

ABSTRACT

WRIGHT, GWENDOLYN. Examining the Intersection of Gender, Race and Class: A Study of African American Women Presidents at Four-Year Colleges and Universities. (Under the direction of Dr. Colleen Wiessner.)

This study suggests that African American women presidents are disproportionately underrepresented in leadership positions in higher education due to a historical and contemporary system of hegemony within higher education that has limited their access to positions of power. The purpose of this study was to examine the ways gender, race and class constructed as an intersectional paradigm influence the professional and personal development of African American women prior to and during their tenure as college presidents. The intersectional paradigm enabled this researcher to gain a greater understanding of the width, breadth, and complexity of African American women's experiences by considering their marginalization as a whole, rather than simply considering the individual constructs alone. This locus of analysis was particularly beneficial when examining the many ways in which the participants' marginality was perceived and negotiated and renegotiated in different environments at various stages of their lives. The findings reveal a dual narrative of the intersectional paradigm of gender, race, and class in shaping the life experiences of the participants. One narrative presented a portrait of African American women growing up in the margins, denied many opportunities afforded to the dominant culture that would enable them to reach their full potential. Concurrently, the influences of the intersectional paradigm created a cumulative effect, wherein their marginal status became a source of empowerment that was central to their personal and professional success and ascension to leadership positions in higher education.

Examining the Intersection of Gender, Race and Class: A Study of African American
Women Presidents at Four-Year Colleges and Universities

by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	vi
CHAPTER ONE CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND.....	1
Context for Study	3
Conceptual Framework.....	4
Definition of Key Terms and Concepts	5
Black Feminist Standpoint Theory	6
Class.....	6
Critical Race Theory.....	6
Critical Race Feminism.....	6
Critical Social Theory	7
Epistemology	7
Gender.....	7
Intersectionality.....	8
Outsider- Within Perspective.....	8
Race.....	8
Survivor.....	8
Other Definitions	8
Purpose Statement and Research Questions	9
Significance.....	10
Delimitations of the Study	10
Limitations of the Study.....	11
Organization of the Study	11
CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	12
Background.....	13
Influences of Gender, Race and Class on African American Women in Higher Education	15
Recent Trends in Higher Education- Black Women and the College Presidency	20
Traditional Feminist Theory and African American Women.....	22
Developing a Black Feminist Standpoint	26
Critical Race Feminism and Critical Race Theory	28
Intersectionality and Power.....	32
Conclusion	35
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY	37
Research Using Feminist Perspectives	40
Role of Researcher	42
Ethical Issues	43
Selection of Participants	43
Data Collection	44

Research Protocol	53
Data Analysis	53
Transcription	54
Coding	54
Conclusion	54
CHAPTER FOUR PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	56
Introduction	56
Description of Participants	58
Living in the Margins: How Gender, Race and Class Shape	
Black Women's Identity and Self-Image	61
What does it mean to be marginalized?"	61
Surviving and Succeeding in the Margins	69
Conclusions	77
Breaking through the Smoked Glass Ceiling: A Reconceptualization of	
Power and how it is used in Higher Education	77
Power used as an Extension of African American Women's Skills as Nurturer,	
Problem-solvers and Collaborators	77
Power used as a Tool for Social Change	81
Power used to Change and Adapt to Create a Different Kind of Environment on	
Campus that is more Open and Student-focused	86
Conclusions	88
Speaking Truth to Power: How Black Women Challenge Power Structures	
that Limit Their Access and Opportunity	88
Sexism in Historically Black Colleges and Universities	88
Engaging Systems of Hegemony: Strategies for Success	90
Conclusions	95
Summary of Findings	95
CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	97
Family and Community	97
School	101
Black Church	104
Social Class	106
Historically Black Colleges and Universities	107
Summary	114
CHAPTER SIX IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS..	116
Overview	116
Implications for Future Research-Theory	117
Implications for Future Research-Practice	117
Conclusions	119
Conclusions—Research Question 1	119
Conclusions—Research Question 2	121

REFERENCES	123
APPENDICES	137
APPENDIX A Interview Protocols for Research Study.....	138
APPENDIX B Demographics Questionnaire On Research Participants.....	140
APPENDIX C IRB Forms	141
APPENDIX D Sample Codebooks.....	151
APPENDIX E List of Dissertations Reviewed for Study.....	161

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Documentary Data Sources.....	50
Table 2	Creswell’s Criteria for Trustworthiness.....	51
Table 3	Summary of Findings.....	57
Table 4	Summary of Participants' Backgrounds and Demographics	60

CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Higher education has undergone significant changes since the founding of Harvard College in 1636. Women outnumber or nearly equal men at undergraduate and graduate levels (National Science Foundation [NSF], 2004). People of color have made impressive gains as well, but there has been limited progress in attaining senior level positions in the academy. Approximately 67% of the presidencies in higher education are still held by white men (American Council on Education, 2007). African American women in particular have a difficult time crossing the boundary into leadership positions. Even at historically black colleges and universities (HBCU), power imbalances between men and women are pronounced. Although there is a huge gap in favor of African American female students at these schools, men still occupy the majority of top administrative positions on HBCU campuses.

There are various opinions as to why African American women are disproportionately underrepresented in senior administrative positions in higher education. According to Miller and Miller (2002), the problem is equitable access, particularly to positions of power within institutions but also to specific programs and disciplines. Some scholars such as Adrienne Rich (1979) emphasize an organizational structure in academe that is resistant to change. Still others such as Alfred (2000), Wilbur (1992), Matthews, (1992), and Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) are concerned with the organizational climate at colleges that remain hostile to the “others”, a term used to describe groups traditionally left out of decision making processes. Adrienne Rich (1979) also points out that women’s unequal power status in academia has to do with a tradition rooted in patriarchy that needs

changing. Rich says the central question is not whether women and minorities are intellectually equipped for higher education; rather, it is whether this male-created, male dominated structure is really capable of serving the humanism and freedom it claims to profess. Many of these scholars also point to the fact that while white women and black men share some of these concerns about the academy, there are certain issues that speak directly to the experiences of African American women and their plight in higher education (Jones, 2001).

The marginality experienced by African American women as a result of their gender and race may be intensified by class. Data documenting the impact of social class in higher education in regards to tenure and promotion is difficult to obtain; however, there are a number of scholars, such as Tokarczyk and Fay (1993); Adair and Dahlberg (2003) who have articulated the struggles experienced by women from working-class backgrounds. In *Working-class Women in the Academy*, Tokarczyk and Fay (1993) provide insight into some of their experiences:

Women academics from the working class clearly felt torn; they wanted to maintain their ties to their families, but wanted to fit into the academy as well. Often, they feared they fit into neither world. They were frequently uncomfortable with the language they used, afraid their voices would slip into dialect or working-class patterns. And they were angry at being ignored or at being expected to be middle-class professionals, socially and economically (p.3).

This study explores how gender, race and class shape the lives of African American women presidents of four-year colleges and universities. The decision to study presidents was made because of the effort it takes to obtain and prevail as college presidents, thus

providing a unique opportunity to examine the interlocking influence of race, class and gender within higher education. Further, the study does not include participants from community colleges and other post-secondary institutions due to a different promotion and reward system for administrative achievement than that found in four-year colleges and universities (Brown-Klingelhoef, 2003).

Black feminist standpoint theory and critical race feminism are used as the theoretical frameworks within which the relevant social, historical and contemporary events that influenced black women's development and experiences in higher education can be analyzed.

Context for Study

Over the years, women and minorities have made some progress in achieving senior administrative positions. White women have made the largest gain in the past ten years, nearly doubling their numbers to nearly 23%; however, they are still substantially underrepresented compared to the proportion of undergraduate and graduate female students. By contrast, only 1.88% of the presidential posts at colleges and universities across the United States are held by African American women, despite their success in increasing the number of earned doctorates by 33% and increasing their presence as faculty members by more than 33% (American Council on Education, 2007; Gregory, 2001).

The research of Howard-Vital (1989), A. C. Collins (2001) and Gregory (1999) offers great insight into the present-day experiences of black women in the academy. Gregory found that the status of African American women in the academy has been shaped by the same historical and societal forces that have influenced the ways in which African American women view the world, themselves, and their position within higher education. The ways in which African American women have used education to promote equality has in turn

produced a new way of thinking, a new type of intellectual. The black community's priority of education for black women has been unprecedented in comparison to similarly oppressed classes. As a result of this commitment to educating females, combined with the opening up of white institutions of higher education to larger number of blacks in the 1960s, the intellectual imagination of scholarly African American women has been unleashed. Yet, it remains unfulfilled (Gregory, 1999).

Howard-Vital (1989) found that African Americans often find themselves in highly visible positions in the academy that carry little authority and that in these positions African American women are often expected to perform quite differently from their white counterparts. For example, they may be required to participate in legitimate but time-consuming issues with students and committees that leave little or no time for research. A. C. Collins (2001) indicates that the academy is still a chilly environment for black women students, faculty and administrators, and that universities are unsupportive of the issues that impact the lives of black women. For example, not enough academic courses explore the history of black women and their experiences. Although some universities have women's and black studies departments, the stories of black women are often lost in the space between white women and black men (Collins, 2001).

Conceptual Framework

The use of gender, race and class was key in this research for examining the lives of female African American college and university presidents. The point of analysis for this study centered on the use of an intersectional paradigm that allowed the researcher to examine how gender, race and class interacting simultaneously influence the lived experiences of the participants. Black feminist standpoint theory is the primary theory used to

frame and contextualize this examination. Critical race feminism was useful as a second theoretical tool to further explain and extend the application of themes found in black feminist standpoint theory. Both theoretical frameworks evolved from a body of work known as critical social theory that seeks to understand questions about groups who are situated differently in the political, social, legal and historical landscape of society (Collins, 2000a).

Black feminist standpoint states that intersectionality of gender, race and class sets black women's perspectives apart from other groups by placing their experiences at the crossroads of multiple oppressions and shifting the investigation from a singular exploration of race, gender or class to one in which the goal is to determine the links among these systems (Collins, 2000a).

By highlighting the dynamics of unjust power relations as they affect African American women and other social groups, intersectionality adds complexity to approaches that were formerly centered only upon race, class or gender individually (Collins, 2000a). Its goal, an important one for the study of social phenomena, is to provide an interpretive framework for race, gender, and class experiences within specific contexts rather than to simply apply a dualistic label of 'right' or 'wrong' to such experiences (Collins, 1998).

While black feminist standpoint theory focuses largely on the political and social context of gender, race and class, critical race feminism, which grew out of critical race theory, extends the locus of investigation to include inquiry into the impact of the legal system on women of color.

Definition of Key Terms and Concepts

In this section of the dissertation, definitions of the key terms and concepts that shape this study are provided. They include:

Black Feminist Standpoint Theory

A social theory that argues shared group experiences and challenges can foster similar ways of seeing a standpoint that, in turn, can lead to group knowledge or standpoints that are essential for informed political action (Collins, 2000a). One of the core features of standpoint theory is that it values the experiences of oppressed groups and suggests ways to create an oppositional consciousness by which dominant ideologies can be challenged (Harding, 2004). Black feminist standpoint theory draws upon three themes: 1) black women's self-definition; 2) the interlocking nature of oppression; and 3) the importance of African American women's culture (Collins, 2004a).

Class

Class is a very complex term that describes differential distributions in income, wealth and social mobility (Ortner, 2003; Rosenblum & Travis, 2003). Class is difficult to define because it is often intertwined with other social constructs such as race and gender. According to Rosenblum and Travis (2003), class status is a more accurate reflection of economic and social factors than of individual merit.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory was developed in the 1980s by a group of legal scholars who believed that the civil rights movement had stalled, that many of the laws enacted from that movement were being rolled back or substantially weakened, and that a new movement was needed to confront contemporary discrimination (Wing, 1997).

Critical Race Feminism

Critical race feminism examines the role of race, class and gender, focusing on analyzing the impact of the law and the legal system on women of color. Fundamental to

critical race feminism is the importance of both theory and practice, with an emphasis on the latter as critical to addressing the needs of marginalized communities (Wing, 1997)

Critical Social Theory

Critical social theory refers to a body of knowledge that grapples with questions facing groups that are situated differently by political, social and historic context. Critical social theory is characterized by its emphasis and commitment to justice for all groups (Collins, 2000a). Black feminist standpoint theory, critical race theory and critical race feminism are subsets of critical social theory.

Epistemology

Epistemology refers to a theory or theories of knowledge that describe how we come to know the world. This term has particular significance to the black feminist standpoint goal of helping African American women construct positive self-identities by using their own experiences as the basis to create new knowledge and alternate understandings of the world around them (Anderson & Williams, 2001).

Gender

Gender is a social construct that differs from the term sex, which refers to chromosomal, hormonal, and physiological differences between males and females (Rosenblum & Travis, 2003). Gender describes learned behaviors, particularly the socially constructed roles associated with being male and female; in other words, it is the culturally and historically specific acting out of masculinity and femininity.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a tool of analysis that states systems of race, class and gender, and other oppressive social and political constructs form mutually constructing features that shape black women's experiences (Collins, 2000a).

Outsider-Within Perspective

An outsider-within perspective is a locus or position from which minorities or oppressed peoples can observe and become familiar with the mindset and behavior of dominant groups.

Race

As applied in this paper, race is a social construct used to classify individuals into groups; it is organized around social policy, law, and the distribution of wealth, power and prestige (Rosenblum & Travis, 2003). The terms African American and black are used interchangeably to describe a group of people born in the United States whose ancestry stems from the black peoples of Africa (Davis, 1991).

