In detail, phenomenology is an examination of human experiences through detailed descriptions of the people being studied. According to Patton (2002), the foundational question for phenomenology was "What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?" (p.104) This approach explores human experiences and how they alter them into consciousness. The phenomenological approach thoroughly captures how people perceive, describe, feel, judge, remember, talk about and make sense of a particular phenomenon. The approach allowed the research to capture the experiences of African American women presidents and how they viewed their leadership in connection to race, gender and social class.

Purposeful Sampling

The research study examined four African American female presidents of predominantly White institutions, historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and community

colleges. Each participant represented the various sectors of higher education. The following represents the number of participants that were chosen from each sector:

(a) One: Four-year predominantly White institution (PWI)

(b) One: Two-year institution

(c) Two: Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU)

Due to the severely limited number of African American women who hold the position of president, access was limited and the sample was small and necessarily restricted to a particular demographic. The reliability of this research depended on in the ability to interview each participant in person. Patton (2002) argued that in qualitative research there are no rules for sample size. With qualitative inquiry it is not about making generalization for a population but attempting to gain understanding of a specific issue. Therefore, a sample size of four was valid and purposeful for this study (Holmes, 2004).

Participant Selection and Entrée

African American female college presidents were chosen for this study because they represent a voice in the academy that has been marginalized. The office of president was selected because it represents the epitome of one's career in the academy. The president of the university or college serves in the highest office outside of the board of trustees. This position is considered the pinnacle by all accounts. People who generally occupy this position are not ordinarily seeking to advance their career.

Each participant was recruited from the American Council on Education's (ACE) mailing list. All participants fit the designated criteria: (1) self-identify as an African American woman and (2) currently serve as president of a four-year, two-year, or a Historically Black College or

University. Presidents were, to a certain degree based on availability for participation. The researcher used quota selection, which involves the researcher identifying a large group and then conceptually dividing it into subsets based on pre-determined criteria. Then the researcher recruits participants from each subset to participate in the study (Patton, 2002).

During the first phase of participant selection, four presidents were extended an invitation asking for their participation in the research endeavor, with one participant from each of the aforementioned areas. Two presidents agreed to participate. After two declined, three more invitations were sent out to presidents who fit the criteria. Two more agreed to participate, providing the research with the appropriate number of participants. One president did not respond to the invitation.

Ethical Considerations

The number of African American female presidents is so small that it is important to maintain confidentiality with all participants so that information cannot be directly linked to any particular individual. The researcher eliminated all names and affiliate institutions from all written documents. Each participant was given a pseudonym that the researcher coded. The researcher will protect all participants' identities during all parts of research, including when the information is disseminated in presentations and publications. Furthermore, there will be no identifiable data for each participant based on name and institution on any documentation made public. The researcher will maintain the data for three years. After said time has passed, all research materials will be destroyed. Each participant had the right to choose to leave this research study. In that event, another person would have been selected to fill the void. Even upon completion of data collection a participant could have requested that her information not be

used in the study.

Data Collection

Participants received a formal invitation by mail asking for their cooperation in the research endeavor (Appendix B). Participants expressed acceptance first by a verbal commitment via a phone call. Upon acceptance, each participant was sent a consent form by mail and a self-addressed stamped envelope in order to return the form. Each individual was given the opportunity to ask questions by telephone or e-mail prior to completion of the consent form. The informed consent was sent to each participant to gain final entrée and to solidify her participation in the research (Appendix C). Each participant was asked to read the material presented carefully on the consent form. Upon review, they were asked to sign and date the form so that data collection could begin. Once signed, their signatures indicated that they had a thorough understanding of the research and their participation. A triangulation of data consisting of (a) interviews, (b) campus observation and (c) a questionnaire was collected.

Interviews

Each president participated in two interviews. For three presidents an interview was conducted in-person at the interviewee's campus. One president participated in a videoconference. For all participants, the second interview was conducted by telephone exploring follow up questions. Participants were asked if they wanted to convey any additional information that might have been missed in the initial interview. The first interview explored: (1) Self-reports of leadership in the realm of presidency (2) Definition of leadership (3) Exploration of gender and leadership and (4) Race relevance, thus, understanding the leadership for African American female Presidents. See Appendix D for a complete interview question guideline.

Every attempt was made to interview every president in-person however, with one president it proved impossible. The researcher set up a date and time however, due to unpreventable circumstances the president had to cancel and had no other availability on her schedule. She still wanted to offer her voice to the research study and agreed to do a videoconference at her earliest convenience. It was the decision of the researcher to continue with this particular president because of her accomplishments. She currently heads one of the largest two-year institutions in the country and has been in her position for over 15 years. The researcher felt it was necessary to keep someone of her stature in the study. The interview was conducted in the same format of the in-person interviews.

During each in-person interview, the researcher used a digital recorder with the expressed consent of the participant to capture the participant's responses to the open-ended interview questions. The recorder was placed directly on the table between the researcher and participant. The participant was informed when the recorder was turned on and the researcher explained that at any time during the interview, the recorder could be turned off per her request. The recorder had the capability to connect to a personal computer (PC) to upload data for simplified transcription. In addition to the digital recorder, the researcher used a journal to take written field notes pertaining to the demeanor of the participant as well as body language, including perceived comfort or discomfort. The digital recorder captured the conversation when it was inappropriate to take written notes.

Written field notes helped add depth to the interview; in addition, they provided another layer of analysis. Field notes were written in large black and white marble tablets and contained unprocessed observations and insightful notes including census, map, and calendar information

that were later transcribed into detailed field notes. Census data were gathered to paint a visual picture of each president. Mapping provided a visual-spatial view of the physical space and a calendar was created to layout daily activities, routines, and social interactions.

Campus Observation

Each participant was asked to provide brief information about her campus on the institutional/biographical questionnaire. This served as the introduction to the unobtrusive campus observation made by the researcher. The researcher observed the participants in their natural working environments for approximately two hours. The researcher also conducted a self-guided tour of the institutions. For the participant that took part in the videoconference, the researcher later traveled to the school to observe the campus. In addition, the researcher observed the campus culture through demographic data (Appendix E). The revelations of the campus observations were explored in the coming chapters.

Instrument Implementation

Each participant was asked to complete an personal biographical questionnaire which offered an additional layer of investigation prior to the in-person interview (Appendix F). The questionnaire also explored family background and personal information pertaining to educational background and work experience.

The entire data collection process took ten weeks. Interviews were conducted at the participants' convenience between the hours 9:00 am and 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. The location was also left to their discretion; however, they were told that their campus was preferred. Synchronizing the researcher's schedule with each president's proved to be the most daunting task. Their busy schedules were already filled with previously scheduled dates that

required their commitment.

Data Management

Upon completion of each interview, field notes, census information, mapping and calendar data were transcribed into data charts designed by the researcher (Appendix G). A data management grid was then utilized to organize the data charts (Appendix H). The grid consisted of four categorical types (field notes, mapping, census, calendar), quantity (number of pages collected), index (material details), and notes (additional researcher information). All data collected were coded and categorized into themes making a sound connection between the frameworks and research agenda. Superior management of data helped to make the material easier to understand and also played a key role in looking for themes and patterns that were not anticipated.

Data Analysis

When qualitative research is successfully managed, it has the potential to unveil a variety of subject matters. The researcher constructed principal and derivative coding of the data including field note codes and interview codes to pinpoint emerging themes of African American women presidents and how they perceive leadership. The research gathered on the African American women presidents was concurrently compared and contrasted in order to discover recurring patterns and themes; some were predictable while other themes and patterns that emerged were unexpected.

Coding

*"*Raw field notes and verbatim transcripts constitute the undigested complexity of reality" (Patton, 2002, p. 463). The task of the researcher is to simplify the material in order for it

to make sense. Developing a form of classification such as coding is the first step of data analysis (Patton, 2002). Huberman (1994) indicated, "Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (p. 56). The majority of the coding stemmed from the research questions and progressed into emerging themes. The coding allowed the researcher to sort through cumbersome data more efficiently. Axial coding was employed in this research endeavor. This method of coding facilitated building connections within categories -- that is, between categories and sub-categories, and thus serves to intensify the theoretical framework underpinning the data analysis. The coding for this research began by analyzing the research questions that generally lay the foundation for early coding (Huberman, 1994). Coding was done in three stages with each stage providing a deeper analysis of the information.

Triangulation

Patton (2002) indicated that triangulation is a method utilized in qualitative research to cross-reference data; moreover, it strengthens a study by combining methods. Denzin, identified four basic types of triangulation: (1) data triangulation, (2) investigator triangulation, (3) theory triangulation, and (4) methodological triangulation (Patton, 2002, p. 247). Data triangulation, which uses a multiplicity of data sources, was used in this research endeavor. The demographic observation, background questionnaire and interview data sets for each participant were triangulated across data sources. The participants' responses to interview questions, campus observations and personal biographical data were cross-referenced in order to determine if there were reliable emerging themes across the data.

Validity and Reliability

According to Ratcliff (1995), researchers can find validity and reliability in qualitative

research by:

1. Divergence from initial expectations - see personal notes kept from the beginning to see how the data has [sic] pushed the researcher from initial assumptions.
2. Convergence with other sources of data - using variation kinds of triangulation and comparisons with the literature.
3. Extensive quotations - from field notes, transcripts of interviews, other notes
4. Other research data - such as archival data, recordings (video or audio) extensive quotations - from field notes, transcripts of interviews, other notes
5. Independent checks/multiple researchers - more than one person involved in the research of those studied; team research approach or other sources of verification
6. Member checks - where one goes back to those researched, at the completion of the study, and asks them if the researcher is accurate or needs correction/elaboration on constructs, hypotheses, etc. Some take this to the point of the researcher and those researched working together in the planning, conducting, and analysis of results

Retrieved July 7, 2008 from http://qualitativeresearch.ratcliffs.net/Validity.pdf

To find reliability in this qualitative research, the researcher listened as many times as necessary to the audiotapes, and multiple transcriptions of the audiotapes occurred (Ratcliff, 1995). There are many synonyms for reliability; however, the most important are dependability and consistency; they help put the research into perspective. Every effort was made to ensure the highest reliability during this research endeavor. The use of triangulation added to the validity of the research.

Participant Profiles

This section of chapter three presented a profile of each president who participated in the study. In order to maintain confidentiality, each participant was given a coded name only identifiable by the researcher. In addition to coding the names, the participant's institution does not appear in any document. The institutions were written only as PWIs, HBCUs and Two-Year Institutions. The following pseudonyms were used throughout this chapter and the forthcoming chapters for participant protection: Sandra Mask, Helen Smith, Mary Clay, and Vanessa Jones. Each president presented herself in an individual way. All had a commanding presence and spoke with conviction about their leadership but each individual tone was different. Some spoke softer, some more stern. Dr. Clay has held her position the longest and is the most acclaimed of all the presidents, was the smallest and spoke softly. Additionally, the presidents presented themselves as "normal" women. They were not dressed in flashy attire but well-groomed. Each interview flowed naturally and did not come off in a contrived manner.

Presidents Profiles

Dr. Sandra Mask

Sandra Mask was born in a small town in Mississippi, one of seven children. Both of her parents received bachelor's degrees and went on to become teachers. Dr. Mask mentioned in her interview that her parents were fortunate that they came of age during a time when all they needed was bachelor's degree to become an educator. All six of Dr. Mask's siblings have at least attained a bachelor's degree. Sandra Mask, is in her 50s and is currently remarried. She is in an interracial marriage with two adult children. She has authored several books and self-identifies herself as a scholar.

Dr. Mask earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from an HBCU. Shortly after earning that

degree, she went on to obtain a Masters degree in English from a PWI and eventually a PhD in American Literature. She has held most of her professional appointments in the field of higher education. These include Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice Chancellor for Educational Services, Academic Dean, Assistant Professor, and Instructor. She currently serves as president of a bachelor's degree granting Predominately White Institution.

Dr. Helen Smith

Dr. Helen Smith is a native of Florida. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in early childhood education from an HBCU. Her master's of education is in curriculum development from a PWI. She later earned a doctorate of education in educational administration. Dr. Smith did not begin her career in higher education. She served in the primary sector as an elementary school teacher, progressed to serving as a principal, and later became a university professor. Dr. Smith said the transition to higher education was very natural to her. She has served in various administrative capacities including Vice President for Administrative Services, Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs, Assistant Provost, and Dean of Administrative Services. Dr. Smith is currently in her tenth year of service as the president of a small HBCU.

Dr. Mary Clay

Dr. Mary Clay was born in a small town in Kentucky. She is the daughter of farmers and is one of 5 children. Both of her parents did not complete high school. Her mother's highest level of educational attainment was the 9th grade and her father completed the 6th grade. Out of Clay's siblings four went to college. Clay earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from a PWI and eventually achieved her doctorate from a large PWI as well. Dr. Clay began her career as a junior high school teacher and moved on to work in a high school. She made a gradual jump to a dean's position at a small college, and then obtained her first presidency in the 1980s at a community

college in the Midwest. She currently heads one of the largest community colleges in the country and has held the position for over a decade.

Dr. Vanessa Jones

Dr. Vanessa Jones is a native of Philadelphia. She earned her bachelor's degree in sociology from a small HBCU located in the Midwest, where she has a family legacy. She pursued her master's from a larger PWI and 11 years later went to Law school on the East Coast. Upon completing Law school she held several appointments at various law firms.

Dr. Jones has had the opportunity to work at various universities in several capacities such as Acting Director of Admissions, Assistant to the Associate Provost, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid. In 2003 she was appointed as a board member of her undergraduate alma mater and moved in to the position of provost several years later. She currently is entering her second year of her presidency.

Summary

In the book *Sistahs in College* (2001), Johnson-Bailey asserted that Black women do not have the privilege of race, gender or class to trade in a world that grants entitlements based on all three. She further wrote that the issues of race, gender, and class are multifaceted and interconnected in all areas of their lives. This translates into an inability to acquire power, thus creating a canvas of adversity upon which African American women paint their own picture of leadership. Understanding why the experiences of African American women are different from those of other women and those of African American men is steeped in the historical progression and ideology of African American people in the United States (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Furthermore, one cannot address the leader without understanding the context of the past and how different life experiences helped African American women to evolve and advance in higher

education. Many different studies have tied together race and gender but rarely have the two social phenomena been evaluated through a leadership lens. This study addressed race, gender, and social class with the belief that leadership is a lifelong process that is inextricably linked to the three social influences. In order to fully grasp the concept of this study, it is imperative to understand the contextual setting. This research endeavor addressed three contextual issues that helped set the foundation for the research and provides a sound perspective on the socialization process for African American women presidents.

Shakeshaft (1990) reported that previous studies on early research in educational leadership failed to accurately address the issues confronted by women in positions of leadership. Shakeshaft's accounts were correct not only for women but for African Americans as well. Clearly, African American women were absent from early research in education. The foundation of this study was based on open-ended interview questions in order generate in-depth responses, which allowed the researcher to address issues of adversity more so than if a quantitative approach had been used. This study triangulated data and coded research results for strong validity and reliability. Furthermore, this study investigated leadership conception for African American women who lead colleges and universities.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

This study focused attention on the multiple identities that African American women presidents have. It was designed to investigate the self-defined leadership styles of African American women presidents and to examine the role that race, gender, and social class played in their leadership development. The study used the position of President as the vehicle to address the aforementioned questions. This study used a qualitative approach that focused on open-ended interview questions for content analysis.

The purpose of this research was to examine what factors contributed to and defined leadership for African American women presidents. Another goal was to give a voice to these leaders. Furthermore, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the self-identified leadership model for African American women college presidents?
2. Is there a connection between race, gender, and class in leadership development throughout the lives of African American women as they rise to the position of president in the nation's colleges and universities?

The experiences of four African American women presidents were used to explore these questions. The research consisted of interviews, a biographical questionnaire, and a campus observation that provided the information that further developed into themes and patterns that afforded the researcher a plethora of information on these four African American women.

It should be noted that this study does not in any way claim to represent the collective

experiences of African American women who serve as presidents in institutions of higher education. The research study merely presents the experiences of the four African American women who agreed to participate in this study. They are voices within the academy who continuously redefine leadership for themselves, their communities, and their institutions.

Thematic Analysis

According to Richard E. Boyatzis, the thematic analysis was a process utilized for coding qualitative information. This process involved creating a list of themes, wherein the patterns were found in the research described and organized observations with the intent to interpret a particular phenomenon (1998). Therefore, the thematic analysis of the interviews and questionnaires in this research supported one overarching theme and stayed consistent with the researcher's expectations that some African American women presidents believed that their leadership style varied from that of Whites and males. Thus, this was maintained by the emerging themes that answered the two research questions presented in this study.

A summative list of the foundational themes was constructed through the rigorous coding process. These areas were then broken down into more distinct categories and the language used by the participants assisted with the development of the subsequent themes: (a) presidential path; (b) leadership development: defining leadership, leadership foundation, natural leadership, and new leadership perspectives; (c) race construction: definition of racism, racial experience, and race networks; (d) gender construction: definition of sexism, gendered experience, gender networks; (e) race and gender differences in leadership; (f) class construction: family economic structure, family support, religion; (g)mentor relations: seasonal mentorship; and (h) identity. Other themes that emerged included the widespread similarities and differences between the

participants, the civil rights impact, and a large contrast between the African American women in this study and their leadership path in juxtaposition to the traditional male model.

Each theme was carefully observed in order to make sure the dialogue between the participants and the researcher was captured and full attention was given to the voices of the women in this study. This chapter shared results of the interviews conducted in this research beginning with the institutional overviews of the demographic information collected, the presidential overview, including sharing each president's response wherever necessary to the aforementioned themes constructed.

Institutional Overview

Campuses

The institutions selected for this study all offer certificates. Three institutions offer four-year bachelor's degrees. Two institutions offer associate degrees; one institution had some graduate study. The institutions have an approximate enrollment ranging from 900 to 24,000 students. The institutions were located in the Midwest, South Atlantic, and the Upper South. The African American student population at the institutions varies widely from one percent to ninety-eight percent. Lastly, three-out-of-the-four institutions have their first African American woman serving as president.

Presidents' Office Climate

Each president currently has a woman serving as her administrative assistant. Two out of the four employed African American women on that position; two presidents have a White administrative assistant. Each president encouraged a relaxed environment with employees (e.g., open doors to encourage informal employee interaction).

City Climate of the Institutions

The cities where each president served were considered for size, type (e.g., urban, suburban, rural) and racial dynamics. Most presidents of institutions generally have a strong obligation to their communities; therefore, it was imperative to understand the dynamics where they serve. The population of each city area where the presidents worked varied greatly, ranging between 1,647 and 438,000. The racial dynamics of the cities also varied greatly with the largest African American population in one city being eighty-four percent while the lowest was two percent.

Presidential Overview

The following pseudonyms were used throughout this chapter for participant protection Sandra Mask, Helen Smith, Mary Clay, and Vanessa Jones. The presidents in this study were all over the age of 50 with the eldest being in her mid-60s. Three of the women were married and one was a divorcee. Among the three married women, one was in her second marriage. She candidly spoke of his race during her interview saying, "My husband is a White man. So was my first husband; this was not intentional, by the way." Three of the women had adult children; one president had no children. Also, three women were in their first role as president of a University. Three attended HBCUs for their undergraduate education. Two majored in sociology one majored in education and another in literature. All of the presidents received their masters and terminal degrees from PWIs. As previously mentioned Dr. Sandra Mask currently heads a four year PWI, Dr. Helen Smith and Dr. Vanessa Jones lead HBCUs and Dr. Clay heads a two-year institution.

Each woman in the study carried herself in a respectable manner. They all greeted the

researcher with a smile and a handshake. The women also wore traditional business attire.

Three of the presidents spoke with their hands. The participant who conducted a video conference stayed very still throughout the interview and spoke softly. Upon completion of the interviews all thanked the researcher for asking them to be a part of the study. One president offered the researcher a speaking engagement at her institution and another insisted she would become a mentor to the researcher. As the interviews concluded, one president hugged the researcher.

Presidential Path

Achievement of the presidency varied slightly by pathway. Two of the four presidents who participated in the study had aspirations of being K-12 school teachers and administrators. These two presidents began their careers in that sector and eventually moved into higher education. One president wanted to be a writer and began her career in the newspaper business and another president had a career in law. All of the presidents had terminal degrees; three obtained a PhD and one obtained a Juris Doctorate.

Three of them acquired the position of president after the age of 50. One president progressed slightly faster, receiving her first presidential appointment at age 43. Once in the academy, all followed paths that undoubtedly led to the presidency (i.e., Department Chair, Dean, Assistant President, and Provost). Out of the four presidents, only one never held a faculty position.

Each president led responsible career paths in the academy by taking on positions that required a great deal of commitment. Interestingly, none of them actively thought about becoming a college or university president. It took encouragement by colleagues, mentors and

headhunters for them to confirm their potential effectiveness at the presidential level. When asked about her path to the presidency Dr. Mary Clay responded:

> Well, I was encouraged when I was a Dean in Chicago by the president to pursue a PhD. He said, "I see a lot of leadership qualities in what you do day to day… I really think that you are going to move beyond me to get the PhD not so much with the idea that I would be president but I thought ok…I was encouraged during the PhD program to think about a presidency and at that point in time, I really didn't give it a lot of thought since I liked what I was doing. I knew the PhD was certainly a valuable credential to have and so at that point that was kind of where I saw myself. But I think others may have seen something that I didn't at that time. So I did have people pursuing me to take a look at presidencies.

Dr.Clay took her first position in her early 40s and is currently working in her second presidency. Dr. Sandra Mask did not consider a presidential appointment until she was nominated by an outside source for a fellowship. She expressed that she was happy in her position.

> I was nominated for the ACE fellowship program. I learned from the person nominating me what the program was all about. But that was the first notion that I knew there was a pathway to the presidency. I never thought about it. During that year I had a whole lot of time to think about it. I never wanted to do it right away; I just thought it would be something that would come one day.

During that program she realized that there was a clear path to the presidency and if she was going to approach it she wanted to be ready.

> Because no one tells you when you are a faculty member or a student going through

> college programs what the pathway is to the presidency…I wanted to get all my ducks in a row. I would get myself together so that when I wanted to do it I would be in the position. I wanted to go through the steps. I was the department chair when I left for the program... I moved into the dean's position thinking okay, I will spend some time here not really thinking about making a move to the next step right away.

Dr. Helen Smith wanted to become a superintendent, when she reflected on the presidency she said, "It kind of just happened."

Although none of the women in their early career aspirations saw the presidency as a career goal, they are serving a wide range of institutions today. Their time of service ranges from their first year through their fifteenth.

Leadership Development

Each president cited key people who played a role in their leadership development beginning in childhood though their professional career journey. All of these women believed that they were still growing and becoming better leaders every day. Two of the four presidents took the lead of institutions that were facing dire straits. Issues of financial stability plagued the institutions, and there were low faculty approval ratings from the previous presidencies. Dr. Helen Smith said her institution faced significant challenges upon taking over, she felt women get opportunities when institutions are in trouble. She went further by saying:

> They tend to give us the schools when they are in the toilet and once we have brought them back to stability then they begin to undermine and eventually, a male president is elected or appointed. If you look at that pattern, you will see that is truer more often than not. Those of us that survive at all, do so with a great deal of trepidation because they do

> tend to give us the schools that are in great deal of trouble but they don't seem to give them back to us. Or they don't give us the schools that are stable.