Survivor

The term survivor refers to African American women who have acquired knowledge and tools that enable them to navigate successfully their social and economic status in the United States.

Other Definitions

Career path is a series of jobs that provide the foundation and experience for higher-level positions; in this case, executive positions (Tobe, 1999).

Four-year colleges according to the Carnegie classification are institutions that grant primarily baccalaureate degrees.

Lessons of experience refers to concrete illustrations of experiences undergone by participants during their careers, such as setting and implementing agendas, handling professional and personal relationships, and the formation of basic values, professional temperament, and personal awareness (Tobe, 1999)

People of color is a term that references all non-white racial and ethnic groups.

President is the chief executive officer of a college or university. In the state of North Carolina and other university systems, the term chancellor may be used interchangeably.

Universities are institutions that award degrees beyond the bachelor's degree.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways gender, race and class constructed as an intersectional paradigm influence the professional and personal development of African American women prior to and during their tenure as college presidents.

It was not the intent of this study to assess the level of effectiveness of these women or make comparisons about their performance, but rather to understand their experiences from their perspectives and analyze the meanings they construct around the events that have led them to this point in their lives.

A qualitative research design using a narrative inquiry approach is proposed. The set of research questions to be answered by this study are:

1. How do African American women college presidents perceive gender, race and class in shaping their experiences?

2. How have gender, race and class contributed to and challenged African American women college president's ability to negotiate positions of power within the academy?

Significance

This study adds to the body of literature about African American women in higher education, which currently is limited. Second, this investigation provides a greater understanding of how gender, race and class operate as an intersectional paradigm to provide deeper insights into the social and cultural heritage of African American women. Next, another gap filled by this study is that it includes significant bodies of knowledge developed by African American women, thus adding another layer of authentication by giving voice to those whose ideas and contributions were previously unknown. Finally, this research can be used as resource guide for other African American women who aspire to leadership positions in higher education.

Delimitations of the Study

1. Participants in this study are from four-year institutions and universities only.
Based on the literature, the structure and administrative processes of two-year and community colleges have a different promotion and reward system for administrative achievement than that found in four-year colleges and universities (Brown-Klingelhofer, 2003).
2. The available pool of African American women presidents within the time frame of this study was subject to change due to the mobility of presidents.
3. The study included presidents who are former and current presidents.

Limitations of the Study

Because the researcher chose to conduct a qualitative study, the findings cannot be generalized; however, the data generated from this research should prove very useful as a resource that provides significant insights and rich, thick descriptions about the influence of gender, race and class on the lives of African American women working in the academy.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic and includes background information on the study, definitions of key terms, research questions, purpose and significance of the work, its delimitations and limitations. Chapter two discusses the relevant literature on the history of African American women in higher education, with an analysis of African American women as college presidents. Following this section of the literature review is the historical development of the theoretical frameworks of black feminist standpoint and critical race feminism. Next, chapter three describes the research methodology and design method for this study, including procedures used to collect and analyze data, as well as brief descriptions of the participants and the research experience. Chapter four provides a presentation of the findings from the coding and analysis of data. In chapter five, a detailed discussion of the findings is given in the broader context of the literature and higher education. The last chapter focuses on conclusions from the study and implications for future research in higher education and other disciplines related to the findings in this study. References, the interview protocol and the North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board form for the use of human subjects in research are presented in the appendices of this dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review for this study is intended to provide a detailed framework into the history of African American women in higher education, with a particular focus on the college presidency. Within this framework is the theoretical context and development of the intersectional paradigm of gender, race and class that is used as the locus of analysis for investigating this research.

The primary literature for this study comes from multidisciplinary sources in higher education and sociology. In the higher education citations, literature on the college presidency goes back centuries, but despite African American women's long history of significant contributions to U.S. higher education, relatively few scholarly books or journal articles exist about their accomplishments when compared to the number of citations found about white men. In particular, there is an absence of literature about black women and the college presidency. When conducting a search of publications on the topics, only limited information was located, mostly in dissertations. An analysis of these dissertations revealed approximately 42 dissertations addressed the issue of black women and the college presidency, with the majority focusing on leadership and career development in community colleges (See list of dissertations analyzed in appendix). Of those studies that emphasized themes of gender and race, most were analyzed using frameworks and theories related to career, organizational and leadership development. Those that utilized theoretical frameworks situated in the critical social theory genre, gender and race issues were seen as separate constructs. One study did attempt to examine multiple oppressions of women of color using an intersectional focus but from the perspective of a signal individual based on

historical and other secondary data sources and not from the perspective of the participant. This literature builds upon existing studies on African American women presidents and extends the research by analyzing their experiences from their perspectives by utilizing the intersectional paradigm rooted in black feminist standpoint as the center of analysis, in which their marginal status of gender, race and class is considered simultaneously instead of individually to generate a greater understanding of African American women experiences in higher education and civil society.

This chapter is organized into four main sections. First, this chapter provides a review of literature that is relevant to the history of African American women in higher education in the United States and the struggle to define their identities as black women and professionals. Second, there is a section that describes traditional feminist theory and examines the primary issues that led to the development of a black feminist standpoint. Next, the chapter provides a review of black feminist standpoint and critical race feminism as frameworks for confronting issues of race, class and gender in the academy. Last, the chapter concludes with a discussion of intersectionality and power.

Background

American women did not have access to opportunities in higher education until the nineteenth century (Gordon, 1997). Initially, their roles in the academy were constructed as an extension of what were considered female responsibilities in the home (Gordon, 1997). When women were admitted into professional positions within the academy, they entered a hostile environment that provided few opportunities for advancement and limited access to decision-making positions. This exclusion reflected a hegemonic system within higher education that still favors and promotes male privilege (McIntosh, 1995). Evidence of male

dominance can be seen in the development of academic curricula, policies and governing structures of four-year colleges and universities. Sheryl Bond (2001) suggests that senior administrative positions are seen as “posts of confidence” and that many men, consciously or unconsciously, are reluctant to share power.

Hegemonic worldviews have also profoundly affected the particular way in which education has evolved in the lives of African American women. Historically, education has served as a tool for uplifting the race, i.e. to assist with economic and social improvement of the black community (Noble, 1988; Perkins, 1988). Originally, implementation of the race-uplift objective, including educational programs, was primarily accomplished by black women; for example, black women in the South created charitable organizations and other related institutions in order to aid the black race. Another factor that distinguishes the relationship of black women and education is their need to acquire a college education as a means to generate financial support for their families (Noble, 1988; Perkins, 1988).

Education for white women, in contrast, became socially acceptable based on an ideal of “true womanhood” (p.65), which emphasized their domestic roles as mothers and wives rather than as breadwinners or benefactors of their race (Perkins,1988). Although this model was designed primarily for middle- and upper-class white women, poor white women often aspired to this status as well (Perkins, 1988). Ironically, the stereotype of the fragile white woman emerged during a time when masses of black women were enslaved and legally defined as three-fifths of a human being (Noble, 1988, Perkins, 1988).

It was not until feminism’s second wave in the 1960s that white women began to make substantial gains in higher education; currently, they equal or outnumber men in many disciplines (NSF, 2004). The progress made by white women in traditionally male-dominated

disciplines such as science and engineering is significant; according to a survey on women and minorities conducted by the National Science Foundation (2004), white women account for 33% of undergraduate science and engineering degrees, which is about the same as white men. Enrollment numbers in graduate school are equally strong, with white women representing 21% in science and engineering. By contrast, black women have outnumbered black men as students in institutions of higher education since the second decade of the twentieth century (Noble, 1988). In addition, between 1980 and 1993, the number of black women earning doctoral degrees increased 33% and their presence in faculty positions grew by more than 30% (Gregory, 2001).

Influences of Gender, Race and Class on African American

Women in Higher Education

The following analysis examines the influence of race, class and gender in shaping the experiences and consciousness of African American women as it relates to promotion and access to positions of power within American colleges and universities.

The story of African American women is a story of the struggle for equality in America. Although the term “black feminism” was not used until relatively late in the twentieth century, many black women espoused the principles associated with black feminist ideology as far back as the mid-nineteenth century, when their higher education was used as a tool for advocacy, uplifting their communities and promoting social justice (Perkins, 1988; Noble, 1988). In *A Shining Thread of Hope: The History of Black Women in America*, Hines and Thompson (1998) reveal several important themes that have emerged from the lives of African American women over the years: an emphasis on education and community, an understanding of the importance of self-worth, self-definition and triumph over obstacles.

This unique combination of historical and personal characteristics has made most black women *de facto* feminists (Hine & Thompson, 1999; Willis, 2001).

Sojourner Truth and Mary Terrell are two examples that illustrate the persistence of black women in agitating for women's rights prior to the Civil War, although their presence was not welcomed by white suffragists (Terborg-Penn, 1977). During that time, white women did not openly seek black women's participation in the movement because they did not want to risk alienating Southern white women (Harley & Terborg-Penn, 1997). Moreover, they believed that black women's participation would shift the movement's focus from suffrage to civil rights, which were opposed by many at that time, particularly Southerners. Suffragists such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton felt they had a better chance of building support for gender equality if this goal did not give the appearance of being linked with an agenda to address racial discrimination in the United States (Terborg-Penn, 1997). Accordingly, a statement signed by Susan B. Anthony, Carrie C. Catt, Anna Howard Shaw, Kate N. Gordon, Alice Stone Blackwell, Harriet Taylor Upton, Laura Clay and Mary Coggeshall endorsed the organization's states' rights position, which amounted to an endorsement of white supremacy (Harley & Terborg-Penn, 1997).

Nor were black men supportive of black women's equality efforts during this time. Black male leaders felt that race was a far more important issue than gender, and, while advocates such as Frederick Douglass generally supported rights for women, he felt "the woman question" was secondary to the issues that race presented and that black men needed to be at the forefront of the campaign for racial equality (Harley & Terborg-Penn, 1997). However, exclusion from representation in mainstream organizations did not mean that black women were not making contributions to women's suffrage. Instead, it produced the

phenomenon of black women establishing their own organizations while continuing to press for inclusion in predominantly white groups (Harley & Terborg-Penn, 1997).

Black women educators also contributed to advancing equal rights for black people, as well as for women generally. Many of these black women chose educational fields as a way of helping the black community. Choosing to use one's position to foster black causes and help black people placed African American women at great risk professionally and personally (Harley & Terborg-Penn, 1997).

Mary Jane Patterson, the first black woman to earn a baccalaureate degree, from Oberlin College in 1862, devoted most of her life to the education of black children. Patterson also devoted time and money to other black institutions in Washington, D.C., especially vocational schools for young black women. Patterson's background is typical of the experiences of most professional black women of her time: she was well educated but her career aspirations were limited to teaching lower grades, with little hope for advancement to any administrative leadership position (Hine, Brown & Terborg-Penn, 1994).

Anna Julia Cooper also emerged during the late nineteenth century as an advocate for black women's rights (Cooper, 1988). Born Anna Julia Haywood on August 10, 1858 in Raleigh, North Carolina, the daughter of an enslaved African woman, from early on Cooper had an unrelenting passion for learning and a sincere conviction that black women are capable of intellectual pursuits (Hine, Brown & Terborg-Penn, 1994). Cooper went on to become one of the first African American women to hold a Ph.D. and for a short time was principal of Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. (Lemert & Bhan, 1998). Cooper believed black women had a greater burden to bear than white women (Harley, 1997). In her

seminal work, *A Voice from the South* (1892), Cooper was among the first to articulate that black women's suffering stemmed from both race and gender (Lemert & Bhan, 1998):

The colored woman of to-day occupies, one may say, a unique position in this country. In a period of itself transitional and unsettled, her status seems one of the least ascertainable and definitive of all the forces which make for our civilization. She is confronted by both a woman question and a race problem, and is yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both. (p.112)

Lucy Diggs Slowe was the first black woman to serve as a dean at Howard University from 1922-1937. Linda Perkins (1996) provides valuable insight to her importance in higher education and women's rights. An outspoken advocate for black women, women's self-determination, female advancement and access to leadership positions in higher education, she was responsible for establishing two important organizations: the National Association of College Women (NACW) and the National Association of Women's Deans and Advisors of Colored Schools (NAWDACS).

While the majority of the black community viewed teaching as a woman's highest calling, Slowe was very critical of the view that female students should pursue teaching as a profession without other options and career choices. She was also critical of the traditionalistic Christianity to which most black women students were exposed, believing strongly that it often contributed to the conservative and sexist beliefs of many black families. She addressed all of these issues through her work at Howard and through the NACW and NAWDACS.

In 1933, Lucy D. Slowe's *Higher Education of Negro Women* addressed many of the same issues raised by Anna J. Cooper, particularly the lack of leadership training offered to

black women by black colleges. She also noted the lack or even absence of women on policy-making bodies as indicative of college administrators' discomfort with women in leadership positions (Perkins, 1996). Slowe was an instrumental promoter of black women's rights who emphasized the importance of supporting women generally, and black women particularly, as leaders in colleges.

Another pioneer was Mary McLeod Bethune, who opened a black girls' school in Daytona Beach, Florida, in 1904 (Edwards, 2002). Motivated by her personal struggle for an education as a poor black girl, Bethune believed education was important if black women were to rise above oppression and assist the black community (Edwards, 2002; Noble, 1988; Terborg-Penn, 1997). Also, like Booker T. Washington, she supported vocational training and economic independence for black people. She became the first African American woman president of an institution of higher learning when the school she founded became a four-year college in 1947 (Edwards, 2002).