President Vanessa Jones shared a similar attitude and stated, "My job is to make things better and I know that." These two women continue to make changes at their institutions.

Defining Leadership

In order to understand the small percentage of African American women presidents and how they viewed leadership, each woman was given the opportunity to define leadership in her own words. This was used to gauge the presidents' perceptions of leadership. As noted in Chapter Two, leadership has a plethora of definitions. Dr. Sandra Mask introduced a new way to look at leadership and varied from the other women in the study:

> I should have looked that word up…I think it's… I am going to go round about...Having both the ability and desire to listen and to hear, to accept input. You can ask for it but you have to accept it, and the willingness to make decisions based on all of that. You just have to be a good follower. You have to be both selfish and unselfish. There has to be a want for yourself. Whether people admit it or not you are motivated for you. It does not have to be monetary or an accolade but just self-satisfaction that you are able to get it done. And the unselfishness I think comes with being able to share that leadership with others. Being able to share being in charge with others.

Dr. Mary Clay emphasized the leader/led relationship:

> I think in many ways it is a position [leadership] of responsibility whereby you influence those who are following you and working with you to maximize their contribution and their potential around whatever common purpose there may be.

Dr. Helen Smith utilized the words of her student to explain her definition of leadership.

> Well, one of my student's defined leadership as the ability to make people do things that they don't want to do. As I thought about it over the years I think that he was probably on to something. We tend to think of leadership as all the glowing aspects.

Leadership Style

When they were asked to think about their leadership style after defining leadership, they approached it very carefully. Some used terminology associated with transformational leadership while others professed that they do not have a particular style. Dr. Sandra Mask said "I don't get into discussions of consensus building, saying this is my leadership style… I don't get into that…" She went further to say:

> People always ask me. I say if anything, there is a leadership from the heart and gut, being intuitive to decide what's right. Knowing that you can't do it by yourself. But also not going in there thinking that I have to reach consensus; I got to be transactional, I have to be informative. I got to do this, that and the other. It is knowing that you have to get something done and that it is going to take a number of those characteristics in order to be able to actually follow through in order to make something happen.

Natural Leadership

While giving an overview of their leadership styles, it was normal for them to talk about past leadership experiences. Dr. Helen Smith expressed that she had natural leadership abilities.

> Well, if you were to ask the people who have been on my journey with me, they will tell you that I am a natural leader. I have always been a leader. I have always been the person to take charge.

In an oblique way, all of the women expressed that they had natural leadership abilities. They also addressed the issue by talking about their early commitments. Dr. Sandra Mask said:

> …There were these small steps and seemingly small things that helped out the lives of others. It was my principle, no choir. I made things happen. I think after you get a taste of telling people how to do things right then you try to get more involved.

New Leadership Perspective

No matter how each person perceived leadership development or leadership styles, each president expressed in that she had changed over the years in her leadership practices, explicating that they had stayed true to themselves, while growing each step of the way. Dr. Sandra Mask began the discussion by saying:

> Well, you know I say that I am still learning leadership because some of it is foundational. When I went to church or Sunday school, I read because my parents had us reading our Bible stories. I found out what it meant to be a good person. Not just a good Christian person but a good spiritual person and you don't forget that. It figures very

highly in the leader that you become. Because you don't forget to do unto others as you want them to do unto you. You don't forget to just play fair…you just carry forward a lot of that.

She further went on and talked about her growth as a leader in retrospect:

I have grown to the extent that there are things that bother me but they bother me in different ways. I analyze it--I don't just simply take it and consume it and own it. Instead I think about what that person must be feeling in order to make such statements. Or to do the things that they do and then you come at it differently…If you are thinking about being human or thinking about others treating others well, then what you are going to do is think about how you are going to do it without killing this person or their self- esteem. But I think at a younger time I would have just slapped them and moved on because they earned it. You feel badly about it afterwards because it kicks in and you think well, maybe I shouldn't have done that. As you grow as a leader, you really start to think about it. You broaden your perspective, your thinking about any given situation. You look at it from fifty different angles and vantage points and you speak slowly-- you don't speak fast. You give yourself time to respond. You learn that you don't have to quickly come back. There used to be a time where I would think I've got to put this person in his or her place or they will walk all over me. Well no, that is not necessarily true. You make them wait sometimes. That is the worst because they are waiting and wondering...I have grown but there is a lot of [Sandra] still here but a maturing [Sandra].

Dr. Helen Smith spoke of her increasing knowledge, identifying political prowess as part of her new mature style.

> Over the years I have become more politically savvy. I have learned that you can't fight all the battles even when you are right. You have to evaluate the best and most substantive outcome. Sometimes you have to take a chance and pick the battles. I have learned to become more politically astute; I have learned to find the power source. I have learned to strategically convince both sources to think like I do, as opposed to running head off with right in one hand and wrong in the other.

As she reflected on her growth she believed she had evolved as a leader giving credit to her patience.

> I think from that vantage point the evolution of leadership has occurred. Patience has always been the defining attribute for me. In terms of where personality and leadership have emerged, I do not think that I am different now than I was 20 years ago. I have always been an advocate for what I believe in. I ask the questions always "What is the worst case scenario?" and if I can live with what it is and I believe I am on the right path then I am not hesitant.

Dr. Vanessa Jones said "I never wanted to be that oppressive kind of dictator leader and even here people frequently say to me you can do whatever you want because you're the president." She believed in the past she search for authority but now she searches for consensus. Each president appeared very secure in her leadership style. These leaders presented themselves as competent leaders of their institutions.

Race Construction

When talking about race, Dr. Jones and Dr. Clay talked about their experiences. They shared stories of adversity which they described as part of the times; the era that they grew up in put racism into perspective for them. They viewed racism in a way different from Dr. Mask and Dr. Smith who were only ten years younger than them. However, all of the women used similar language when defining the phenomenon of racism. The following definition given by one president is representative of the women in this study:

> Well, I think racism is both real and perceived. I think it is an accumulation of ideas and perceptions that cause one group to think that another group is superior or subordinate, incompetent or competent, or unequal to one another…A series or accumulation of facts or myths that cause two or three different groups of people to fail to see similarities and feel that they are equal or unequal.

Along with the definition of racism came stories of times when they were the victims of it. Dr. Jones stated, "I can remember one situation like it was yesterday. What this woman said to me is the reason why I am here today." She then went into detail and described a situation that had happened nearly 30 years ago:

> The Associate Provost of Humanities who had a discipline in French said to me one day, "You think very highly of yourself don't you?" I responded by saying, "Yes I do. My parents taught me that I was capable. She didn't make a comment after that. So to me, that just came out of nowhere and when I left the office I knew that it was time to go.

Dr. Jones had another experience with a subordinate at the same institution.

> There was a secretary who was White that didn't want to work for me to the extent that she cried "boo whoo whoo" and just had a big uproar in the office and they were prepared to find her something else instead of making her deal with it…I was the first to come in at a professional level. I let it be known if this is the way they are going to operate and let this employee dictate the university's approach to racism, it would be an insult to me if she was permitted not to work for me. Well, they folded and she had to work for me. It was horrible but I decided it is her horror not mines. So I was beginning thinking again this is not the place for me…it is time to go.

Dr. Mask who did not see race so much as a factor still had her own experience with the situation:

> We have this joke since I have been at this position. I was telling someone when I was at the art center, I was in this crowd of people and there are only so many Black people and on any given occasion I could be the only Black person in the room with lots of people. This guy walks up to me and says, "Good evening." Then he says, "Do you realize that you are the only African American in this gathering?" I said to him, "Oh my God! I am Black!" The guy jumped.

She told a group about the situation that had occurred:

> I was telling this women's group and they went "Ah, the nerve of him." They got angry and upset and I had to tell them "This is life." People can walk around smiling and pretending but there are some daggers out there and I know what some of them have done and so it is there. You just have to know that it is there, but you can't walk around with blinders on and not think about it. You have to figure out your response to it and my

response is…that is your problem.

She continued with her story and talked about transcending race. She said "[that] situation was just one in my life but I won't let it define me or this job."

> I took on the job here and I took it to heart. I am here. I remember telling one of my board members this story and he turned to me one day and said, "Oh my God! You are Black." What they say to me is because of how you carry yourself and the way that I act; they don't even remember--they forget. That is what it is about. That is my goal, to transcend race in order to get things done. If it is always in your head then you will always be thinking and looking through a race-colored glass. So I prefer to look through my glass.

Each woman had her own story about race. Two of the presidents did not see the purpose for race in their careers and the other two thought that it permeated every level and had an impact on how they viewed leadership.

It has been documented that many female college presidents Black and White feel isolated in their positions. The women did not really describe isolation but their professional networks at the racial level were, in fact, limited. Every president reported not actively belonging to any particular group race. Three had the desire to get more involved with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Urban League but did not have time. All of the women were affiliates of historically Black Greek-lettered organizations. In no particular order, there was one member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, one member of Zeta Phi Beta, and two members of Delta Sigma Theta. All of the women reported that they had not been active at the graduate level in years because of lack of time.

Gender Construction

In order to understand how gender plays a role in the lives of the presidents, they were asked a series of questions pertaining to this topic. The two presidents who spent more time talking about race did not share the same concern for gender. Dr. Jones said, "I am Black before I am a woman." She contributed her feelings about gender to the feminist movement:

> … I think that comes from some of my own views about feminism. That started in the late 60s-70s and I have issues around other groups who have piggy-backed on the civil rights work we did in the '50s and '60s and during slavery times. There were very hard civil rights movements that were very violent and when White women were fighting for the vote they thought okay, we can get out Black sisters but only for that. But when the meeting is over you go back to…being oppressed. So I have some historical feelings around the whole feminist movement.

She further described how she related to the womanist view over feminism:

> But in the theological realm, there were some Black women in theology school in the 70s and 80s that created this doctrine called the "Womanist" that is more related to Black women. So, I would say that I look at it in that way. My depth of being a woman, I guess it does influence my leadership, but it really is secondary and I think I have my flashpoint around sexism. If I think it is a gender sexism issue, particularly if it is coming from a White woman. I do kind of go off on that whole historical perspective. You know in the 50s and 60s, the door we opened and the door you walked through and now you are trying to close the door. So when I see it coming from a man I just chalk it up to sexism or chauvinism.

Dr. Mask and Dr. Smith who did not perceive race as influential did so with gender. These two women perceived gender and sexism to be their largest hindrance in the work place shared stories of sexist behavior. Dr. Smith recalled interactions with male colleagues.

> As a college president, coming into a situation where the scope of a situation and the need to be a part of certain networks-- that is when I realized it…There were opportunities. There were perceptions and interactions that occurred because I was a woman. The newspaper took issues with things that they would have ignored in a man. A lot took exceptions and allowed in previous presidents because I was the first female president of this institution. Things that they allowed from other presidents -- they had issues if I did them. The tendency to be greeted with a hug and a kiss as opposed to a handshake.

She continued by saying that she is very passionate about gender. Her sentiments were shared with another president and they both expressed that they were part of numerous gender organizations. Several organizations included the American Council of Education Office of Women in Higher Education (OWHE), and the women's network. In fact, both women were in the process of starting gender specific groups in their city.

Race and Gender Difference in Leadership

Each president was asked to reflect on the differences between race and gender leadership in comparison to their counterparts (i.e., White male and female and African American males). Dr. Clay and Dr. Jones were very clear that their leadership styles varied greatly from their counterparts, while Dr. Mask and Dr. Smith believed that their leadership varied only by gender. Dr. Smith shared her views on the issue:

> I definitely think African American women have a different leadership style than African American men. I think women lead differently than men, period. I do not know if our leadership style is as significantly different from White women. I have White women colleagues who have similar personalities and when we come together, we have similar obligations and we make similar decisions. White presidents have some advantages in general that Black presidents don't have because I think the network of fundraising and accesses are easily available and ready for them. But I think there are some people who have defied that for African American women -- the Bill Harveys and Dorothy Ann's and Beverly Tatum's who are presidents at Black institutions have also opened up networks, but I do think that women presidents lead differently than male presidents overall . I am not sure that the racial factor is that significant.

The belief that race was not significant in their leadership was not shared by all presidents. Dr. Clay recognized the cultural impact race had on her life:

> I think we come out of the culture that we grew up in, that we know and we come out of the gender that we again have been oriented to, and how we view the world often gets translated into how you take in information, how you learn and I think all that information comes back to you in your leadership role. So there are things that I do or decisions that I make that I know are from that experience base that I have as an African American female growing up.

Class Construction

The leaders provided thoughtful reflections on their childhood and shared stories of leadership development that happened over the course of their lives. Each president spent the most time on this section. Dr. Jones said, "I bet you get a lot of people that spend a lot of time on this section. We don't get asked to reflect often on our past. Everything is now." Dr. Mask and Dr. Clay grew up poor in rural areas and spent a lot of time in farming environments. When Dr. Mask reflected on her childhood experience she said, "We were not lower-class, we were po [sic]." She continued by describing life on the farm:

> I grew up in this area, very, very rural on a farm. We depended on the farm crops for our living. My father worked out of the house or home…My sister told me that they ate turnips an entire winter because times were just that bad… But we were very poor but we had land. My father's family had quite a bit of land. We were not in a class…just plain and simple poor…There were seven children and we lived in a two bedroom home and it wasn't until high school by the time we had running water in the house. But we had a very fancy outhouse we had an old one and a new one very fancy.

Dr. Jones grew up on the East Coast. She considered her family working class by all accounts. Dr. Smith had the unique opportunity of growing up on an HBCU campus where her parents worked and she contributes much of her leadership to this environment:

> My parents were college professors. I grew up on a college campus. I grew up in a neighborhood of very educated people. By most standards, I grew up entitled and middle-class. My grandfather was a physician and my grandmother had her degree from

> an HBCU. By most standards we were considered middle-class or upper-middle class… growing up around an HBCU, it was a continuous environment that fostered self-confidence and leadership. Not being told that we had to be better than somebody else but being told we had to be the *best*. I think that played a tremendous role in those who went on to be in leadership positions as adults.

Since Dr. Mask and Dr. Clay grew up on farms they talked about the commitment and responsibility they learned in their environments. The following statement was made by Dr. Clay on the responsibility she learned on the farm:

> There is an expectation on a farm that everybody works; they work hard and everybody else's job is dependent on someone else. There is a lot of team work in getting things done. Everybody has to pitch in. Um, you don't run away from hard work. My dad had a quote that said, "There is no elevator to the top; it is one step at a time" so I learned very early that you work hard, you have to be persistent in your work, and I think I learned that on the farm.

All of the participants talked about the expectation to go to college from their families. Dr. Mask, Dr. Smith and Dr. Jones mentioned that it was not an option not to go. Dr. Jones recalled her school being a legacy in her family:

> The expectation that we would go to college was not up for discussion and really where we went was not up for discussion. My mother went to an HBCU. It was a family school. My mom was the first; I call her the pioneer. She came from a little town …She came out here in the 40s but then in the 50s her brother came and in the 60s my cousin,

her niece, came then I came. Then in the 90s my daughter came. So we have a legacy here.

Dr. Clay spoke about her family and how imperative education was to them as a way out:

> I think they realized that since we were not a family of very much education …[it] meant a new opportunity for us to get out of this little town of 2800 people and an opportunity for us to pursue a career to provide us with financial stability in our lives. They didn't have a lot of money to help us in terms of going to college and particularly my dad. The goal was to help everybody get through high school and then to do whatever they could to help with college, but for the most part there was no money for tuition. But in my case, my dad had some connections at the state university that I chose to go to. My dad asked him if it was possible for me to get a work study job there working in the cafeteria. So they helped out where they could by making connections and introducing us to people to make contact with who then might be able to help us with our goal…My older sister went into the army and became a registered nurse getting her education through the military, so we all found different ways to finance it, those of us who went to college.

Each president commented on their parents' support that was given to them as children. For most it was positive. However, for Dr. Jones, she spoke about her mother and how all her life she had to prove to her mother she was good enough.

> Mother let it be known that she never wanted girls; they were too much to deal with. When my little brother died at age five, mother was devastated and never really got over

> it. However, Pop Pop's support was always there. He was proud of us for everything we did.

Other presidents spoke of the unwavering support of their parents. Dr. Mask said her parents were proud of everything she did:

> Each time I've moved from one position to the next, my parents always told me how proud they were. Even when I finished school, quite often they did not have the money to travel to graduation but they were still proud. Every step I made, they were applauding. They wanted to make sure your picture was in the paper, The little local paper. Urging you saying, "See I told you, you could do it." They would do that if you got married, got a new car; it was just this encouragement that they had.

During the presidents' discussions of family life, Dr. Mask, Dr. Clay and Dr. Jones mentioned the role of religion and when asked to expound on that topic, the three presidents all said it played a significant role in their lives. Dr. Smith who did not speak about the strong role religion played in her life gave credit to spirituality:

> Spirituality plays a role for me. In order to get through these positions without going crazy you have to believe there is a master plan that you are here for a purpose. But I cannot in all good conscience say that I rely on religion or that I have turned to religion at difficult times.

Dr. Clay, who said religion played a significant role in her life, agreed that spirituality did as well. She was keen to mention that they are very different.

> I would say both religion and spirituality and they are very different…I grew up in a home of ministers so religion has always been a huge factor for me. My maternal grandfather was a minister. My mother's only brother was a minister so I grew up in the home of ministers almost all my life. So I grew up AME Zion and Baptist. One of my mentors, my godmother, was Catholic, a very devout Catholic, so my wedding was Catholic, Baptist and Methodist …so I had exposure to religion but I think the area that was most helpful to me was the area of spirituality.

Mentor Relations

Throughout the interviews, all of the women spoke of varying relationships in their lives with different people. When asked if they considered them mentors, all agreed to some extent. Dr. Smith spoke of her father being her first mentor:

> My dad was analytical and a great critical thinker. I was always able to bounce things off of him. He helped me build confidence and self-esteem. He was very sure that I was protected and took chances and moved through this evolution of leadership.

Dr. Mask spoke about all the different people and many of them she considered mentors.

> I did not have a main mentor, but several. I did not make choices on whether they were men or women but what could I learn from them and how supportive could they be of me and I of them. So I have had them probably at every step along the way and sometimes I have mentors who serve different purposes or for different things. I play to their strength in terms of leadership and leadership goals; that is how I mirror myself, so not one but many. I would advise anyone coming along to do that. Yes you can have a main person

> that you talk to, but after a while you begin to sound like each other. You don't know where you end and they begin. After you learn the person, you can pretty much know what they would say for you to do in a situation.

She was then asked if it could be considered seasonal mentorship and she responded, "Yes, when you look at it that way." She explained that as they are mentors to her, she is a mentor to them.

> There are folk who I consider mentors to me whom I met ten years ago. I see them at a conference and I can call them. There is a women that I met who is now a chancellor of a large system, an African American woman who I can call and say, "What do I do?" Then you become almost co-mentor. Kind of a co-dependency. Then I have a friend and mentor who is a president of a totally different type of institution. There have been things that she says where I asked, "How did you get them to this place?" I just believe it takes more than one person to keep me in line. It takes a village to raise me…to keep me raised**.**

Identity

The researcher ended each interview by asking the participants to reflect on self-identity. How could they do a job that is so demanding and still maintain their own sense of identity? All four women laughed instantly at the question following up with, "That is a good question!" Dr. Jones said, "I don't know if I do. I go home thinking about the university. I cannot turn it off." Dr. Smith said, "I am not sure that many of us do. I think that is the challenge that we face on a day-to-day basis." Dr. Mask spoke about the daily struggle; she feels her identity is the university but makes a conscious effort every day.

> You know I am not sure I have an identity other than what I am here. I think that I have interest outside of being president. And maybe I learned a lesson from the way that some women treated me when I did not have a title that you got to be somebody without the title. So when I am interacting with a lot of women (I am on a lot of boards) and I am sure that the reason I am invited to a lot of events has to do with my position in the community. But I would like to think that once I get there it is not because Sandra is president of [institution] but Sandra is the kind of person who will get things done. Someone who we want to be around. When I am there I tell people all the time when they say "President Mask" or "Dr. Mask", I say "My name is Sandra." They say "Really?" I say, "Yes, I am Sandra and if I can continue being Sandra then when I am no longer president Mask I am I still have an identity. " It is not [husband's name] wife or [children's names] mother. It is Sandra. It is not the title.

Dr. Clay spoke about maintaining her identity by always being true to herself:

> I bring who I am everyday to the job as president, who I am in the role of the president. I decided early on when I was going through the ranks that if people were hiring me, they were hiring me. They wanted the personality, the imperfections; they wanted me. I couldn't be somebody else. I couldn't out-male a man or be a different type of person than I am. I had to bring my unique set of skills and personality background, culture, religion belief, and values. I bring all of that every day to the role. It is me at the table -- take it or leave it.

Each woman was asked if they have a particular philosophy in life about leadership. Dr. Jones replied, "In all things excellence." When I started working here I believe that we needed a

new outlook. When working with Black colleges, the perception of others is that things are always kind of "not excellent" but I wanted to change that perception. Dr. Smith said:

> Well, actually it is interesting. The one that keeps coming back in some form or another is actually a prayer, the serenity prayer. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference." Probably the most critical thing for a leader is the wisdom to know the difference.

Dr. Mask responded

> Well, I do a daily reading. I can't depend upon one proverb but something that keeps me going is "Let Go, let God" It is everyday on a daily basis. My husband and I have this ritual. (We are into unity, not Unitarian, but unity.) They have something called the "daily word" so every day my husband reads the daily word to me. Every day it speaks to my existence. It keeps me grounded; it keeps me. But my favorite of all these is "Let go and let God."

Dr. Clay provided a simple quote, "Is it right for students?"

Similarities and Difference

Despite the fact that the interviews were conducted in a similar manner for each participant, some questions yielded very different responses while others were almost verbatim. For example, when asked about a particular phrase or philosophy that they used in their leadership, their answers varied greatly. Two presidents used phrases that are directly connected with their institution: "In all things excellence." In contrast, the other two presented phrases of a Biblical or spiritual nature.

The four African American women also gave a variety of answers when asked to describe leadership. Their answers ranged from “I am more politically savvy now” to “inspiring others to see your vision” but despite their differences, they all eventually arrived at the same point that leadership is about the constituents they serve.

Two women spoke extensively about White males who gave them opportunities. They gave them credit for being mentors in their lives. The other two spoke extensively about their fathers being their first mentors and strongest influences. All of the women talked about having different people in their lives at different times throughout their career that made an impact. Additionally, three of the women cited a “sister circle” as being their sounding board more than any mentor at this particular time in their career.