Bethune was a tireless advocate for women and the less fortunate. Realizing that black women needed a clearinghouse for their isolated groups, she created the National Council of Negro Women, which focused on improving the living conditions and educational and civil rights of women and children in the United States (Edwards, 2002).

Despite significant contributions of black women to higher education and education in general, the level of gender, race and class discrimination against black women remains significantly high (Noble, 1988; Perkins, 1988).

Recent Trends in Higher Education—Black Women
and the College Presidency

Black women's historical successes as students and faculty in higher education did not guarantee them positions of authority, even at historically black colleges and women's colleges. Spelman College, established in 1881 to educate black women, did not have an African American woman president until 1987 (Spelman College Facts, 2006).

As a matter of fact, all American college presidencies were held by men until Julia Sears became the first women president of a college when she took the helm of the State Normal School at Mankato, Minnesota in 1872 (Tobe, 1999); next, Mary McLeod Bethune, founder of Bethune Cookman College became its president in 1936 (Tobe, 1999). Following federal legislation designed to address discrimination and equity in the workplace (e.g., Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964), women in general started to progress into senior executive positions in higher education (Brooks, 2001). In 1975, 5% of US colleges and universities had women presidents. By the 1980s, this proportion had increased to 10%. The 1990s showed an increase to 16% and currently women occupy approximately 23% of the total presidencies in U.S. higher education (American Council of Education, 2007).

Minority women have also enjoyed some progress in gaining access to positions of power but there remains a huge disparity between the level of success for women of color and their white counterparts in becoming college presidents. Because the majority of college presidents enter the academy as faculty members, and the majority of college faculty members are male, male faculty members tend to have professional experiences that increase their potential to become college presidents (Martin, 2002). On average male faculty receive tenure in less time, earn more money, leave faculty positions less often and have more

longevity within their jobs than female faculty (Waring, 2003). By contrast, black women are disproportionately assigned to teach remedial classes or perform tasks that fulfill a service component—activities which are usually not rewarded with tenure or promotion to senior administrative positions (Turner & Myers, 2000).

In the 1990s, women of color comprised 2% of presidents; African American women made up 1% or half of the total. (Sanders, 2004; Tobe, 1998). Today, minorities account for 10% of college presidents; however, the proportion of African American women remains relatively unchanged (American Council on Education, 2007; Sanders, 2004).

Typically, opportunities for African Americans and other minorities are limited in terms of the type of institution they can serve as president. Most minorities are presidents at historically black, tribal and other minority-serving colleges (Sanders, 2004), which comprise only a small percentage of the overall colleges and universities in the United States. A few black women are presidents of majority public institutions located in metropolitan areas with a significant minority population, such as Chicago State University (Sanders, 2004).

Two exceptions are Ruth Simmons and Shirley Ann Jackson. In 2001 Ruth Simmons became president of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, the first African American to be president of an Ivy League institution. Before this appointment, she was president of Smith College in Massachusetts, a private, elite, liberal arts college for women. In 1999, Shirley Jackson became president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, a national research university in Troy, New York. Dr. Jackson is also the first African American woman to hold a Ph.D. in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

As African American women continued to be disproportionately left out of positions of power in higher education, some contemporary scholars presented the feminist movement and its ideology as a way to support black women and their struggles for equality.

Traditional Feminist Theory and African American Women

The feminist movement gave rise to a critical social theory to address the political, social and economic practices of gender discrimination. Feminist theory is rooted in feminist ideology, which defines feminism as the belief that women are full human beings, capable of participation and leadership in the full range of human activities: intellectual, political, social, sexual, spiritual and economic (Cleage, 1993). Feminist ideology identifies gender as a social construct that, as a major social, historical and political category, affects the life choices of all women in all communities and cultures (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986). Feminist theory refers to a myriad of works produced by movement activists and scholars in a variety of disciplines; these include discussions of societal and relational inequities, how these ought to be remedied, and strategies to achieve equality, as well as theoretical explorations of the role of gender in various social, cultural, economic, psychological and political structures and processes (Chafetz, 1997).

Traditional feminist theory was developed during the second wave of feminism, which began after World War II (Lather, 1991) and lasted through the 1960s. With the goal of undermining cultural hegemony, it supports collaborative, non-exploitative relationships and research that is transformational, wherein questions focus on the centrality of gender in the shaping of consciousness (Belenky, et al. 1986, 1996). In addition, traditional feminist theory calls for an end to male domination by correcting both the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position (Lather,

1991). One of the pioneers of this movement was Betty Friedan, whose book, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), was hugely influential although it captured the liberation experiences only of a small, select group of college-educated, middle-class women.

In 1982, Carol Gilligan's *A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, a critical analysis of gender differences in moral development, reframed personality traits long considered feminine weaknesses as human strengths. The research of Belenky et al. (1986, 1996), which did not incorporate women from diverse background until the mid-1990s, is considered the most comprehensive and important work to date on epistemology and the development of women's knowledge.

However, as with Friedan, white women who dominate feminist discourse rarely question whether or not their perspective on women's reality is true to the lived experiences of women collectively (hooks, 1981, 2000). Because of these gaps in knowledge and the inability to recognize the full extent to which race and class are central to the daily realities of most women, traditional feminist theory has not resonated with women of color and poor women in America (Cleage, 1993; Collins, 1998, 2000a, 2000b; hooks, 2000).

By contrast, many black female scholars consider the dynamics of gender, race and class to be the major theoretical framework for analyzing gender and the lives of black women. Pearl Cleage (1993), Patricia Collins (1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2004a, 2004b), Kimberlé Crenshaw (2000), Angela Davis (2000) and Rose Brewer (1997) also write about the connections between race, class and the development of black civil society. The black class structure is formed in the context of economics, state restructuring, political struggle, and enforcement/perpetuation of racial stereotypes, as well as along gender lines (Collins, 2004). Under the assumption that class is inextricably linked to the struggle to end racism, a

thorough understanding of class relationships can only be obtained by analyzing racism and the way it functions in American capitalist society (hooks, 2000).

Collins (2000a) writes that after 1945, the changing global economy, in conjunction with the emergence of a new postcolonial transnational context, fostered significant shifts in black civil society. Globally, numerous groups waged successful anti-colonial struggles that resulted in new nation-states in Africa and Asia. Within the United States, black activism of the 1950s -1970s stimulated the dismantling of de jure and de facto racial segregation (Collins, 2000a). For African American women, these international and domestic political shifts greatly affected the relationship between work and family.

According to Brewer (1993), Cleage (1993), Collins (1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2004a, 2004b), Crenshaw (2000), Davis (2000) and Brewer (1997), feminism must reflect in its theory and practice the race and class terrain upon which hierarchy and inequality are built in the United States. The issues surrounding black women's labor, paid and unpaid, well illustrate factors that are crucial to the understanding of inequality. The first is mobility, illustrated by black women's movement from domestic service to industrial and clerical work. The second is integration, exemplified by black women's participation in an international division of labor that does not compensate service work sufficiently to support a family (Brewer, 1997). When combined, these two factors divide black working-class women into two subgroups: the core, which is African-American women holding "good" jobs in industry and the government sector; and the working poor, mostly black women who can find only low-paid, service jobs. The latter segment is the most likely to end up in poverty (Brewer, 1997; Collins, 1998, 2000a, 2000b).

In the 1970s and 1980s, female black feminist scholars identified core themes of work and family that formed the foundation of black feminist thought (Collins, 2000a). Black feminism, which is concerned with the struggles against sexism and racism by black women, who are themselves part of the black community's efforts to achieve equity and liberty (Collins, 1998), views American black women as a unique group, set undeniably apart and facing a unique set of challenges (Cleage 1993). Their similar work and family experiences as well as participation in diverse expressions of African-American culture mean that, overall, black women as a group live in a different world from that of people who are not black and female (Collins, 1998, 2004a, 2004b).

Black feminist theory supports broad principles of social justice that transcend the particular needs of African American women (Collins, 2000a, 2000b), but nonetheless aims to empower them within the context of social injustice sustained by intersecting oppressions. Black feminists acknowledge that the process of accounting for their historical and contemporary position does, in itself, upset some of the central categories and assumptions of mainstream feminist thought. For example, whereas white feminists emphasize patriarchy, black feminists redefine the term and make it more complex (Collins, 1998). In *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (1983), Alice Walker offered an alternative to her critique of traditional feminist theory—that it presents a “we against them” relationship with men which is not embraced by African American women—by introducing the term *womanist*, a black feminist who can address gender oppression while fostering strong relationships with black men.

Two main themes emerge from this analysis of gender issues: (1) Traditional feminist theories have failed to consider the unique needs of poor women and women of color; and (2)

Factors of race and class are as important as gender in analyzing the oppression of poor women and black women.

Developing a Black Feminist Standpoint

As black women moved beyond critiques of traditional feminist theory, they began to construct their own strategies to reconceptualize existing interpretations of black women's experiences and envision black women as agents of change against gender, race and class discrimination. Standpoint theory, which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a feminist critical theory about the relationship between knowledge and power (Harding, 2004), argues that group location in hierarchical power relations produces shared challenges for individuals within group structures (Collins, 1998; Harstock, 2004). Furthermore, these common challenges can facilitate similar viewpoints which may foment a group knowledge, or standpoint, that in turn can influence the group's political action. Therefore, women's marginal position in society can be beneficial rather than merely oppressive; recognition of this fact is an important aspect of standpoint theory that sets it apart from other feminist critical theories.

According to Audre Lorde (1984), observation is a tool often used by black women to ascertain knowledge of dominant groups. Black women have learned how to be watchers to survive gender, race and class oppression; as such, they become familiar with the language and behaviors of a dominant group and use this knowledge to plan their survival strategies. bell hooks (1990) recalls the importance of being a watcher growing up in a small segregated town in Kentucky:

Our survival depended on an ongoing public awareness of the separation between margin and center and an ongoing private acknowledgement that we were a

necessary, vital part of that whole. This sense of wholeness, impressed upon our consciousness by the structure of our daily lives, provided us with an oppositional world-view a mode of seeing unknown to most of our oppressors that sustained us, aided us in our struggle to transcend poverty and despair strengthened our sense of self and our solidarity (p. 147).

Standpoint theory resonates with African American women whose history has been one of struggle to confront and reframe existing knowledge claims that distort black women's identity in the United States (Collins, 1998, 2000a). For such women, using standpoint theory means acknowledging and drawing upon the individual strengths and collective realities that created and maintain African American women's cultural history, enabling it to influence group political action; it also means recognizing the complex differences that operate within the term "black woman" (Collins, 1998, 2001).

In a study of African American women faculty, Alfred (2001) found that participants strongly emphasized the importance of being a watcher, which helped them acquire knowledge to successfully manage institutional environments. By watching, observing and learning the practices of the dominant group, these women developed a frame of reference within which to pattern their behavior. Such awareness enhances African American women's knowledge of organizational culture; within the university setting, such knowledge increases their opportunities for successful participation.

Another essential component of a black feminist standpoint is the critical role it assigns to self-definition in black women's survival. Within black feminist standpoint theory, self is not defined as autonomy gained by separation from others but instead draws upon the interaction with family and community forged by the early development of black women in

the United States (Collins, 2000a). Self-definition enables black women to reject externally defined, controlling images of black womanhood and replace them with African-derived conceptions of self and community; with this self-knowledge, black women can confront negative assessments of black womanhood advanced by dominant groups (Collins, 2000a).

Moreover, Alfred's (2001) study found the perspective from which black women in the academy viewed their marginality as central to their definition of themselves as survivors who maintained both a strong sense of self and the ability to float in and out of different classes and ethnic cultures. Knowledge of the academic culture and role expectations strengthens black women's abilities and contributes to their success in the white academy (Alfred, 2001). Alfred goes on to say that by reconceptualizing their marginal status as a source of empowerment, African American women can learn to navigate the social and political issues of their status to gain access and inclusion in institutions of higher learning. For black women, creating new knowledge about their self-identity is critical to their survival in higher education.

Critical Race Feminism and Critical Race Theory

Black feminist standpoint is used as the primary theoretical framework in this study because its narrative focuses on the African American female experience; however, this does not represent the total black female experience (Reynolds, 2002). According to Hua, (2003), black feminist standpoint addresses mostly the contested space between black and white women. Thus, critical race feminism becomes important as a secondary theory in this study to extend the analysis of gender, race and class to capture a broader range of experiences from black women, particularly black women who are bi-and multi-racial, and those who were born in countries other than the United States. Critical race feminism also allows for

the exploration of race, class and gender in other disciplinary contexts. It considers how legal issues influence the lived experiences of African American women in higher education.

Critical race feminism developed within legal studies in the 1990s, as a way of providing incisive analysis of the impact of race, class and gender together on the legal status of women of color. As such, it emphasizes the theoretical and practical concerns of women of color under the law. The impetus for its creation was the highly controversial series of Senate hearings on the confirmation of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court (James, & Sharpley-Whiting, 2000). The hearings became interrogation sessions for Anita Hill, a former associate of Thomas who claimed that he had sexually harassed her; many Americans were outraged over her treatment by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Critical race feminism is also related to critical race theory, a movement within legal studies that challenged the conservatism of hegemonic legal theory (James & Sharpley-Whiting, 2000). Some of the most prominent writers in critical race theory who also analyze gender issues are Derrick Bell (1997), Patricia Williams (1997), Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (2001), Angela Harris (1995) and Kimberlé Crenshaw (2000).