Three of the women had parents who graduated from high school and two had parents who went to college; however, only one had parents who actually graduated from college. For the three women who had parents with high school diplomas, all were encouraged to go to college. All of them said it was not an option. Dr. Clay retorted that her parents really pushed graduating from high school. All of the women come also come from families of at least two children.

The two women who were born prior to 1949 (which would make them at least 61) identified race as being their largest hindrance. They both cited times in their career when they had been denied jobs, awards and recognition based on racial bias. They talked about their commitment to the African American community over gender. The two women who were in their fifties shared similar views about gender; they credited gender as being their largest challenge. They both cited times in their career when they had been denied jobs, awards, and

recognition. Regardless of their views on race and gender, all still shared stories of racial disparity in their lives.

To conclude, despite the differences in their socio-economic statuses growing up, all of the women achieved presidential status. None of them ever imagined being president of an institution. They all worked hard and gave tirelessly of themselves. All of the women showed their ability to overcome adversity and achieve success. Finally, although the presidents found time to participate in this research endeavor, they all talked about time being the one commodity that they did not have.

Civil Rights Impact

All of the women were born prior to 1959 which meant that they spent a large part of their childhoods in the heart of the civil right movement. Dr. Clay, Dr. Mask and Dr. Jones talked about the civil rights specifically, although Dr. Smith did not mention the civil rights by name, it was evident the impact it had on her education. Dr. Clay, Dr. Mask and Dr. Smith attended segregated elementary, middle, and high schools. Dr. Mask said her high school became desegregated the year after she graduated. Dr, Clay said her high school became integrated during her senior year. The researcher did not ask about the civil rights specifically but the presidents who talked about it shared certain veracity in their stories. Dr. Mask recalled a troubling situation that her family faced:

> I grew up in a time when… I can't remember how old I am, but I can remember the freedom rides. I remember the KKK and the threats that they would give to churches because I happened to be in a church for a church conference when one was issued and I had to leave. One time my niece and my father were coming back from something out of

> town and this was probably in the 80s late 70s mid to late 70s and they rounded the curb and over in the field were KKKs going through their rituals and my father said, "Just drive on." That is a fact of life. Those folk do whatever they want. They are some of the same folks that will greet you by day and put on a robe at night. But that is kind of what I grew up around.

These women have developed strong coping mechanisms. Their views of race and racism showed that. Dr. Jones said she was so inspired by the times that she majored in sociology "so I could change the world. Now look at me behind a desk…I am so far from where I thought I would be." She was almost saddened by the thought. However, she feels she is making a difference at her HBCU where she leads.

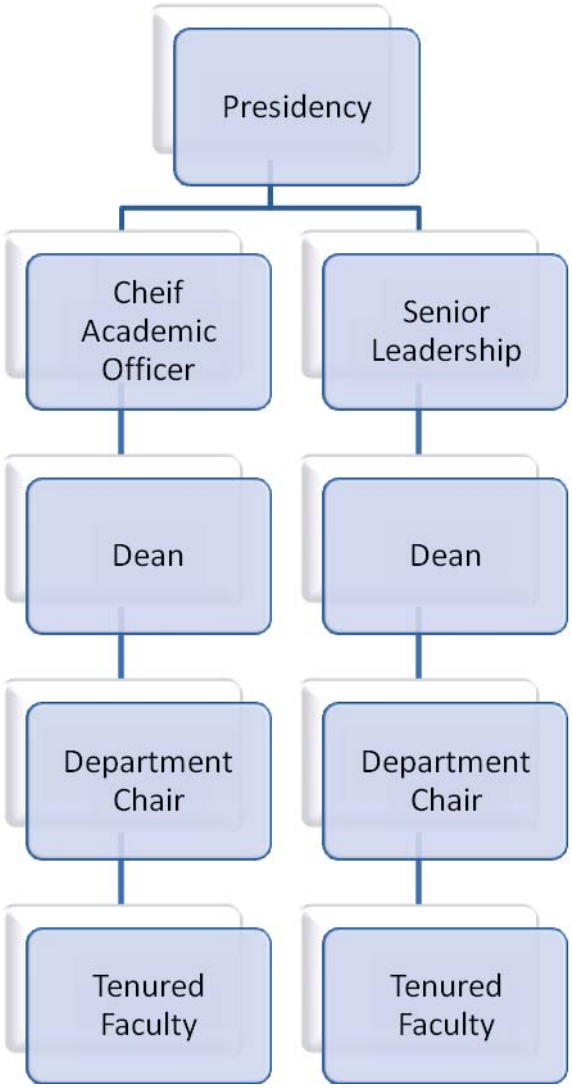
Contrasting leadership

According to Nealy (2008) the traditional route to presidency is tenured faculty to department chair to dean to chief academic officer, possibly a senior administrative position and then the office of the presidency (See Figure One).

Nealy believes that minorities are not afforded the opportunity to follow this traditional path. This path is one traditionally followed by White males. Only one person in this study followed the traditional path. She was also the youngest person in the study. The three other women varied in their climb to the top. One president never served as a faculty member, another jumped right over the senior leadership and chief academic officer positions. Dr. Jones said "I know I am not the traditional option for president." Clearly a large contrast exists between African American women in this study and their leadership path versus the traditional male model to the presidency.

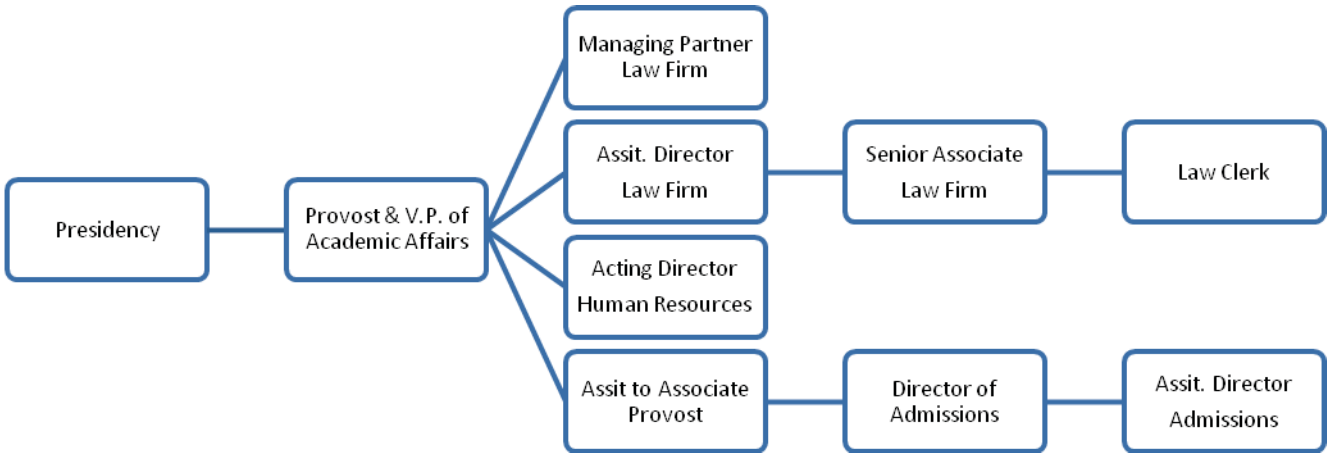
Traditional Path to the Presidency

Figure 1



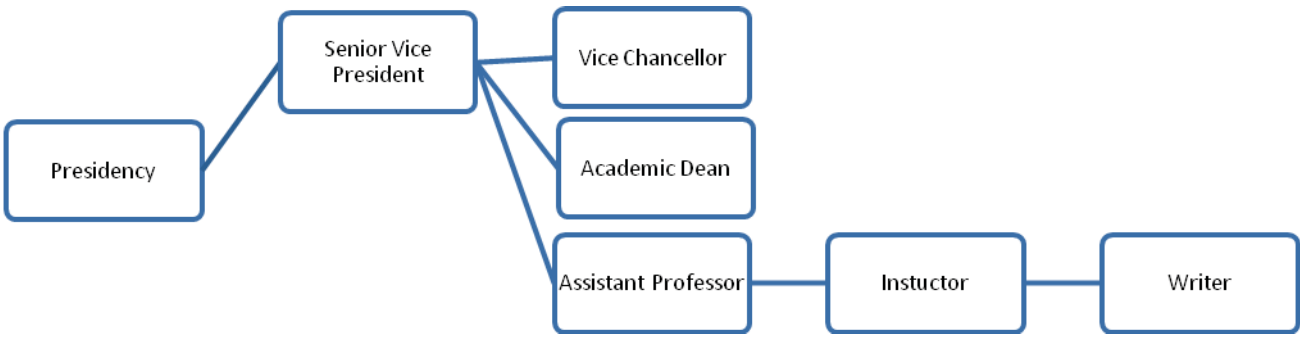
Non-Tradition Path to the Presidency
Dr. Vanessa Jones

Figure 2



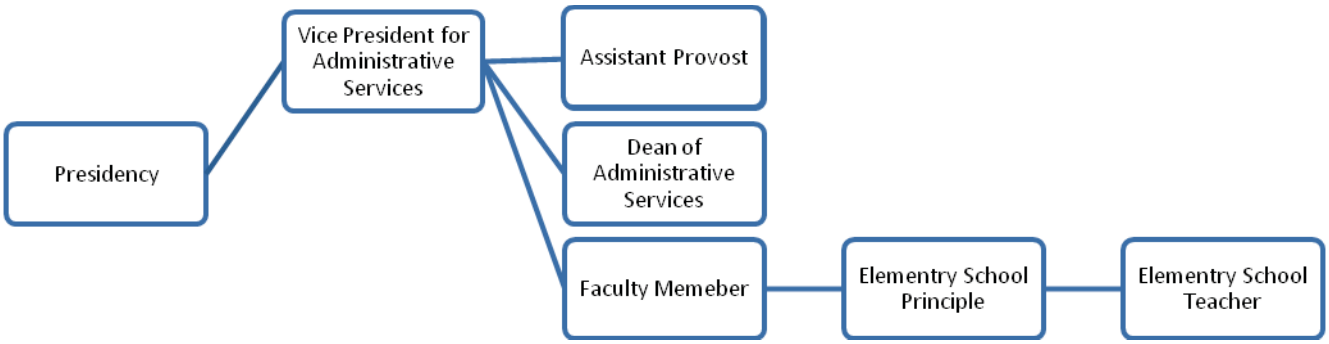
Non-Tradition Path to the Presidency
Dr. Sandra Mask

Figure 3



Non-Tradition Path to the Presidency
Dr. Helen Smith

Figure 4



Non-Tradition Path to the Presidency
Dr. Mary Clay

Figure 5

Directives of the Study

This study began with two research directives: 1.) What is the self-identified leadership model for African American women college presidents? 2.) Is there a connection between race, gender, and class in leadership development throughout the lives of African American women as they rise to the position of president in the nation's colleges and universities? The qualitative approach used in this study addressed the aforementioned areas.

Self-Identified Leadership Model

The African American women in this study were incongruent with the literature when talking about a leadership model/style. The women in this study did not immediately jump to a transformative model as the literature suggests. Some believed that they are a combination of all the leadership models. One president stated, "You have to be able to adjust. People call me 'transformative' all the time but I think my style changes depending on the situation and the constituents." Results from this study revealed there is no particular style of leadership with which the African American women presidents in this study verbally identify. Many used language representative of transformational leadership such as "motivation", "inspire," and "collaborative" but refused to be positioned into a particular category.

Summary

This research discovered that race, gender and class play a significant role in leadership development and perspectives; surprisingly, in this study they are not inextricably linked. Some garnered more weight than others. For two of the presidents, race was the most significant construct in their leadership. For them, commitment to the African American community outweighed their gender. One president said, "I feel more of a commitment to the racial

expectations frankly than I do the gender ones… I feel more of a commitment in terms of mentoring or helping. If I had to pick one over the other it would be African American over gender."

For two other presidents, gender dominated their sphere of leadership. One president said, "I am hell on wheels towards women." These two women did not quite believe that racial equality had been achieved but refused to become a victim to it. They felt the stagnation in women's advancement at this particular time in society far outweighed other social constructs.

All four women talked sincerely about their past. None of the presidents in this study expressed dismay. They did not mention their social class growing up as being a negative factor. They are all success stories. All of them gave credit to their childhoods for instilling in them fundamental values. Dr. Mask claimed, "They were values that you don't find in a classroom." Social class appeared to be a silent but salient factor for all of the presidents.

This chapter provided the results for the African American women who participated in this research. Sharing their responses on particular questions and themes derived from the study illustrates that there are various similarities and differences between the African American women presidents who participated. The following chapter will expand the results found in this study.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The typical American college president is a 60-year-old White male who previously served as a Chief Academic Officer. The women who participated in this study represent the polar opposite vision of a university president. Studies similar to this one continue to report that African American women presidents lead colleges and universities well and are highly qualified; nevertheless, their leadership continues to be overlooked. Although they have significantly increased in numbers in the last 30 years, they have not yet reached equality with their White and male counterparts. This research postulated that it is time for a change to take place in the academy.

According to Kirwan, (2008) "Current data suggest a changing of the guard in campus leadership. A significant number of institutions stand to lose their presidents to retirement in the coming years. How we take advantage of this window of opportunity will reveal a great deal about how serious the higher education community truly is in our calls for greater racial and gender diversity at the presidential level" (p. 5). The academy has a rare and unique opportunity to make a paradigm shift in leadership in the coming years. The researcher hopes that African American women will be included in the shift. The purpose of this research was to examine what factors contribute to and define leadership for African American women presidents. This study used a qualitative approach and examined the formative experiences of these women.

The measure of commitment to diversity by institutions plays a role in the success of this group. The academy's ability to understand race, gender, and social class of African American women aids in comprehending their leadership abilities. The women who participated in this

study are as different as the literature that exists, as to how these areas affect their leadership and how their leadership differs from that of men. As more African American women emerge as presidents of American institutions, more research will identify specific patterns that relate to them as presidents. This research is one of the few studies about this subject and one of several dissertations that have emerged in the last several decades that attempt to validate the leadership experiences of African American women presidents.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter One discussed the importance and rationale for researching African American women college presidents. It gave insight into the contributions this type of research can offer to the field of education and leadership. It also explored the research problem and introduced the reader to leadership, race, and gender inquiries. The research questions that served as the guiding structure for the study were introduced in this chapter.

Chapter Two reviewed the relevant literature pertaining to this group. It addressed issues of leadership theories, race, gender, and family social class. One significant issue that emerged from the literature review was the scholarly work that is divided on whether African American women presidents' leadership is different from their counterparts.

Chapter Three detailed the methodology and tools employed for data collection in this study. In-depth interviews, a biographical questionnaire and campus observations were used to gather and analyze the data. It explained the phenomenological approach that was used to address the life-long experiences of the participants. Four African American women presidents who were chosen from the American Council on Educations presidential mailing list were selected to participate in this study. Next, the participants' locations were surveyed based on

convenience to the researcher. Two women represented different types of colleges and universities. Black feminist thought, critical race theory and the Bolman and Deal leadership lens theories all provided a relevant framework for use in this study.

Chapter Four presented the information gathered through the data collection process. Additionally, it used the voices of the participants to explain the foundational questions through derived themes identified by the researcher in the course of thematic content analysis. The researcher also used the interview questions as a guide.

Findings

The results presented in this study provided insight into the leadership development and experiences of the four participants. The study also served as a platform for the women to share their stories of adversity, persistence and motivation to succeed. Directed by Black feminist thought, critical race theory, and the Bolman and Deal leadership frames, this study examined the influence of race, gender, and class on leadership development for African American women presidents. The primary purpose of this chapter was to expound upon the results in the previous chapter.

Question One: Self-identified Leadership Model

This research began seeking to answer "What is the self-identified leadership model for African American women college presidents?" The reason for undertaking this question was to gain insight into the leadership development of African American women presidents. There are two major leadership models that dominate the field: transactional and transformational. The model that is most frequently associated with women is transformational. The women in this study were asked if they identified with a particular leadership model; their responses varied.

Interestingly, no one listed transformational leadership as her particular style. For that matter, they did identify with transactional leadership either. Bass, one of the top scholars in transformational leadership, wrote that transformational leaders generate awareness and motivate their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group (1985). All of these women used language that would classify them as transformational but talked more specifically about their flexibility, their ability to change according to the situation.

Previous research suggested that African American women presidents are transformational leaders (Brungardt, 1998; Chliwniak, 1997; Kezar, 2000; Nance, 2006; Richart, 2002; Watson, 2004; Young, 2004). This might be true based upon their leadership actions. It should be noted, however, that when given the opportunity to identify one particular style, these women refuted the notion by explaining that their leadership is more than one style. Parker and Oglivie (1996) noted that the two distinct models, the Anglo-American male hierarchical model (Transactional) and the "distinctly female" approach to leadership (Transformational), are not representative of African American women. The transformational model of leadership is based on the experiences of White women executives. The author argues that for African-American women executives (which included presidents), leadership styles and behaviors may reflect attributes of both the transactional and transformation leadership models (Parker & Oglivie, 1996). They continued by writing that there might be a distinctive model of leadership for African-American women. This research concurs with Parker because these women identified their own type of leadership, one that is not represented in the literature. The following figures are representative of transactional (Figure Six) and transformational (Figure Seven) leadership characteristics described by Bass (1985).

Figure 6

Transformational Leadership Characteristics

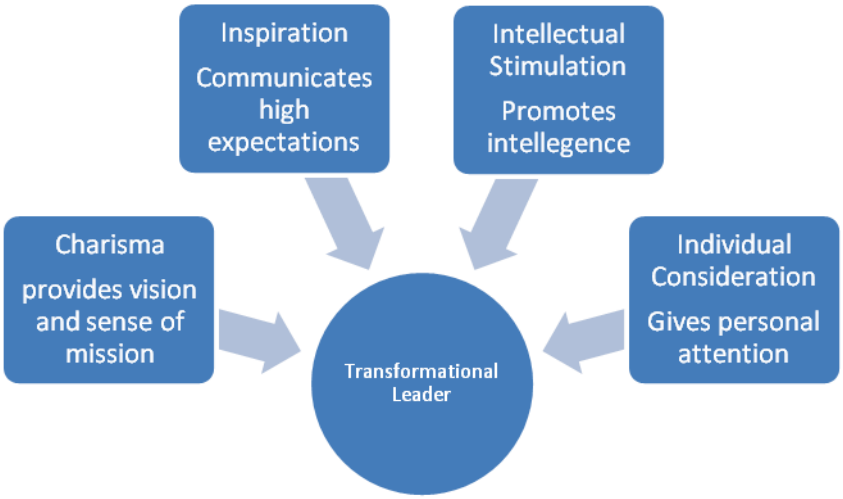
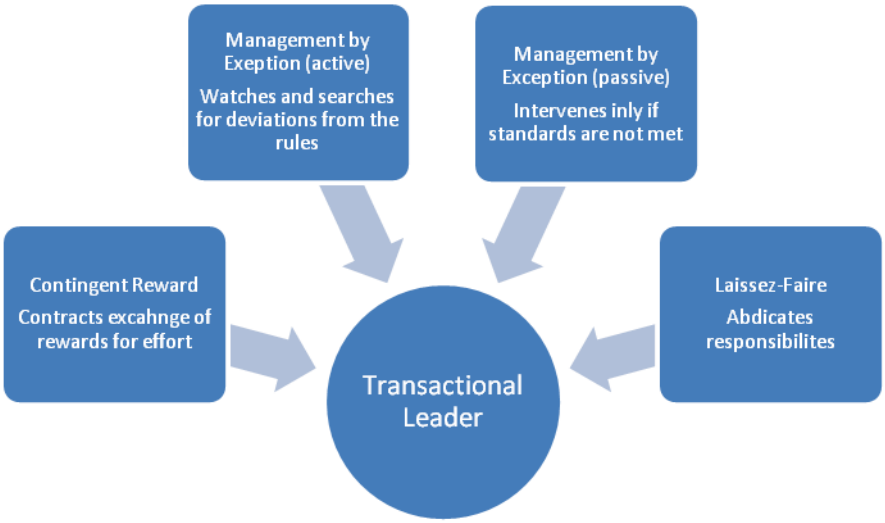


Figure 7

Transactional Leadership Characteristics



For the African American women in this study their leadership appears to be more reflective of both styles. Additionally, their leadership is reflective of characteristics that are not noted in Bass's original transactional and transformational models. The women included in this study spoke candidly about their leadership style being reflective of their cultural competency; they explained the role of race and gender in their leadership development. Clearly, they have a distinct style of leadership (Abdullah, 2003; Bell & Nkomo, 2003; Parker & Oglivie, 1996).

The women in this study have faced issues of identity beyond leadership. Being African American women who grew up during the civil rights era challenged their identity in a society that did not hold them in high esteem. Since the study gave them the opportunity to voice their own existence, they used the opportunity to talk about their true leadership. As one president described it, it is considered "leadership from the heart and gut."

Synopsis of Findings for Question One

This research was conducted in an effort to find the self-identified leadership model for African American women. The study found that despite numerous reports of women being labeled as transformational leaders, these women did not self- identify with that model. Their leadership model is saturated with life experiences that include race, gender and class. The four women in this study appear to lead their institutions well despite not fitting into an expected leadership model. The researcher believes that their inability to identify with a particular leadership style may be a result of the lack of definition surrounding the leadership theories available to these women. The theories of the past have failed to encompass African American women, by omission in the literature. Although the researcher believes that African American

women do lead differently than their white and male counterparts, their language surrounding leadership closely resembles a transformative style, that is saturated with transactional language too.

Question Two: Social Issues and Leadership Development

This study also sought to find out if there is a connection between race, gender, and class in leadership development throughout the lives of African American women as they rise to the position of president in the nation's colleges and universities. This study found that while all of the social issues had some impact on the presidents' lives, as one president noted, they are not inextricably linked.

Race and Gender

Not all of the women in the study felt that race played a role in their leadership at the presidential level but they did share stories of racial adversity in their lives. When one president was asked to elaborate on the role of race, she stated that although she had stories of her brush with racism, it was not a large factor for her. This particular president went to a historically African American elementary, middle school and high school. She also received her undergraduate education from an HBCU. Most of her administrative career took place at an HBCU and she currently is the president of an HBCU. However, she felt race was not a factor. She claimed, "I would have been just as successful if I was White." While this was an unexpected discovery, one can assume that because her life and career were heavily culturally influenced, she never had to face race in the same way as her counterparts in this study. Gender was a more relevant concern for this person. She spoke about the role of gender and the adversity she faced being a woman. Another president shared the same sentiments but believed race played

a role in her life; nevertheless, she actively chose to focus on gender. The other two women believed race played a significant role in their development and in their careers at the presidential level and during their climb to the top.

Racial and Gender Leadership

Two women in the study reported that their leadership is different from their White female counterparts. All of them believed that their leadership is different than their male counterparts. As stated in the second chapter, research attempts have overlooked clear differences in leadership dynamics between race and gender (Hardy-Fanta, Lien, Pinderhughes, & Sierra, 2006; Waring, 2003). Past research has developed a skewed view of leadership from the women's and persons of color's perspective.