Critical race theory (CRT) is defined as a collection of critical stances against the existing legal order with race as the central focus (Delgado, 1995). It considers race to be a social rather than a biological construct (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) and is acutely concerned with the dynamics of such social constructs over time. Its writers have drawn attention to the ways that dominant groups racialize different minority groups at different times, often in response to the demands of the labor market (Delgado, 2001). One example is shifts in popular images and stereotypes. In one era, a minority group may be depicted as happy-go-lucky, simpleminded and content to serve; but in response to political, social and

economic changes, that very same group may appear in cartoons, movies and other cultural scripts as menacing, brutish and out of control, requiring close monitoring and repression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Another important aspect of critical race theory is its notion that people of color have a unique voice based on a history of shared experiences with oppression. American minorities of African, Native American, Hispanic and Asian origin are able to communicate knowledge that dominant groups are unlikely to know; in addition, minority status includes a presumed competence to speak about race and racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Within critical race theory, minorities are urged to recount their experiences with racism and the legal system and to apply their own unique perspectives to master narratives by the dominant group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Critical race feminism building upon the foundations of CRT couples theory with practical strategies to engage oppressive systems. Fundamental to critical race feminism is the rejection of essentialism, i.e., the belief that there is some universal notion of “woman” (Harris, 1995). Women of color are simply not white women plus, with some secondary characteristic such as skin tone added on (Harris, 1995).

Critical race feminists call for a deeper understanding of the lives of women of color based on the multiple elements of their identities (Wing, 1997). In *Race and essentialism in feminist legal theory* (1995), Harris shows how essentialism (i.e., the idea that vital, basic properties can be distinguished from accidental properties) works to fragment black women’s identities through the example of black women’s experiences with rape. The rape of an individual woman may be interpreted by white women as a demonstration of a larger pattern, such as the subordination of all women to all men. By contrast, black women may feel it

necessary to balance individual victimization at the hands of men (black and white) with an understanding of the historic pattern of blaming black men for the alleged rape of white women (Harris, 1995).

Finally, critical race feminism raises important questions about terms such as merit and fairness in higher education. Critical race feminism and CRT question the very notion of terms such as “merit” and “fairness”; such critiques have been used to challenge affirmative action laws intended to broaden access to positions of power for women and minorities in higher education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Research has shown that merit in higher education and other institutions is not neutral, but rather is influenced by social constructs of race, class and gender (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). For instance, coachable standardized aptitude tests such as the SAT and GRE not only reward those from high socioeconomic backgrounds but are also poor predictors of academic success in college or graduate school (Brooks, 2003). Also, CRT analyzes the highly contextual aspects of merit; if benchmarks move up or down, distribution changes radically (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Critical race feminism and CRT make use of counter-stories in many forms (oral discussion, archives, personal testimonies) on the principle that some members of oppressed groups tell previously untold or different stories, based on personal experience, that challenge both existing discourse and paradigms of the dominant group (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). A safe place, called counter-space in the literature, should be available for marginalized groups to share their counter-stories or alternative perspectives (Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Alfred, 2001). In the academy, African American women create their own counter-space by connecting with community organizations where other women of color gather and engage in storytelling (Howard-Hamilton, 2003). In these organizations, they unite with other women

as a way to authenticate their counter-knowledge and experiences; in addition, these groups provide support and refuge from the day-to-day problems of marginalization (Howard-Hamilton, 2003).

By focusing significant attention on gender, race and class, critical race feminism and critical theory become indispensable tools for examining the issues confronting African American women in higher education and the experiences of black women who have achieved the presidency.

Intersectionality and Power

The intersectionality of gender, race and class is the conceptual framework and locus of analysis in this study for examining how African American women presidents perceive the influences of the gender, race and class matrix in their professional and personal development. To better understand how the intersectional paradigm operates within the lived experiences of the participants in this study, it is important to explore further the role that power plays influencing the intersectional dynamic and black women's oppression.

The concept of power in general is a difficult term to define, although most theorists agree is a relational construct that takes on different meanings in various contexts (Griscom, 1992). As discussed in this paper, power is rooted in the literature of black feminist standpoint theory, which synthesizes power into two approaches: one concerns groups with greater power oppressing those with lesser amounts; the second approach emphasizes individual agency to resist oppression (Collins, 2000a). Within these two approaches, power is organized around four interrelated domains, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal (Collins, 2000a). The structural domain organizes oppression around large-scale social institutions, such as the U.S. legal system labor markets, housing, schools, and

others that work to disadvantage African American women and other institutions that produce unjust results based on gender, race and class (Collins, p. 277).

In higher education, there have been unequal results in senior leadership positions, in which women and other minorities continue to hold only a small number of presidential appointments in comparison to their white male counterparts (American Council on Education, 2007). Adrienne Rich (1979) points to the patriarchal structure in higher education that is resistant to change and is central to women's unequal power status within these organizations. Other scholars like Alfred (2000), Wilbur (1992), Matthews, (1992), and Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) state the structure in higher education institutions has created a climate that is hostile to oppressed groups. Within the structural domain of power, oppressed groups cannot hope to attain progress in fighting discrimination and injustices without transformation of higher education and other institutions that facilitate their exclusion (Collins, 2000a).

The disciplinary domain of power manages domination through the way organizations are run and does so not through social policies that are explicitly racist or sexist, but through how the organizations are run (Collins, 2000a). In the disciplinary domain, techniques, such as surveillance is used to regulate the behavior of black women and other oppressed groups once they become part of the organization (Collins, 2000a). When it comes to the disciplinary domain of power, acquiring positions of authority within these organizations is a key strategy. This is particularly important within the academy as described by Collins (2000a).

An African American friend of mine once referred to this process as one of viewing her university as an egg and her job as one of "working the cracks." From a distance,

each egg appears to be smooth and seamless, but, upon closer inspection, each egg's distinctive patterns of almost invisible cracks become visible. Her insider administrative position granted her a view of higher education not as a well-oiled bureaucracy that was impervious to change but as a series of cracks and fissures that represented organizational weaknesses. As she described it, she was committed to "working the cracks" and changing her workplace by persistent use of her insider knowledge concerning its pressure points. Once inside, many black women do make a difference in how bureaucracies operate...Rarely mentioning words such as "racism, sexism", "discrimination", and the like, they find innovative ways to work the system so that it will become more fair. (p. 281)

The hegemonic domain of power seeks to provide a justification for power used by dominant groups by manipulating ideas, symbols and ideologies that shape people's consciousness about oppressed groups (Collins, 2000a). Widely distributed images of African American women as welfare queens and "hoochies have a tremendous impact influencing society's negative perception of black women (Collins, 2000a). By emphasizing the power of self-definition through a black feminist standpoint, the hegemonic domain can be a site of resistance by creating counter-hegemonic knowledge to facilitate a changed consciousness towards black women's empowerment (Collins, 2000a). A study done by Alfred (2001) reinforces the importance of self-definition for African American women in the academy. Alfred (2001) found that a strong self-image was central in helping African American women navigate their status and help gain access and inclusion in institutions of higher learning.

The interpersonal domain of power functions at the micro level and focuses on how individuals treat and relate to each other (Collins, 2000a). Through the interpersonal domain, each person can develop strategies to confront everyday discrimination of gender, race and class to bring about social justice and change the world around them (Collins, 2000a). Thus, Black feminist standpoint theory becomes an important tool for helping to facilitate and foster greater engagement of gender, race and class issues for African American women in higher education.

Conclusion

Until the middle of the twentieth century, higher education in America excluded women and minorities. Hegemonic practices have also played a central role in defining intelligence and academic worth. Traditional feminist theory, while providing an essential foundation from which to address gender identity, is not adequate to address the needs of women of color and working-class women. Black feminist ideology enables African American women to affirm their identities in terms of gender, race and class, as well as to validate their scholarship within the academy.

Traditional feminist theory, when reconceptualized from a black feminist standpoint includes examination of black women's experiences from the gender, race and class intersectional paradigm and offers strategies by which African American women can confront issues that contribute to their marginal status in higher education. The absence of black women has not only created a discouraging sense of invisibility but also generates intense stress and tension for African American women in scholarly pursuits, especially when their ideas and experience regarding issues of race, gender and class are not valued or supported. Standpoint theory, critical race theory, and critical race feminism, which all

emphasize strong self-identity and self-definition, enable black women within the academy to reject negative, controlling images and redefine their marginality so that they can engage the power structures. As presented in black feminist standpoint theory, these strategies can be powerful tools for the empowerment of black women who aspire to be college or university presidents.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways gender race and class constructed as an intersectional paradigm influences the professional and personal development of African American women presidents prior to and during their tenure as college presidents. This chapter contains descriptions of the research design and methods to collect and analyze data for this study, including procedures for developing the survey instrument and ensuring the trustworthiness of the data. It also contains key definitions and a description of the criteria for selecting participants.

Qualitative Research and Narrative Inquiry

Qualitative research refers to any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or means of quantification (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The choice of qualitative research was based on the desire to obtain a deeper understanding of the intersectional paradigm on the participants' lived experiences. Because qualitative research is a naturalistic, interpretative approach that is concerned with understanding the meanings people attach to phenomena within their social worlds, it is the best method for exploring the research questions set forth in this study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). A narrative inquiry method was selected as the approach to provide a better understanding of the personal and professional experiences of the participants in this study as seen from their individual perspectives.

The choice of a qualitative research design for this study is based on two things. The first is the nature of the research questions. The second is the goal of conducting in-depth studies of participants in their natural settings, as many types of qualitative research do

(Creswell, 1998). In this case, this researcher employed a narrative approach, i.e., focus on gathering and interpreting the stories people use to describe their lives (Hatch, 2002). Of the types of narrative studies (life histories, life story research, biography, personal experience methods, oral history, and narrative inquiry) narrative inquiry has been selected because it provides a means to understand participants' experiences without formulating a logical or scientific explanation (Kramp, 2004).

Narrative inquiry changes society's eternal epistemological question from "How do we come to know the truth?" to "How do we come to endow experience with meaning?" (Bruner, 1986, p. 12). As identified by Connelly and Clandinin (1994), key methods for generating data through narrative inquiry include oral histories; annals and chronicles; family stories; photographs, memory boxes, and other personal and family artifacts; research interviews; journals; autobiographical writing; letters; conversations; field notes; and other stories from the field.

Narrative inquiry fits comfortably within the paradigmatic boundaries of critical feminist thinking and the emphasis placed by these disciplines on the meanings that individuals generate through stories (Chase, 2005; Hatch, 2002). According to Juanita Johnson-Bailey (2004), an African American researcher, scholars doing work on women of color rely heavily on narrative inquiry because its implicitly collaborative and interactive nature remedies some of the inherent power disparities of the research process. Also, data in narrative inquiry projects is displayed in its original state, which is acknowledged as a trustworthy way of giving voice to participants and helps convince audiences of the value of the research results (Kramp, 2004). Because the data are situated in contexts of time and

place, narrative inquiry enables researchers to infer meanings where previously there were none and to provide settings for elements of the narratives, such as plot and character.

Last, narrative inquiry supplies the storyteller with a contextual framework through which to connect and situate particular experiences so that they form a coherent structure representing life as it is experienced; along the way, the process of reflecting, structuring and narrating disparate events is made meaningful (Bruner, 1986; Chase, 2005; Hatch, 2002; Kramp, 2004).

In this study, the researcher utilized a sociological approach that focuses on the “hows” and “whats” of storytelling; in other words, the inquiries are based on intensive interviews about specific aspects of the participants’ lives and how they make sense of these personal experiences in relation to culturally and historically specific discourses (Chase, 2005). A major goal of this approach was to show how participants create a range of narrative strategies in relation to their discursive environments (Chase, 2005).

Immersion in the natural setting of the participant is an important part of narrative inquiry; therefore, the fieldwork for this research was conducted either on the home campus of each participant or in the home of the participant if she was retired. Formal interviews took place with six African American women presidents of four-year colleges and universities, and secondary documents such as curriculum vitae, publications, and print media articles were utilized to supplement the interviews and provide background information.

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. How do African American women college presidents perceive gender, race and class in shaping their professional personal life experiences?

2. How have race, gender and class contributed to and challenged African American women president's ability to negotiate positions of power within the academy?

These questions formed the foundation of the interview protocols and guided the researcher in collecting data.

Research Using Feminist Perspectives

The research in this study was conducted using a feminist perspective; the perspectives of feminist research are rooted in feminist theory (Chase, 2005; Hatch, 2002; Johnson-Bailey, 2004). According to Hatch (2002), feminist research is distinguished from other approaches by its assertions that the reality depicted by much of social science is both incomplete and fundamentally distorted, and that the world described by the studies of human and organizational behavior is dominated by white, middle-class experiences, assumptions and perspectives—usually, the worldviews of white males. The experiences, assumptions and perspectives of females usually have been excluded as subjects of study, researchers, and interpreters of results (Collins, 2000b). Hatch (2002) further explains that feminist paradigms focus on historically situated structures that impact the life experiences of individuals. Social action resulting from the influence of these structures, which are perceived as real, leads to differential treatment of individuals based on their race, gender, and class status (Hatch, 2002). Feminist researchers are most interested in exposing the material differences that gender, class and race make in women's life experiences (Hatch, 2002).