Social Class

The presidents' childhood social class was examined. This study found that the two women who grew up poor, prospered despite their beginning social class. The socio-economic status of their family made them stronger and more appreciative. The president who had a middle- class upbringing knows that she is a product of her environment; she believed that not succeeding was not an option. The working-class president still lives by a working-class model and expresses it to her students daily.

In the book entitled *Theorizing Black Feminisms* (1993), many of the writers conveyed that social class placement while growing up has had a significant impact on African American women's lives. All of the women in the study grew up in a time where African Americans were still fighting for social equality. Even in today's society, low social class status has been linked to low achievement. The women in this study are success stories regardless of their upbringing.

Family Support

This study also found that family support played a vital role in the president's success. According to Prom-Jackson Johnson and Wallace (1987), family support and family structure are vital to achievement. All of the presidents mentioned at least one family member in their lives who gave them support along the way. The women expressed pride in talking about their families. This allowed the researcher to see a vulnerable side. When they talked about their parents it slowed down the conversation. Some the women shared stories of full family support, and it reflected on how they viewed their childhood upbringing as well.

Synopsis of Findings for Question Two

The women in this study were divided on the depth that race and gender played in their leadership development and professional careers. Two presidents believed that almost everything they do has a racial context. These two women are from different institutions, one a HBCU and the other a two-year institution. The other two presidents in the study had more of a gender perspective on their leadership. This study found that the intersecting issues vary in degree of effectiveness for each person. For some presidents race was a salient factor, for others gender was. Additionally, this study discovered that race, gender and class did play a role in their leadership development but not to the same degree for all of them. According to Gregory, (2001) this may result from African American women leaders of today are beginning to emerge from the tripartite of race, gender, and class. Despite the reasoning, the women in this study have been resilient in their efforts to overcome hardship and become successful in their careers.

The researcher entered the project with the expectation that race would be the most

significant social construct throughout the presidents careers. The researcher was dismayed to discover that was not the reality for the women in the study. The position of an institutional president has been considered political by many, which leads the researcher to believe that for some of the participants in this study they were political in the way they explicated their answers. It is the belief of the researcher that race plays a larger factor in all of their careers then indicated.

Frameworks

Bolman and Deal Leadership Frames

As noted earlier, this study used a Bolman and Deal leadership framework to guide the research leadership component. Bolman and Deal (1991) conducted a mixed methods study where they employed both qualitative and quantitative data in their study. They attempted to answer several questions:

1. Are there common patterns in the images or lenses leaders employ?
2. Are leaders with multiple frames more effective than leaders who utilize a singular frame
3. Do leaders adjust their lenses to fit their circumstances?

The results of the study suggest that leaders in senior level positions who use multiple frames are more effective than leaders who use singular frames (Bolman & Deal, 1991). As cited in Chapter Three, the four leadership lenses that make up the make up the Bolman and Deal leadership model are:

1. **Structural:** This approach focuses on structural elements within the organization as well as strategy, implementation, and adaptation
2. **Human resource:** This approach emphasizes support, empowerment, staff development, and responsiveness to employee needs.

3. **Political:** This approach emphasizes dealing with interest groups (and their varying agendas), building power bases, coalition-building, negotiating conflicts over limited resources, and creating compromises.
4. **Symbolic:** Symbolic leaders feel that people need to believe that their personal work, and the work of the organization, is important and meaningful. Traditions, ceremonies, and rituals are very important to the symbolic approach, which is most appropriate when goals and/or cause-and-effect relationships are unclear.

The researcher used the words of the women in the study to identify their particular leadership lenses. Dr. Sandra Mask used words such as "constituents" and "staff development" when talking about her leadership. She closely resembles a leader who observes leadership through a human resources lens. This was evident in her relationship with her administrative assistant and in how she spoke about the support she gives to her faculty, students, and staff. Dr. Mary Clay also identified with the human resources lens while Dr. Helen Smith identified strongly with the political lens. Dr. Smith spoke fervently about how important it is to understand politics. Dr. Vanessa Jones is a cross between symbolic and structural. The institution that Dr. Jones heads is in the process of restructuring. She is a woman who believes in vision and talked eloquently about it but due to the situation at her University, must rely on a structural lens that is cause and effect based.

The women in this study were not asked about the Bolman and Deal framework in its place, they were positioned into the particular lenses by the researcher. The Bolman and Deal framework was not designed to fit the African American woman's experience in higher

education; it was designed around the White males' perspective. At the time when the framework was constructed, very few African American women held senior level positions. This study contrasts with Bolman and Deals who believed that those who utilize a multi-lens approach are more effective. Only one president in the study aligned with a multi-lens approach. Although the women talked about shifting their leadership according to the needs of the group, their language implied that they utilized a single lens approach. As stated previously, three of the four presidents have been in position for at least five years; two have been in their position for at least ten years. The women reported that they believe they are successful at their institutions. The only president who utilized more than one lens is approaching her second year of service at her institution. Dabney (2003) reported in her study of six African American women presidents that women early in their career utilize multiple frames; as they became more content in their position, they transitioned to one single frame. She employed the Bolman and Deal leadership questionnaire in her study. This study's findings were consistent with her results all though the questionnaire was not used.

Black Feminist Thought

As stated in the third chapter, Black feminist thought is composed of three key elements. It is shaped and produced by the experiences Black women have encountered in their lives. It served as an excellent foundation when addressing issues of race, class, and gender. Black feminist thought fosters the idea of overarching oppression as opposed to additive. Instead of using gender or race as a foundation and adding social issues one-by-one, it supports the idea that race, gender, and class work in conjunction to oppress the African the American woman. In addition, the framework assisted in illustrating the role that race, gender, and class have

historically played in the lives of African American women. Hill-Collins (2000) contended that the three still constitute intersecting oppressions but they are now organized to produce social injustice in different forms prior than previous eras. This idea is consistent with the women who participated in this study. Their responses elucidate that the way they deal with race, gender, and class differs from that of their counterparts forty years ago. As one president said, "We live in a time where it is no longer cool to be a racist…I know people look at me, but what can they say." Her sentiments really relate to Black feminist thought that address oppression and deal with it in a progressive way.

Black feminist thought also suggest the importance of looking at the women individually as well as together. Collectively, the women embody Black feminist thought, however, after individual examination all of the women do not view multiple oppression the same as Dr. Hill-Collins. They have been able to compartmentalize race, gender, and social, class in their lives. Perhaps as coping mechanism, or as their own realities this was revealed through the interviews.

Self-Definition

This research gave these African American women the opportunity to self-define their own leadership. Black feminist thought supports African American women utilizing self-definition as a tool for advancement. This begins by negating the popular negative images of African Americans. The images that have plagued them are a far cry from how they define themselves. The women in this study used adjectives such as "strong" and "motivated" as descriptors. They identified as "leaders," "mentors," and "scholars," and not once did they use expressions such as "mammy," "welfare mom" or "video vixen." Challenging controlling images such as those mentioned have long been a part of Black feminist thought, according to

Hill-Collins (2000), seeing contradictions in the stereotypical images opens up the conversation of demystification. Furthermore, this gives way to African American women and self-definition.

Implications

This study presented several implications for African American women presidents. While they are still a phenomenon in higher education, the women who are currently in office are making strides toward changing the ill-perceptions of African American women presidents. This research suggests that if African American women are going to continue to climb to the presidency and become successful leaders, they must first obtain terminal degrees. They do not have the luxury to forfeit high educational attainment. African American women must obtain substantially challenging roles and careers in the academy, paying close attention to the traditional presidential pathway. It is imperative for African American women to become grounded in their personal identities and gain perspective on race, gender, and class in order to succeed.

Further, this research suggests that in addition to mentorship, African American women must find solace in friendship outside of their respective institutions. The position of president has often been looked at as being an isolated position; therefore, having "sister circles" can help alleviate pressure. The sister circles act as a sounding board and the separation from the institution also allows for confidentiality.

Finally, this study indicated that African American women can have success in HBCU venues, PWIs and two- year institutions but they must remain cognizant of their environment and the constituents they serve. Generally, African American women are given opportunities to head institutions that are in financial trouble, and have low faculty approval. The women must take on

these opportunities knowing that they can handle the job. If they can look at these opportunities as welcomed challenges instead of situations ripe for failure, they can have optimistic outlooks on their futures at their respective institutions, eventually leading to success.

Limitations

This study was not designed neither to compare African American women to White women nor compare the difference in how White males obtain the office of president as compared to African American women. The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership development of African American women presidents in higher education.

Moreover, this study was not intended to be an investigation into the broad sampling of African American women presidents of institutions in higher education. Rather it was intended to be a comprehensive analysis of four African American women presidents and their leadership development, gaining perspective on the juxtapositions of race, gender, and class.

Several types of institutions were used in this research study. Several of the institutions were in financial difficulties and were facing continued accreditation issues. Although African American women presidents lead a variety of institutions, this study did not include any doctoral degree granting institutions.

It was expected that critical race theory would afford this research a fundamental perspective on role of race in the lives of the four women who participated in this study; it was used only indirectly in the data collection, results and discussion of this research.

While only four African American women were included in this study, the researcher maintains that this is a purposeful sample; however, it is understood that a larger study would yield more information and broaden findings.

Recommendations

Numerous recommendations can be made from this study. Future research would benefit from a cross-analysis of African American women presidents and White women presidents, placing emphasis on race and gender, assuming that there are differences between the two.

Future investigations could possibly benefit from formal leadership questionnaires such as the Multi-Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) or the Fleishman Leadership Opinion Questionnaire (FLOQ). If the MLQ or the FLOQ were combined with qualitative research, it could add depth and comparative responses from self-reports and questionnaire answers.

In addition, future studies may want to compare the differences and challenges reported by women leading Historically Black Colleges and Universities as compared to Predominately White Institutions as well as community colleges in comparison to four- year institutions. Additional studies may also consider the implicit differences between leading single-sex institutions in comparison to coeducational institutions. This can lead to further understanding of African American women lead and approach different institutions.

To summary, there are a large number of leadership development programs in higher education. Most notably for presidential training is the American Council on Educations fellowship. It is imperative that African American women who are considering transitioning into senior level leadership positions vie for opportunities in highly esteemed programs. Additionally, where gaps exist, programs must be developed for the needs of African American women. These women can benefit from professional development programs designed specifically with them in mind. Thus, it is recommended that this and previous research be utilized for the coordination and implementation of leadership development programs focusing on the needs and concerns of

African American women. American institutions must realize the importance of harnessing African American women's talent. As intuitions change by social class, gender and race, it is time for top leadership to reflect those realities.

Conclusions

"Daughters of Africa! Awake! Arise! No longer sleep nor slumber, but distinguish yourselves. Show forth to the world that ye are endowed with noble and exalted faculties." (1831 speech by Maria Stewart's found in Richardson, 1987, p.30) This quote epitomizes the women who participated in this study. They have heard Stewarts call and have responded with vigor. The title of this study is "Redefining Leadership: Examination of African American Women Serving as President in Institutions of Higher Education." The women in this study are truly redefining leadership and making changes across the board for African American women. These women showed strength in various difficult situations, tenacity when fighting for their institutions, and courage in their personal endeavors. They attempt every day to close the gap caused by racism, sexism and classism.

There is a need for more research like this to capture the essence of the African American woman presidents. One person said that she had participated in several dissertations on African American women presidents in the last few years. This research must expand beyond dissertations and move into scholarly mainstream journals and periodicals. As leadership opportunities become available in higher education, hopefully an increasing number of African American women will be given the opportunity to step into these positions. Moreover, they will hopefully lead their institutions in ways different from the past. However, the opportunity must be presented to them. Research like this is imperative because it will assist in preparing schools

for a change. No longer will the face of leadership in higher education be a White man. “The old boys club” must begin to disband and allow women to come to the table without reservations.