One purpose of feminist research is to raise the consciousness of people experiencing oppression because of historically situated structures tied to race, gender and class (Chase, 2005; Collins, 2000a; hooks, 2000; Johnson-Bailey, 2004; Kramp, 2004). Based on the pilot

study conducted by this researcher, black women readily acknowledge race as a major influence in their professional and personal lives; gender, on the other hand, was seen as having little or no impact. Raising consciousness about the ways gender, class and race shape daily life is an important first step toward bringing about social change. For the feminist scholar, data collection is linked to improving life chances for individuals at the bottom of the social hierarchy and a crucial objective is to reveal the kinds and extent of oppression that are being experienced by those studied (Hatch, 2002).

This perspective in and of itself is not a problem when the researcher acknowledges that certain groups are missing from a particular study and thus from interpretations of the results (Shakeshaft, 1987). However, when research is described as representative of the universe under study, and when findings are presented as universally true, there is a significant problem. Thus, traditional feminist theory that resulted from research based totally in a white, middle-class perspective is woefully inadequate for evaluating all female experiences and behavior (Shakeshaft, 1987).

In struggling with issues of diversity within traditional feminist theory, some present-day feminist researchers have come to view diversity as a new criterion for feminist research excellence. Reinharz (1992), an advocate for the inclusion of diversified samples in all studies, even claims that feminist researchers can neither ethically nor successfully study women whose racial, cultural, or social background is different from their own. bell hooks (1981) states that although it is evident that many women suffer from sexism, there is little indication these experiences forge a common bond among all women. Clearly, from the beginnings of a modern move toward a feminist revolution, white female organizers have failed to acknowledge the presence of racism and its impact on their own worldviews.

Furthermore, while sexist discrimination may have prevented white women from assuming the dominant role in the perpetuation of white racial imperialism, historically it did not prevent white women from absorbing, supporting, and advocating racist ideology or acting individually as racist oppressors in various spheres of American life (hooks, 1981). The need for diversity in feminist research compelled African American women to develop their own standpoints.

Another important component of feminist research is authenticity of voice, where authenticity is defined as finding guidance for one's own life within the lives of historic models or examples. A personal life story, in other words, is always rooted in the wider drama of a communal history and an individual's participation in public life functions as an enabling conduit for action (Fisher & Embree, 2000). Thus, instead of representing freedom from communal forms of life experience, authenticity offers a fuller and richer form of participation in the public sphere (Fisher & Embree, 2000).

Role of Researcher

The selection of this topic was inspired by the researcher's own experiences as an African American woman working in higher education and the important roles self-determination and self-worth played in the struggle against discrimination. Therefore, it is crucial that these biases be directly addressed and that the proper procedures and policies be upheld to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Further, it is noted that even though a researcher and a cohort of the same gender and race can develop trust, dialogue and empathy, the researcher's insider position can also create a false sense of comfort and even lead to ignoring subtle aspects of how participants experience the intersection of race, gender and class (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). In other words,

researcher and participants may share a common history of discrimination, but their experiences are not homogeneous.

Ethical Issues

Clearly, anonymity was an important factor for the willingness of some presidents to participate in this study and provide open and candid answers to the questions. To protect the anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms were used both for the participants and for individuals and institutions named in their narratives.; however, this researcher made participants aware prior to the interview that because there are so few African American women college presidents at four-year colleges and universities, complete anonymity would be difficult to achieve for this study. No participant declined to participate in this study because of this issue. Another method used to safeguard privacy was to provide participants the choice of where they wanted to be interviewed. Current presidents all chose their offices and all but one former president chose their homes; that one president chose her personal office as the location. Once the interviews were completed, each participant was given the opportunity to see and comment on the accuracy of the transcripts, with the caveat that all documents generated by this study were the property of the author.

Selection of Participants

African American women hold approximately 40 or 1.8 % of the total presidential appointments of all colleges and universities in the United States, with the majority located at community or two-year colleges (American Council on Education, 2007). Approximately 6 presidents were selected for the study based on the following criteria:

1. must be female and black/African American descent;
2. must be president or former president at four-year college or university;

3. must be president or former president of an institution located in the United States.

The participants for this study included a cross-section from different socioeconomic backgrounds to address the issue of class in this study. The researcher developed a biographical survey that was sent to the first participant prior to the meeting but based on lessons learned from that experience, this researcher decided to discontinue use of the survey prior to the visit but to ask biographical questions as part of the interview process. This allowed for an evolution in the interview process to take place, whereby the researcher had time to develop a rapport with the participant and for the participant to develop a level of comfort with the researcher. This method was consistently used throughout the entire study.

Some background information about the participants was generated before the meeting, including gathering copies of curriculum vitae, newspaper articles about the participant and information about the institution where participant served or was serving as president. This researcher sought and received approval from North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct research on human subjects. A copy of this form is found in the appendices to this dissertation.

Data Collection

This study explored the intersection of gender, race and class, as experienced by African American women presidents of four-year colleges and universities in the Southeastern United States. An important limitation of this study is the time and availability of the potential applicant pool. Since presidents are highly visible, public figures on campus and within the surrounding communities where the colleges are located, they have numerous administrative and social responsibilities that limit their time and accessibility. A semi-

structured, open-ended interview format was used. This tool was particularly useful given the study's purpose of understanding the participant's experiences and the meaning they make of these experiences (Newman & Benz, 1998). The questions were flexibly worded and open-ended, allowing new ideas and themes to emerge (Newman & Benz, 1998). A detailed description of the interview protocol appears below and a copy contained in the appendices.

Gaining Access

Access to this group resulted from the snowball technique. Once the researcher contacted and confirmed an appointment with the first participant, recommendations and names were provided to the researcher who contacted other potential participants for the study. Most of the interviews were confirmed by email and telephone calls. All the participants lived outside North Carolina so air travel and overnight stays were necessary to conduct the interviews.

Interviews were conducted either in the participant's home, their personal office or on campus in the privacy of her office. Although all of the participants were African American women, the sample included a cross-section of socioeconomic backgrounds. A sample size of 6 women was used with more than 32 contact hours for the entire study. Participants in this study were in an in-depth interview that varied from two hours to eight hours depending on the participant. Several participants invited me to dinner, lunch or breakfast where informal conversation took place and added to the number of contact hours. The participants provided lots of archival information such as books, memoirs, reports and other publications on their tenure as president. Several of the participants provided signed copies of books to the researcher.

The researcher kept a journal of the field visits with participants that included notes about the interviews, personal reflections, observations about the setting and the participant and emerging themes about the participant and the study, which allowed the researcher to compare impressions, ideas, and so forth as they developed. This journal also served as the primary resource for documenting informal correspondence with participants, which served to provide additional insights about the participants life experiences. Formal interviews with the participants were documented on audio tape and converted to written transcripts. A key point learned from conducting these interviews is the ability to be quick responding and formulating follow up questions to answers in order to yield the kind of rich, thick descriptions necessary to generate good qualitative data. Finally, participants were contacted after the interview to review the accuracy of the interview transcripts and to confirm the accuracy of any other information compiled about the participant from the research and to address any follow up questions regarding the interview.

Description of Interview Sessions

Participant A is a retired president and contact was first made via email and then by telephone. In preparation for the interview, the researcher gathered as much biographical information as possible through the university website where she served as president and other internet databases on the world-wide-web. The interview was conducted in her home, an impressive grand house that in many ways reflected the personality of Participant A. There were many artifacts from her presidency, which she talked about in detail when she gave the researcher a tour of her home. The formal interview lasted nearly 4 hours. Consistent with all the participants, the initial round of questions focused on her background and early childhood to establish context for her life experiences and develop rapport with the

participant. The total contact time with this participant including informal conversations totaled 10 hours.

Participant B is a current president. The interview was arranged through her secretary who stated that she [president] was surprised that the researcher would travel so far to conduct the interview. The interview was conducted approximately two months after scheduled. Because of the distance between participant and researcher, an overnight stay was necessary, which gave the researcher time to gather more biographical information about the participant from institutional sources and observe the campus setting. The following day the campus continued to be quiet. Most of the students were gone due to the annual holiday observed by the campus community. The researcher observed that the campus was growing as indicated by the level of new construction on campus. Two buildings appeared recently constructed. The interview took place in the president's office in the administration building. Prior to the meeting, the secretary greeted me and I was able to get an updated copy of the president's complete curriculum vitae and a copy of the college magazine, which featured an in-depth article on the president. The formal interview lasted about 2 hours, with some informal time at the beginning and conclusion of the session in which, among other topics, the participant made recommendations of other presidents that should be contacted for the study. The total contact hours with this participant including campus observations approximated 7 hours.

Participant C is the retired president of two institutions. She was interviewed at her home for 2 hours, with additional conversations before and after the interview sessions. The interview progressed continuously except for a couple of occasions when the participant stopped to answer the door and take a phone call. At the end of the visit, she provided a

signed copy of her published autobiographical account of her life from childhood to the presidency.

Participant D is a current president and represented the fourth interview in the study. With each successive interview, the researcher became more comfortable with the process and able to deepen the level of interaction with the participants to generate greater insights into the how's and why's of their life journey. As such, it was necessary to go back to some of the earlier participants and ask follow up questions based on the lessons learned from subsequent interviews. The formal session lasted 2 hours with additional time spent touring and observing the campus grounds. The campus was aged but reflected character and strength consistent with the history and mission of providing educational opportunities for African Americans. The total contact time was 4 hours.

President E is a retired president. She was highly recommended by two other participants but was reluctant initially to participate in the study. It was necessary to send her a summary of my proposal to convince her to agree. Upon arrival that morning to her home, she invited me to breakfast at a local restaurant where we engaged in more than two hours of informal conversations about her life and my life. The formal interview took place back at her home and lasted 4 hours, with some minor telephone interruptions. The participant provided me with signed books on her research, newspaper clippings and other artifacts related to her personal and professional accomplishments. Another hour was spent with the participant visiting an African American museum. At this point the researcher felt pleased with the level of interaction and comfort achieved with this participant, which is reflected in the overall data generated from the session and documentary data sources (see table 1).

Finally, the participant took the researcher to the airport with an invitation to come back to an event later in the year at the museum.

Participant F is also retired. Participant F picked researcher up from the airport and had lunch at a local restaurant for about 2 hours. The formal interview was conducted at her office. In addition to the researcher audio taping the session, the interview was videotaped by a videographer hired by the participant to include as part of her research on a related topic. The session lasted for 3 hours including informal conversations taking place while setting up the camera and microphones. Afterwards, the participant gave the researcher a copy of a CV and several artifacts related to her presidency and life history. An updated CV was mailed later on to the researcher's home. The participant invited the researcher to stay overnight but was unable to on this visit. She returned the researcher to the airport during with additional time spent exchanging information about each other's life journey. The total contact was 6 hours.

Documentary Data

In addition to interviews, observations, telephone and email correspondences, the researcher was able to acquire supplementary records that further validated the trustworthiness of the data. The data sources included institutional reports from the participant's tenure as president, biographical data from published memoirs and other artifacts such as newspaper clippings, magazine articles publications and public records. Table 1 provides a complete list of the documentary data sources for this study.

Table 1

Documentary Data Sources Display Table

Participant A	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D	Participant E	Participant F
Interview 3/21/07	Interview 5/18/07	Interview 6/22/07	Interview 7/13/07	Interview 8/24/07	Interview 9/7/07
Demographics/ Background Questionnaire	Demographics/ Background Questionnaire	Demographics/ Background Questionnaire	Demographics Background Questionnaire	Demographics/ Background Questionnaire	Demographics/ Background Questionnaire
Transcript	Transcript	Transcript	Transcript	Transcript	Transcript
Curriculum Vitae	Curriculum Vitae	Curriculum Vitae	Curriculum Vitae	Curriculum Vitae	Curriculum Vitae
College Website	College Website	College Website	College Website	Newspaper Clippings: October 2, 2000; October 26, 2006	College Report on President's Accomplishment over 10-year period 1987-1997
Other Data Sources on World Wide Web	Other Data Sources on World Wide Web	Other Data Sources on World Wide Web	Other Data Sources on World Wide Web	National Magazine: April/May 1994	Book (1): Higher- Education related Topic
Telephone and Email Correspondences	College Magazine 2005	Book: Autobiographical Account of Life Story	Telephone and Email Correspondences	University Report on President's Accomplish- ments over 11-year period 11987-1998	Telephone and Email Correspondences
	Telephone and Email Correspondences	Telephone and Email Correspondences		Books (2): written by participant on research and history- related topics	
				Telephone and Email Correspondences	

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a crucial component of qualitative research and was crucial to this study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend that in order to adhere to the canons of reliability and validity, trustworthiness has to be established in a research study. Related terms include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (naturalist) and internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity (positivist). Creswell (1998) has developed eight

verification procedures and recommends that a qualitative researcher utilize at least two of them. They are summarized in the table below

Table 2

Creswell's Criteria for Trustworthiness

Criteria	Description
Prolonged engagement and persistent observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build trust with participants • Learning the culture • Check for misinformation that stems from distortions introduced by the researcher or informants
Triangulation	The use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence
Peer review or debriefing	External check of the research process
Negative case analysis	Refinement of working hypothesis as the inquiry advances
Clarifying researcher bias	Researcher comments on past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations
Member checks	Researcher solicits informants views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations
Rich, thick descriptions	Allows reader to make decisions regarding transferability of shared characteristics
External audits	Allow an external consultant or auditor to examine both the process and the product of the account, assessing their accuracy.

This use of the triangulation procedure and member checks are the most relevant given the type of research conducted in this study. The triangulation method makes use of multiple

and different sources to provide corroborating evidence. Data generated from these interviews were compared to confirm accuracy of information. The use of audio tapes as well as on-site notes taken by the researcher were also important comparison tools to ensure credibility of data. Finally, this researcher reviewed publications, newspaper clippings, and curriculum vitae as well as other documents about the participants' lives and experiences to ensure accuracy.

Member checking in this study involved asking the participants to review and clarify information generated from the interviews. Within four weeks of the interview, the researcher supplied copies by email attachment of the transcripts to each participant and request corrections or modifications. In addition to triangulation and member checking, this researcher utilized from Lincoln and Guba's (1985) list all six methods for maintaining a research audit trail. They are:

1. *raw data*-the researcher used field notes and audio recordings to ensure accuracy.
2. *data reduction and analysis products*- the researcher used summaries and themes as part of the collection and analysis
3. *data reconstruction and synthesis products*- the researcher used clustering of themes into categories, interpretations, and the results are presented in the findings chapter of this dissertation.
4. *process notes*- the researcher made methodological notes and included them in the journal for the project.
5. *information about intentions and disposition*-a detailed proposal was presented prior to conducting the research as to the purpose and scope of the project.

6. *instrument development information*- A semi-structured interview protocol was developed for this study.

Research Protocol

The research protocol for this study is based on the matrix of questions for qualitative surveys developed by Patton (2002). This instrument was also adapted from an earlier survey the researcher conducted on a pilot for a similar study. In addition, this researcher also adapted some of the interview protocol from a study by Parker (2005) on race, gender, and leadership. The survey was modified to address pertinent issues and themes found in the literature.

The basic format for the survey was a series of semi-structured and open-ended questions to determine the participants' self-reported perceptions of the influence of race, gender and class on their life experiences in the academy and beyond. Other questions were also developed according to the purpose of this study. The questions were centered on four of the six topic areas described by Patton (2002), which are summarized as background/demographic, experience and behavior, opinion and values. A copy of the instrument and interview protocol of study questions are found in the Appendices of this paper.

Data Analysis

Analysis of these data involved the transcription of audio tapes from interviews conducted with the participants and the subsequent review and systematic coding of these transcripts. Additional analysis came from field notes and other written documents generated by the study.

Transcription

This researcher utilized the services of a professional transcriptionist to convert the audio tapes of the participants' in-depth interviews to text. The professional transcriptionist was given clear instructions to provide a verbatim account of the information on the tapes, including all utterances and vocalizations heard on the recording.

Coding

Coding was an important part of the analysis of qualitative research; after receiving transcripts of the participant interviews, this researcher began the coding process. Codes were used for labeling and assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during the study that were attached to units of text within the transcript such as groups of words, repeated phrases, or whole paragraphs (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For the purposes of this study, the coding system was developed from the conceptual and theoretical framework, literature, as well as those emerging from the data. A sample list of codes used for this study can be found in the Appendices of this document.

The coding system consisted of three types: descriptive, interpretive, and pattern codes (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Prior to going to the field, the researcher created a provisional list of codes and then a final list of codes was developed after analysis of the transcripts. NVivo was used with analyzing the rich textual data from this study. NVivo is a computer software program that helps code, categorize and analyze textual data.

Conclusion

The design, collection and analysis of data yielded some rich and interesting narratives generated from the participants' transcripts. The next chapter provides a detailed presentation of these narratives, as well as a description of the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This study examines how gender, race and class intersect to shape the personal and professional lives of African American women college presidents of four-year colleges and universities. The questions for this research are designed to explore two primary areas: (a) How do African American women college presidents perceive gender, race, and class in shaping their experiences; and (b) How have gender, race, and class contributed to and challenged African American women president's ability to negotiate positions of power within the academy? Although the participants in this study share many similarities, their experiences and perceptions are by no means homogenous. In fact, the women express many different ways that gender, race and class are revealed in their lives.

This chapter presents the findings from in-depth interviews with six African American women who are or were presidents of four-year colleges and universities. These findings are presented in the context of the theoretical frameworks of the black feminist standpoint and critical race theory described earlier in this paper. Consistent with the core principles of the narrative inquiry approach to qualitative research, these findings tell a story of the women's experiences with gender, race, and class and the influences these constructions have had in shaping who they are as individuals and as presidents of colleges and universities. In particular, the participants' experiences are presented in their own voices in rich, thick descriptions as a way of reinforcing the authenticity of the narrative.

The first part of this chapter provides brief descriptions of the participants in this study. Because of the need to maintain their anonymity, each participant is given a

pseudonym to protect her identity, as are other persons and organizations that might reveal the identity of the participant. Next, this chapter examines in detail the three emerging themes from the research: (a) Living in the margins: how the intersection of gender, race and class defines and shapes black women's identity and self-image; (b) Breaking through the smoked glass ceiling: a reconceptualization of power and how it is used in higher education; and (c) Speaking truth to power: How black women challenge power structures that limit their access and opportunity to leadership positions. (Table 3 provides an overview of findings below). Last, the findings from the research are summarized at the end of this chapter.

Table 3

Summary of Findings

Section I	Themes
1. Living in the margins: how the intersection of gender, race and class defines and shapes black women's identity and self-image	<p>(a) There are many versions of how participants perceive their marginality within the intersectional paradigm of gender, race and class</p> <p>(b) The perceived influences of gender, race and class on participant's experiences were seen as more nuanced when factored with nationality and culture</p> <p>(c) The institutional influences of family and community, schools, and the black church produced a cumulative effect of gender, race, and class that enabled participants to survive and succeed within a society that limited their personal and professional opportunities.</p> <p>(d) Collaboration, coordination, and determination are important tools for engaging marginal status</p>

Table 3 Continued

Section II		
2. Breaking through the smoked glass ceiling: a reconceptualization of power and how it is used in higher education	(e)	How participants think about and use power as leaders is rooted in their marginality as African American women
Section III		
3. Speaking truth to power: How black women challenge power structures that limit their access and opportunity to leadership positions.	(a)	Participant perceived gender bias at HBCUs to be huge issue for African American women who aspire to be college presidents at these institutions
	(b)	Participants developed a variety of strategies for challenging hegemony within the organizational culture and climate

Description of Participants

Participant A in this study is identified by the name Alice, born in the North to a middle-class family; both parents obtained advanced college degrees and held professional positions as a teacher and lawyer. At the time of the interview, Alice was in her early sixties and a former president of a small historically black university in the south. Alice is a divorced mother and currently married to her second husband. Alice's professional ascension to the presidency was typical of the path followed by the other participants in the study. Alice's interview occurred in her home; additional time was spent touring her house, discussing the many artifacts from her presidency that she keeps as memorabilia.

Participant B, born to middle-class, well-educated parents in the Northwest, is referred to as Barbara. She is married with children and is a current president of a small four-

year college. Unlike the other five participants in the study, Barbara is president of a primarily white institution in the Midwest. She took a traditional route to the presidency, but began her academic career in West Africa. She was interviewed in her office on campus.

Participant C is the only one in the study who has been president of two different institutions, serving first as leader of a small diverse, but not historically black university in the Midwest, and then as president of a four-year historically black liberal arts college in the South. She grew up in a housing project in the Northeast, raised by her divorced mother. She married and began having children as a teenager while working her way through college. Her pseudonym is Cynthia. Cynthia is currently retired; the interview took place in her home.

Participant D has the pseudonym Darlene. She was born in the Caribbean and is a current president of a small historically black college in the South. She is married with children and has had a traditional route to the presidency. She is from an upper middle-class background, with a white father and black mother, but she was raised by her father's family.

Participant E will be called Ebony. She was born in the South to a working-class family. Ebony served as president of a historically black university in the northeast. Currently, she is in her late 60s, retired, a widow and mother of one. The formal interview took place in her home.

Participant F was born in the South to working-class parents and is the only participant in the study with a doctoral degree in the sciences. She was president of a women's college and her pseudonym is Faith. Currently, she is a widow and retired. Her interview took place in her office, where she works as a consultant and workshop facilitator.

Table 4

Summary of Participants' Backgrounds and Demographics

Participant	Socioeconomic Background	Highest Degree	Status	Number of Presidencies	Type of Institution	Professional Background
Alice	Middle class	Ph.D.	Retired	1	Historically black regional university	Faculty, Department Chair, Dean, President
Barbara	Middle class	Ph.D.	President	1	Predominately white four-year college	Faculty, Department Chair, Dean, Acting President, President
Cynthia	Working class	Ph.D.	Retired	2	Small, diverse university and historically black four-year liberal arts college	Faculty, Vice Chancellor, President
Darlene	Upper middle class	Ed.D.	Current	1	Historically black four-year college	Faculty, Administrator, President
Ebony	Working class	Ph.D.	Retired	1	Historically black university	Faculty, College Administrator, President
Faith	Working class	Ph.D.	Retired	1	Historically black four-year women's college	Faculty, College Administrator, President

Living in the Margins: How Gender, Race and Class Shape

Black Women's Identity and Self-Image

I think that black women face a different set of challenges. And it's always very difficult to tease out what's race and what's gender or maybe that's not even a valid question. Because people see you as who you are. You're a woman who's an African American woman. I think people may put all kind of expectations on you, and your leadership style. Some people still find women who use power problematic. Barbara

What does it mean to be marginalized?"

The emerging theme for this section focuses on the many ways participants experience life marginalized and how this marginalized status within the intersectional paradigm of gender, race, and class is negotiated and renegotiated at various stages in the participants' lives. The narratives present portraits of black women who were disenfranchised as a result of their gender, race, and class status and denied access to many opportunities that limited their ability to live full and enriching lives; however, the results of this research also reveal the cumulative effect of gender, race, and class that produces a parallel narrative in which participants' marginal status served as a source of empowerment that became central to their career advancement and ascension to presidencies of colleges and universities.

The term marginality is used in this research to describe groups historically disenfranchised and left out of the decision-making processes in this society based on gender, race, class, or other social constructs. Five of the six participants grew up in segregated communities that were all black, with limited contact and interaction with other races. One participant was born in a foreign country in which blacks are the dominant race. As a result, these findings reveal that the majority of participants were not aware of their marginal status

related to race and gender differences until much later in life. However, the three participants from working-class backgrounds and the participant who was born in a foreign country did have experiences of being disenfranchised that were related to their socioeconomic or class location. This section provides narratives and explores the many constructions of marginalization. It begins with presentation of marginalization in the early stages of one participant's life from an economic perspective. That presentation is followed by two participants' versions of marginalization based on skin color and physical beauty. Then, one of those participants begins to see gender as a limiting factor based on her experiences in graduate school. Next, two participants with experiences living and working in a foreign country provide their perceptions of marginalization when gender, race, and class are intersected with nationality. Then, the marginal status is examined from participants' professional and personal lives while working in the academy. Finally, this section shifts to present a dual impact of the influences of gender, race, and class. Participants' families and the larger black community serve as important tools to reconceptualize gender, race, and class as sources of strength and empowerment to survive and thrive within their marginalized status.

Cynthia describes the emotional and psychological impact of what it means to be marginalized, or as she perceives being the "other" within her working-class environment:

I was always aware of that [being the "other"]. Even in the housing projects, I was aware. My mother was a single mother; we would not be invited to some of the parties that other people had...We didn't have the same clothes. My mother wasn't there to comb my hair; my hair was all over my head. I didn't have the same presentation that other children did. I didn't have any clothes, the way my hair

looked, I'd sometimes be putting cardboard in my shoes. So there was that difference in what I had as a child. And then with the stuttering, you know, people making fun of your stuttering. I was always very much aware of the fact that my mother was different; the other mothers would be home cooking dinner. My mother was different, the clothes that we had to wear were different, the fact that we didn't have a father in the home.

Two of the participants in the study expressed awareness of their marginal status within the black community based on skin color. Faith describes an incident related to the play *Tom Thumb* when she was in grade school.

So I saw something about a "Tom Thumb wedding," and I decided that I would go to try out for that. Well, so I guess by now I'm almost six. So I went to the cafeteria and I was sitting there waiting, and Mary Johnson, who was one of the teachers who was in charge of this Tom Thumb wedding, ...And so she came up to me and she said, "Why are you here?" and I said, "I'm here to try out for the Tom Thumb wedding. She said, "Oh, you're too black, you can't be in the Tom Thumb wedding. And I remember just sitting there and thinking, "Well, I'm going to stay." I don't know what the actual thoughts were, but I just sat there, and of course, I didn't get chosen.

Ebony, who was born to a working-class family, expands further on this phenomenon of being marginalized to illustrate how the standard of Western beauty operates at many important levels within the black community to shape black women's identities and self-images.

I never had any sense of being disadvantaged until I went to [Johnson University].

The people who went to Johnson—especially girls—were most of them very well off.