This study found that leadership is a connected process, with various life experiences contributing to views, relationships, and goals. There is not one particular leadership style found in the literature that captured the essence of the African American women who participated in this leadership study. This leads the researcher to believe more research is needed to understand what leadership is to African American women presidents. The participants emphasized the process of leadership versus the products that they have become. It became apparent to the researcher that they could not separate the concept of how they “do leadership” from what it made them become.

The African American women interviewed could recall early leadership opportunities. Some were developed by teachers seeing their strengths and mentors acting on it. Race undoubtedly played a role in their early leadership experiences. They became aware of gender as they advanced in their careers and finally social class laid the foundation. Moreover, the interconnectedness of the three varied greatly between the participants.

This research showed the importance of their need for self-definition and the necessity for more research on African American women and their pathways to the presidency. While the women who participated are success stories, other African American women face obstacles that they cannot overcome every day. The American Council on Education has reported that the growth of African American women has reached a standstill. Presidential search committees still

use the same criteria to find new leadership as they have in the past, criteria that neglect the leadership of African American women (Moore, 2003).

The research on this select group of leaders is miniscule in comparison to their White and male counterparts. Holmes (2004) contended that previous research efforts primarily focused on retention of Black students with little emphasis given to senior level administrative positions. It was imperative for this research to explore the presidency as well as the interplay of race, gender and class in the quest to achieve an upper-level leadership role in the academy.

This research presented the argument that race, gender, and class play a significant role in the lives of African American women who obtain the presidency. Continuing research on African American women presidents will help to explain how these women navigate through racism and sexism to obtain the office of the president in the nation's colleges and universities.

It has become more important for the African American women who do hold presidencies to succeed at their respective institutions because their success will help to push the immovable roadblock towards advancement. By redefining what previous leadership models encompassed, the portal for African American women is open to enter into the presidency.

It is imperative to keep telling the stories of African American women in the hope that one day we will reach social justice.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Appendix A

African American Women Serving as Presidents of Colleges and Universities: 1970 – 2006

1970s				
President	**School**	**Tenure**	**Noteworthy**	**Institutional Classification**
Dr. Mable Parker	North Carolina Barber-Scotia	1974-1988 and 1994 - 1996 *two terms	First woman in school history	
1980s				
Dr. Johnetta B. Cole	Spelman College	1987 – 1997	First woman in school history	All female school; HBCU
Dr. Niara Sudarkasa/Gloria A, Marshall	Lincoln University	1987- 1998	First woman in schools history	
Dr. Dolores M. R. Spikes	Southern University	1988-1996	First woman president of a Louisiana public institution	
1990s				
Dr. Marguerite Ross Barnett	University of Houston in Texas	1990-1992 *Died during her appointment	First African American women to lead a national research PWI	PWI
Dr. Barbara Hatton	South Carolina State University	1993-1995	First women president	
Dr. Dorothy Cowser	Johnson C. Smith	1994-2008	First African American woman	
Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	1999-Still Serving	First African American women	
During the 1990s approximately **16** African American women were appointed president some with appointments at multiple institutions				
2000's				
Dr. Algeania Warren Freeman	Livingstone College	2000-2004	First woman	
Dr. Francine G. McNairy	Millersville University	2003-Still Serving	First woman and First African American	
Dr. Julianne Malveaux	Bennett College	2007-Still Serving	Known economist	HBCU
During the new millennium so far approximately **10** African American women have been appointed president of institutions. Perhaps the most notable was Ruth Simmons appointment in 2007 of Brown University, an Ivy League.				

Appendix B

Appendix B

Redefining Leadership: Examination of African American Women Serving as Presidents in Institutions of Higher Education

Recruitment Letter

Nicole M. Ausmer M.Ed

(440) 225-4800/UCdissertation@gmail.com

Greetings!

My name is Nicole M. Ausmer and I am currently in the process of collecting data for my doctoral dissertation in Educational Studies at the University of Cincinnati. The intent of this research endeavor is to examine your view of leadership as it relates to race and gender. My research will examine four African American women who currently serve in the role of President at various institutions of higher education. . Please read the following carefully and feel free to ask questions about anything you may not understand.

By participating in this research study you will be helping to increase research endeavors of African American women. To participate in this study you must identify as an African American woman and currently serve as President of an institution of higher education.

Attached is a consent form describing the details of the study and advising you of your right as a participant in this study. Upon completion of data collection I will supply you with a copy of the information to ensure validity and accurate representation.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 440-225-4800 or via email at smithno@email.uc.edu or my faculty advisor Lanthan Camblin at 513-556-3331 or via email at lanthan.camblin@uc.edu

Appendix C

Appendix C

University of Cincinnati
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
College of Education, Criminal Justice & Human Resources

Department of Educational Studies
Nicole M. Ausmer, M.Ed
(440) 225-4800/UCdissertation@gmail.com

Title of Study:

Redefining Leadership: Examination of African American Women Serving as Presidents in Institutions of Higher Education

Introduction:

The literature that addresses race, gender, and leadership is relatively small in comparison to other bodies of research. Hill-Collins (2000) and Giddings (1984) argue that there have been increasing calls to understand the experiences of African American females from their own perspective.

This research will examine four African American women who currently serve in the role of President at various institutions of higher education.

In the following document you will find information critical to your understanding of participating in this study. Please read the following carefully and ask questions about anything you may not understand.

Purpose:

The purpose of this research is to examine relationship between leadership, gender, and race.

Moreover, it is the researcher's intent to give a voice to the African American female leadership experience through personal narratives. All research will be conducted by Nicole M. Ausmer.

Duration:

Your participation in this study will last approximately two weeks (one interview per week) during February 2008 – April 2009.

Procedures:

This study will consist of four African American women who currently serve as President of an institution of higher learning.

Your participation in this study will include:

- Completion of a brief personal inventory survey
- One in person interview lasting up to two hours
- One telephone interview to aid in follow up questions, which will take place approximately one week after the in person interview

This information will be triangulated with a campus observation. All interviews will occur at your convenience. The interviewer will use a tape recorder to capture the interview and later transcribe the information.

Benefits:

You will receive no compensation for your time participating in this research study.

Confidentiality:

It is important for you to know that your name and institution in all correspondence including email and interviews will be kept confidential in its entirety including but not limited to dissertation and publications. Your research data will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Only my faculty advisor Dr. Lanthan Camblin, and I will have access to your data. All research data will be kept for five years. At the end of five years all information will be destroyed.

Offer to Answer Questions:

If you have any questions about research study related activity, you may contact me at (440) 225-4800 or Dr. Lanthan Camblin my faculty advisor at (513) 556-3331.

The University of Cincinnati Institutional Review Board – Social and Behavioral Sciences reviews all non-medical 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 research participant, you may contact the University of Cincinnati Institutional Review Board – Social and Behavioral Sciences at (513) 558-5784. If you have a concern about the study you may also call the UC Research Compliance Hotline at (800) 889-1547, or you may write to the Institutional Review Board-Social and Behavioral Sciences, G-28 Wherry Hall, ML 0567, 3225 Eden Avenue, PO Box 670567, Cincinnati, OH 45267-0567, or you may email the IRB office at irb@ucmail.uc.edu.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw:

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or discontinue participation at any time, without penalty. In addition if you choose to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason your request will be honored immediately and all of your documents will be destroyed.

Agreement

I have read this consent document. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. I will receive a signed and dated copy of this informed consent document for my records.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____

Signature of Person Conducting the Consent Discussion' Date

Appendix D

Appendix D

Redefining Leadership: Examination of African American Women Serving as Presidents in Institutions of Higher Education

The following questions will be tape recorded and transcribed, and stored in a locked file cabinet. You may refuse to answer questions, turn off the tape recorder, or withdraw from the interview at any time. You name will be changed in transcripts, publications and other written materials in order to ensure anonymity.

Evolution of Leadership Identity

1.) What was your definition of leadership when you were in:

a.) Elementary:
b.) Jr. High
c.) High School
d.) College (undergraduate)
e.) Graduate School
f.) Professional

2.) How do you believe your definition of leadership has evolved?

3.) When did you realize that you wanted to become President of a university/college?

4.) How did your career path to presidency evolve?

Race and Leadership

1.) What is your definition of racism?

2.) What role has race played in your ascent to presidency?

3.) Do you have a mentor?
{What race}

4.) Did you seek out the relationship or did they seek you out?

5.) Do you think White Presidents have the same issues as Black Presidents?

6.) Are you a part of any race specific networks?

Gender and Leadership

1.) What is your definition of sexism?

2.) How do you think sexism has affected you in your climb to presidency?

3.) Do you think male Presidents have the same issues as female Presidents?

4.) Are you a part of any gender specific networks?

Intersectionality questions

1.) Do you feel that you had to earn respect because you are a Black woman?

2.) Which group do you feel demands more of your time, Blacks or women?

Work Philosophy/Other

1.) Do you have a philosophy or frame work on how you do your job?

2.) Did you have any doubts about taking this job?
    a.)What were they?
    b.)How did you overcome them?

Appendix E

Appendix E

Redefining Leadership: Examination of African American Women Serving as Presidents in Institutions of Higher Education

Campus Observation Guide

Campus Climate

What type of school (HBCU, PWI, Two Year, Four Year)

Enrollment Size

Leadership Organizational chart

School gender dynamics (Male to Female ratio)

School race dynamics (Percentages of different races)

History of Presidential appointments

Appendix F

Appendix F

Redefining Leadership: Examination of African American Women Serving as Presidents in Institutions of Higher Education

This questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please complete and return the form via email no later than February 28, 2009 via email at UCdissertation@gmail.com

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Nicole Ausmer via telephone at (440) 224-4800 or via email at UCdissertation@gmail.com
It is imperative to the researcher to insure you the utmost confidentiality. All names and universities will be confidential.

Demographics

Name: Participant 1 (Do not put anything here)
City and State of Birth: _____
Marital Status

Married: _____

Divorced: _____

Single: _____

Widowed: _____

Divorced, Remarried: _____

Employment Information

What positions have you held in the field of education? Please list:

_____
_____
_____
_____

What positions have you held outside of the field of education? Please list:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Family Information

1.) Highest educational level attained by your father (Please check one):

a.) Less than high school diploma ___
b.) High school diploma ___
c.) Associates degree ___
d.) Bachelor's degree ___
e.) Master's degree ___
f.) Doctorate ___
g.) Professional ___
h.) Don't know ___
i.) Other ___

2.) Highest educational level attained by your mother (Please check one):

a.) Less than high school diploma ___
b.) High school diploma ___
c.) Associates degree ___
d.) Bachelor's degree ___
e.) Master's degree ___
f.) Doctorate ___
g.) Professional ___
h.) Don't know ___
i.) Other ___

3.) Do you have any children, if yes, how many?

a.) Yes
b.) No
c.) Number of Children: _____

4.) What ages were your children when accepted your first Presidential appointment?

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

Personal Educational Background

Please list all degrees obtained:

Degree Institution Graduation Year

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Presidential Inquiries

How long have you been President at your current institution?

_____

Have you held another position as President at another institution?

_____

If yes, please list all institutions and years of service.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix G

Appendix G

Field Note Charts

Participant: _____

Institution: _____

Focus: _____

Time In: _____ Time Out: _____

Date: _____ Page #: _____

Field Notes

Researchers Notes

Appendix H

Appendix H

Data Management Grid

{Participants Name}
{Institution Name}
Field Note Charts, Census, Map, and Calendar Data

TYPE	QUANTITY	INDEX	NOTES