They were from the black middle class, whether they came from Texas, whether they came from Illinois, the ones that came from Florida. I remember some of them—well, there were just a few who were not so well off, but they had the looks. Now the first time I ever came into contact with serious emphasis on color was at [College] because they, you know, most of the girls there were light-skinned...I was very much aware that when they chose the Miss [College], you know, it was always somebody fair. And then one time something really exceptional happened. I don't know whether it was in our first year or second year, but the woman who was chosen the young woman as Miss [College] was the cousin of one of the people in my class, and the one in my class is still a very close friend of mine now. She is very fair. They come from Georgia, and her cousin who was Miss [College] was not quite as fair, but you know, a very fair, very attractive young woman, and she did something that made the school mad. She chose her court, because Miss [College] always chose her court, right, and she chose brown-skinned girls. One young lady who was very heavy, I mean even at that time, she was heavy and not as if she was just a little bit plump, And do you know, whoever the powers-that-be in the school were, were so upset about the fact that Miss [College's] court didn't have the image of the [College] woman—light-skinned, shapely, da-da-da—from that point on they stopped allowing Miss [College] to choose her court.

College life also provided Ebony greater exposure to gender as a source of marginalization when she left [College] and entered Columbia University Graduate School. There she discovered how women are steered into certain disciplines and denied opportunities for advancement based on their gender.

Well, I would say Columbia was the first school where it was very obvious to me that gender made a difference. There were no women at Columbia who were professors except... [Mary] had been a professor in Anthropology... No, I don't even know—I don't think she was a full professor. First of all, the Columbia Anthropology Department came out of a very male-oriented background; [Bill Jones] was the leading light there for many years. I think Benedict was one of his students. I think Margaret Mead was one of his students. They pushed the girls into what they called “culture and personality” in those days, and they pushed the boys into what they considered to be the “difficult” challenging subjects in anthropology. And when I got there decades later, in the 50s, there were a lot of girls who were good students, and they were recognized to be good students, but they weren't the ones that the professors would pick out and sort of make their plum interns—they took to the male students much more so. Even though the one black professor there—who was [Bob Smith] who died this summer—encouraged me and he was the one who really led me to do field work in Africa rather than in the Caribbean, because I was focused on going to the West Indies and following up the things that had interested me in college. I don't think he was male-oriented, of the sense, but then he was a pretty young professor himself at Columbia in those days. He had been teaching at NYU, had graduated from Columbia, and sort of just been recruited back. But the men who were the stars of the department had young men as their protégés. And then [there was] the fact that Margaret Mead wasn't considered good enough to be a professor—she was the most famous anthropologist in the country. But all of her life, her professional life, her main appointment was at the American Museum of Natural History—she

was an adjunct professor, I believe it was, at Columbia. You see, this was just on the edge, if I might say that, of the women's movement. Civil rights, and women's rights and all that hadn't come to the fore. But I could tell that we were, I guess, in the forerunner group, because all of us found that to be unbelievable. But we were students, we didn't... We didn't protest, which tells you something, I guess—but we talked about it.

The intersection of gender, race, and class with nationality produces a different perception of how gender, race, class and their marginal status are viewed. Darlene, who was born in Jamaica and raised in an upper middle-class family, perceived that, within this intersectional construct, race is neutralized and becomes a proxy for class.

I grew up with a Caucasian woman. I used to hear about the little black this, the little black that, worthless little black this. I heard all of that. But I was special. I couldn't understand... That was what I just couldn't understand. I heard a lot of negatives; nothing black was ever good. Yet she was married to a black man, but [he] was a black man with status, so for her status was an overriding factor. That's why I say class is very important. Our country was at this point in time—at that point in time was more about class than it was about race. Race wasn't dominant because she would welcome any black person as long as they were up there on the totem pole. So that's what mattered, class had more to do with it than race. But I grew up hearing a lot of negatives about... When you look at it, those negatives [that] were focused more on working-class people. If you were black and you were intelligent, educated, they called, and you were up there in the social class it didn't matter, nobody heard it. So class was more a dominant factor than race was. Because you had a white core just

the same down there, and they didn't... They still wouldn't be revered or respected anymore than a black person of the same class.

Darlene further states that she believes the dominance of class is not only true for blacks in Jamaica but is a fact for African Americans as well.

I still think that class is quite dominant here [United States], but people - it's overshadowed by race, I think it really is overshadowed by race. How many people, be they black, white, pink, blue, do not bow at Oprah Winfrey, Colin Powell—celebrity—and they're black. Okay, they stand shoulder-to-shoulder with whites, so I think class is pretty dominant here, but depending on what happens, people hone in on race. But let's face it, they get respected just the same as their white counterparts, so it's class.

The findings show that when a person is not born in another country, but spent a significant portion of time working and living in another country where blacks are the majority, the boundary between race and class becomes blurred, as experienced by Barbara.

One of things that living in—I would say most parts of Africa but particularly Nigeria—for a long period of time is it helps you understand without the clutter of race, the power of class, and you learn very quickly that people who look just like you can make decisions that are inequitable, that are unfair, that are sometimes dishonest. And so I guess I would say that my concept of race has become more nuanced because of that.

The intersection of nationality with gender, race, and class also produces a different way in which participants individually confront issues of discrimination.

Culture has a lot to do with who you are and how you see things, and I understand it better today than I did when I got here. For example, I did not find offensive things that certain whites would say—I saw it as an opportunity to educate them. They didn't know better and they needed somebody to help them. And some of them had been socialized into it, and I'd accepted it. And maybe if they knew otherwise they would see things differently. So I saw it as teachable moments, whereas for African Americans who have suffered at the hands of people like that, they saw it more offensive, and therefore their response was different from mine.

Darlene goes on to say that growing up black in the United States also influences the way you treat other blacks.

And this has been documented for years, 'cause I went back and did research personally, and I replicated research as well, and found that there is a difference in how African Americans treat blacks from other countries and how Caucasians treat African Americans and blacks from the Caribbean and Nigeria. My replication of it in the 1990s proved to be almost identical to what was found in the 1950s and '60s, and a lot has to do with what transpired here. Now, although a similar situation transpired in the Caribbean, because we are smaller countries and once you gain independence and so on, things changed, and changed more quickly, then the same sort of perception does not change... Because I don't look at a person based on race, I don't respond to a person based on their skin color, regardless of what comes out of their mouth. If you happen to be black, and you say something that I think is demeaning or not what you should be saying, I'm going to respond the same to you, and that is

where I find it different, where people are more willing here to accept their own based on what they know has taken place in that culture.

Surviving and Succeeding in the Margins

It was clear from the narratives that participants' immediate and extended families, as well the broader black community played critical roles in their development and positive self-images and served as important tools to mitigate the negative rhetoric and images experienced by the participants' marginal status.

Cynthia describes the importance of family and community in defining her identity and fostering a positive self-image:

When my father came by, he was almost like a Marcus Garvey. He had some very strong feelings about race in this country. We had an experience once when he was taking us to New York and a white sailor told him 'Nigger, get out of the way' and my sister and I were with him. He almost killed the man and a porter had to stop him. But I will never forget. I can still see the look of rage on his face. So his rage and my mother's being and then not having some of the things that other people had, not being a part of that, so there was not the things like the sororities and the clubs. In fact, I don't even to this day belong to a sorority—so [I was] always on the outside, but being made to feel secure by my mother. My grandparents played a big role, my aunts, my uncles, and also church. My grandfather, I didn't mention, was a Baptist minister. So being a part of that church, and people there looking out for you, but not the structured support that maybe middle-class children had. So my achievements meant something.... It gave people pleasure. In fact how do you make people who are

feeling bad feel better? Your grades, being able to recite a poem, your achievements—those things mattered to them, and they saw me as somebody.

Cynthia and Ebony provide additional insight on the importance of parents and grandparents in shaping a positive identity and self-image when you are negatively labeled.

One of the things I really learned that my parents helped me most is that you're in charge of your own self and that you should never let anybody else penetrate that by degrading you or whatever (Cynthia).

Ebony speaks about the influences and the important role her mother played in defining her perception as a female:

The one thing I must say that relates to the whole question of gender versus race or anything else: I never was made to feel that there was something I couldn't do because I was a girl. My grandmother—in fact my mother—they never treated me as a person who was in any way handicapped by sex or gender. I don't think my mother was treated that way either because she was a very independent woman, very independent woman, and one who grew up with all brothers, too. But you see, my mother was the youngest in her family—I was the oldest—but she could do. She used to say, "Oh, if there is anything a man can do, I can do myself." Then she was thinking about things around the house, you know, my mother was the first person, the first woman that I ever knew who, you know, was like an amateur electrician, plumber. Anything that we needed doing when we were living in New York in the apartment, she would just do it.

Participants who grew up in middle-class homes also spoke about the positive influence of family and the larger black community in shaping their perception of self. These participants

were careful to distance themselves from aspects of middle-class life they felt were not affirming, as expressed by Barbara:

I grew up in a middle-class environment that was racially conscious and the distinction that I would make was my family moved to Compton, where other families who were equally upwardly mobile moved to Baldwin Hills and West Los Angeles. We were—we were—middle class, but oriented toward a responsibility that we had. And I lived in a family that was middle class, not bourgeois, if I can make that distinction. I mean my mother was not elite. She was not a sorority member and she eventually—kicking and screaming—joined Jack and Jill so we would have some things to do, but she was not that kind of person.

The black church plays a significant role, too, in helping to provide a strong support system for participants, as expressed by Faith:

I was a child who went to church early. I lived across the street from the church and by the time I was six, I went to church...I learned a lot through the church, Sunday school and other things, choir, and got a lot of my grounding—really a lot of it—by listening and learning to listen to the sermons and listen to the lesson, Sunday school lessons and think things through.

The majority of the participants grew up in segregated communities where black teachers were foundational as well in shaping participants' identities and providing them with a deep understanding of how gender, race, and class operate in the world and how to negotiate this system. Faith describes an experience she had with her black principal:

He was an excellent principal [Mr. Johnson] because what he would do, he would try to help us understand, and that's another part of my foundation, I guess I should say.

Mr. Johnson would help the whole school understand... He was the principal of all these black children, most of whom were not from middle-class families, and his thing was to require his teachers to teach, to make every kind of growth opportunity. He would invite people to come and speak about Russia, and all kinds of things. He made you have respect...And he [Mr. Johnson] talked to us one day about skin color and how racism was very prevalent, of course, in Texas. He said, "You little people. I don't want to hear anybody using the word nigger here because it is not appropriate, and nobody should even be calling you that, and you should not be looking at people's skin color." You never know sometimes what's motivating these things, but he said, "Let me tell you all about how these redneck crackers are," and he would say the word like that. He said, "Now, crackers is a word that is derogatory just like nigger is a word for blacks. It's the word for white people." He said, "Neither one of them is appropriate. But you have to be careful about people who are white because they are afraid of us, they don't want us to advance. So, if you use your head..."...He was always telling us to use our brain. He said, "Think things through." So he shared that with us as a way of understanding and thinking on how to use the system, that this is one of the ways he was always empowering us.

Ebony believes that black teachers were so critical to her success that the diminished role of black teachers and black schools is at the core of some of the problems faced by African American children in a post-*Brown vs. Board of Education* environment.

When I came back to Florida in the 70s when they had seriously begun to integrate schools, I almost wept. Because when we were going to Dillard we had *everything*, I was in the band, and I was in the chorus, even though I couldn't sing, (chuckle) but I

used to do a lot of stuff in the chorus, and my friends were in the band, in the chorus—they had opportunities to explore everything that was of interest to them in terms of sports. And when I came back in the 70s and I was asking my neighbors who had young children, “Where do your children... Where do your nephews go to school?” And I went to see the junior high schools where these kids were. After school they [the kids] would just be sitting out on the sidewalk, just waiting for somebody to pick them up, or waiting to walk home with somebody. There were no activities for them, they weren't a part of anything, they weren't in the band, they weren't in the chorus, they weren't doing anything in those schools. And I tested whether or not my observations were different from the people who taught here, and I found that my former teachers, who had done so well by us at Dillard, were just castaways. They took them and put them in the worst schools that they could possibly put them in, they didn't respect them for what they knew, and several of those teachers became alcoholics—they were unhappy for the students, they were unhappy for themselves. So I'm just saying that I really believe that the predominately... Well, the all-black college, I should actually say the predominately black, historically black, college and the all-black high schools offered students an environment that encouraged them to succeed in a way that the other schools didn't, they really didn't.

As the participants advanced in their professional careers in higher education, gender, race, class and their marginal status continued to be factors in their development as professionals and in their personal lives. Participants learned to cope and adapt through collaboration, coordination, and determination. Participants described experiences of having to assume multiple roles as professionals in higher education, with little time for research and

scholarship, which often had a negative impact on their tenure and promotion in higher education.

One of the things that happened is as an African American woman, and the first and only African American woman in Education—students didn't have anybody to turn to, so I had a very heavy service and advising load. So I had the advising hat, multiple hats to wear. I had the administration, building up a new program on the undergraduate level, and then also building a new program on the master's, the graduate level, the master's of Arts and Teaching Program; and then the expectation was that I do research. So I had all three of these things. The other women that came in with me who were white, ABD, did not have administrative responsibilities; they did not have the same responsibilities. They did not have a big service load the same way minorities did. Because the minority students wanted someone who was interested in their success, who could really clarify the realities of the situation to them.

Service is not valued. I served their purposes, and they could look at me as an affirmative-action candidate. I had responded to their diversity initiative; I had built a program, but they were not interested in me as a scholar, and that was clear, they were not interested in me as a scholar, there was no... There was no support for me becoming a scholar. I was someone who was elected to the faculty senate, you know, high visibility, she's here, but they were not interested in my success. The white women wanted to sue the school, etc., but then that sort of dissipated and I just decided to move on.

Collaboration and cooperation with other minority women who were similarly situated was key to Cynthia being able to fulfill her many roles within the university, as well as conduct research and publish.

I was not able to get articles done. In most cases, I had to cowrite—to coauthor articles with other black scholars who were faced with the same dilemma in other institutions. And we talked about this at the American Education Research Association in terms of black folks. We talked about the dilemma that we were in. And so we made the conscious decision to cooperate with each other, and edited publications, and to coauthor articles and presentations so that we could somehow meet that research requirement.

Three of the six participants in the study were divorced, with two of the six crediting their career aspirations and success as being significant in the breakup of the relationships. One participant remarried and is currently married. Another, who never remarried, recalls

I got divorced right after I became vice chancellor...Yeah, because he had been somebody then, you know, a basketball player, he had been the center. I was doing all these things, it was like I was a closet administrator and he says he didn't want to carry my coat.

Alice provides further insight into her career and marriage:

But you see most women keep a lot of secrets and the main secret they keep is ambition. It was because...he had a business and he was very proud of me. I was chosen to go to Africa and he was proud of that but then he said, "You know, we have these children. And I think you need to be home by 4:00." Universities are not public schools and things just don't end at 3 p.m. That was the beginning of the end.

Because you're working on a Ph.D. – you know how hard it is. So for someone to tell you that you have to go back to being a schoolteacher, to be home around that time, then you realize that you would have to give up all ambitions for moving up. Because there's no way you can work that hard and give it up for anything.

Finally, for Barbara, who is the only president of a predominately white institution in the study, being marginalized provides some unique challenges for her to navigate.

My experience has been one that's been so different, in the sense that – you know, When I returned to the US I was first in a historically black institution, and then in a women's institution. So in some ways, this is the first time when these two things have come together. In a place like this where there has not been an African American presence...I think there are people who are not African American who have had the historical role of defining African American experience. And my definition of experience may not be their definition of experience. And that's real problematic, because they have fallen into a role that my very presence challenges. I think on college campuses, among faculty, you have younger faculty of all colors and genders who are much more nuanced. They've come from a very different reality. And then you have more senior faculty whose view of the world – you know, people who were trained in the late fifties and the early sixties—their view of the world represents the world they struggled in. But not necessarily the world of the students they have. Currently, there's a real dynamic tension there. And I think when one is a person of color who's leading in a majority white institution, you got to navigate all that.

Conclusions

The findings presented in this section provide a fuller understanding of the many types of marginalization experienced by the participants at various stages of their lived experiences. With the support of family, community, teachers, and the black church, their senses of self and identity are reconstructed in a positive and reaffirming way to empower participants to survive and thrive within their respective environments. In the next section of the findings, the strong sense of identity and self become powerful tools as they redefine how power is utilized in their role as leaders of colleges and universities.

Breaking through the Smoked Glass Ceiling: A Reconceptualization of Power and how it is used in Higher Education

I call it the smoked glass ceiling for black women, beyond just the glass ceiling for white women...because it's black and it's cloudy and you're never sure about it. With white women you know it's the gender thing... but the smoked glass ceiling is the one that black women have to get through, and there's smoke in it as well as a barrier.

With white women it is clear, but the smoke does not allow black women to see to the other side.

Faith

Power used as an Extension of African American Women's Skills as Nurturer, Problem-solvers and Collaborators

Achieving leadership positions in higher education has been a long and difficult journey for African American women. Based on current data presented in this paper, they are still marginalized from positions of power based on multiple factors of discrimination, as indicated in the statement by Faith. However, for those who have achieved success in breaking through the "smoked glass ceiling," the intersection of gender, race, and class has

created a reconceptualization of how power is used within these leadership positions that is more open, participatory, and inclusive of different groups within the organizational structure.

In presenting the findings of how power is reconceptualized in the context of gender, race and class, we first examine the source of the conceptual difference. That difference, according to most of the participants, is rooted in their struggles in having to play multiple life roles, as expressed by Darlene:

One thing I do know is that the role of a woman is one that requires her to be multitalented, be able to multitask, be able to take hard knocks, to make something out of nothing. That's been her life as a mother, as a wife-- women socialize differently. And so I can understand why women would in today's age certainly rise to assume these types of positions, especially after things have gone awry simply because of that... You know what a woman does in the home, with very little. Whatever comes in they have to know how to stretch it to meet the needs of the family, they have to support... They are the backbone of a family, and I think that's how God made us, for whatever reason. And so I can understand why the skills you have developed over time will equip you to do this type of thing. And the other thing is—and I've found this in the research—women, by and large, have a strong nurturing character and that, they say, is a very successful character[istic] to possess, whether it's in a corporate world or otherwise. That nurturing that a woman brings to the environment is very different from how men manage, by and large...They realized that a woman was going to be focused, she's going to use all these things that we do

in terms of nurturing, building. She's going to use all of her perspective and a woman's way of doing things and apply to it.

Darlene goes on to say that these skills enabled her to use power in a more supportive way to empower her staff and address some of the challenges in her institutions.

Research says that men tend to—just set the standards, tell you what they want, and you find your way. Women will *hold* your hand and *show* you and *help* you to find your way. So they're more supportive, and encouraging, and do whatever... They give you a few more chances in some cases, "Okay, let's try..." Especially if you show promise. They just don't expect that you're going to rise to the occasion immediately. So it's a charter of women, I think that makes for the difference. But I've never really thought of it. I think... You know, the surprising thing is my first piece of research was done on gender differences, and yes, we are different, we are very different, and I think we were made that way for a particular purpose, because I think we're supposed to be complementary in many ways. I think sometimes if we understand that and we use it—we build on and use the strengths of each other—then we have a better world, we have a better family, we have a better organization.—

What you do is that you use the strengths, and you support the challenges with whatever is needed...While somebody's pulling you up, you are pulling somebody else up, so everybody is going up, not down, as we have a tendency to do. I just believe that we should support each other and make sure that people achieve their potential, and be fair— be fair.

Mothers were the role models that played a significant part in teaching participants how to use power in a nontraditional way. This was true for most participants regardless of socioeconomic background, as expressed by Barbara.

My mother was a very bright, very quiet woman who got what she wanted—very different from me... But...she had a way of using power that I think—although I'm much more outspoken than she was—I think there was a powerful dignity there that I observed and absorbed.

Finally, Barbara, who is president at a majority institution, felt that the tools and skills she brought to the position as an African American woman provided her with a special insight in relating to diverse groups of students on campus.

And then I think everything you have becomes something in your tool box, in terms of how you use it to make things happen. The other day our Asian students had a...a teach-out about an ethnic studies major. And I looked around the people who were there. And I decided at the end that I was the only one that we're talking about. Because one of these young women talked about missing herself in the curriculum. So I was meeting with some department chairs yesterday. We were talking about it. You know, the thing for me—it may not be the way you've experienced that—but I gave that same speech in 1967. And so for me to hear another student—she doesn't look like me. But she's giving the same speech, from the same as I did in 2007. That's 40 years later. But I'm telling you I understand it more than intellectually. And then I have to step back and let them do the work. But what I can give them is the power of my ability to connect with that in a way that they can't. And you just know they're trying to use that. And they're trying to leave it alone, I think.

Power used as a Tool for Social Change

All the participants interviewed expressed the need to change the patriarchal culture by using their positions to bring about gender, race, and class equity. Nearly all participants were very active in their presidencies in challenging the core elements of the good-ole-boy system found in their institutions, such as favoritism, dishonesty, and corruption. As Faith observed

Have some stamina and willingness to go up against those barriers and to take them on...To bring information to the table, and bring the corruption to the table. Trustees who bring to bear their influence and stuff like that—this is corruption as far as I'm concerned.

In challenging the system, Cynthia was confronted with a situation that jeopardized her presidency, in which she found it necessary to fire a black male who was corrupt but was very popular within the university and seen by many as the person who should have been appointed president.

What happened was when... He said something and I had to let him go. When I did this it was like I let a good man go. It was like, "You let a good man go." And the women there... There was a lot of anger about that because I think one of the reasons why it made it powerful, they thought there had to be this very strong, black male there. But he had... he was duplicitous; he wasn't really doing some of the things. And that was tough. And I could have just gone along and just overlooked it or whatnot.

All participants were concerned with equity and fairness within their institutions, but those who came from working-class backgrounds, as well as those who were either born in a

foreign country or spent significant time working and living overseas, had particular sensitivity to challenging issues related to class.

You have to bring everybody, every level... You can't have classism within the institution. You can't have the buildings and grounds people, for example, be one class, or treated very badly, or treated differentially, 'cause they are as important to the moving of the university as the president.

All participants felt that for the president to be a change agent, she had to be an exemplar of high standards for the organization.

Be a person of high moral standards, ethics, care for other people, and just help each other, and I think if you do that you'll succeed... Get your priorities right. These are all things that come with, that support excellence, that support achievement. Don't badmouth other people and try to pull them down, because you're not helping, you're just degrading yourself.

Hiring and promoting other women is another way most participants in this study use their power as president to effect social change. However, all participants acknowledged the pitfalls of hiring and promoting women, either in an HBCU or majority institution, and were extremely careful when it came to making these decisions. Alice describes her tactics:

You have to look for ways that women can get an opportunity. Logically and academically, not picking over men. But if one is as good as the other and you have, I think, one department chairperson is a woman, you got to do something like that. And so I did. You know, I couldn't fire or promote just anybody but whenever I had an opportunity. Where you could – you couldn't be called – they couldn't take you to the EEOC.

Cynthia went further and stated that not only do you need be careful in your deliberations when hiring and promoting other women, but you need to make sure you provide them with the support and resources they need to be successful in those new positions.

I think what goes through people's mind is that you're appointing people who they think will be more loyal to you, and that you're appointing them based upon that. "She's appointing her friends, her cronies, because they're women..." If you're interested in providing opportunities for them that *they* have to work harder, that it becomes a struggle for them, and you have to be very sensitive to when they're being put down around the table, and when they're not being listened to. So what happens as a president, once you make the commitment to hire a woman, you have to have her back as much as she has yours, and that's a reality. Because what you see is a sort of patronizing, almost like you're a little girl, and the women are not given the professional stature. They might say, "Hey look at, Oh, boy you look cute in that outfit." And you see certain things that really have nothing to do with business. And that happens. And you see women who you appoint, who are younger, not being treated in a professorial manner—which is something that you have—and you have to remind people of.

When addressing problem behavior with faculty, participants felt their use of power was more instructive than punitive, which stood in contrast to their male counterparts as recounted by Alice:

Like one woman. And—I loved her because she was such an academic. And—she wanted so much to help students But she would lock the door at the scheduled class

time and wouldn't let the late students in. And they would come to me. And I would tell them to be on time the next time. But in my heart I thought it was very hard. Then she got into some trouble. And I told her, I said, "You know what I'm going to do for you?" And she said, "Let me go?" And I said, "No. I want you to go over there and study the business methods of something and come back here and enlighten our students. Moreover, think about where our students come from, and how meaningful you are to their success and what the standards are." But sometimes standards have to be reachable. Some of these students are late because they take their children to the babysitter. Or the babysitter doesn't show 'til late. A mama doesn't come. Their mama's stoned or a number of reasons. To give everybody an opportunity. Those were the kind of things I think that a man wouldn't do. A man would be very much, it's a punishment. I'm being stereotypical here. But I am speaking from the kind of experiences that I have seen.

Several participants found out that tackling pre-existing policies and procedures and shedding light on problems often resulted in them being accused of being the source of these problems and attacked by the campus community.

Well, sometimes when a woman comes in and uncovers a problem, it's perceived that she's creating it, and I think that happens more for women. but when you come in you say, "Okay, this needs to be done, that needs to be done, this is where I can, this is where I end." You are perceived as creating the problem, and if you are perceived as creating the problem, the notion is you've got to deal with it, and so you become the agenda, so that's, you know, what happens. It's not the board. The woman becomes the agenda—not the problem, not the larger picture, not the fact that all the colleges

are not equal, not the fact that the board is not stepping up to the plate. But the woman—she uncovered the problem, which translates to some people she created the problem. Whereas, a man may be getting into the situation, may not even tell anybody what the problem is—you know, it's all hand-clapping, you know, brother, sis, you know, giving a high-five, whatnot, and just moving away into the sunset. And then when this woman comes in, she says, "This is a mess." "What do you mean, this is a mess? Nobody else told us it was. It wasn't a mess before you came." I mean, that is what happens, and so you know, for, If you were a man in the corporate sector and you came in to clean shop, you know, they would do articles in *The New York Times* about how you came in and you uncovered this, you know, deficit and this downfall and whatnot, and you addressed it, but for the woman it doesn't happen that way.

Participants learned that being a change agent can also have long-term, negative consequences on a professional career beyond one's tenure at an institution, as expressed by Alice when she decided to challenge faculty over tenure and promotion standards at her college that she saw as unfair.

I think you have black people in white schools who try to take advantage of the situation, just like you have white people in black schools. You have a black faculty member who will scream racism if you don't promote him. And sometimes they don't have anything that's really promotable. But they're going to embarrass the heck out of the school. And so the school has to make a decision. Do I lower my standards, or take a stand? And whether you are a male or a female president, you cannot knuckle under to that. And so I took them on—I'm not going to be blackmailed. I'm going to be embarrassed, you know, I'm going to be embarrassed, but I'd rather be

embarrassed than to be bought and sold. Because newspapers have to sell. And so that's the embarrassment of it. So I think – had I been a male, I think...would I have? No. Because my upbringing taught me you don't hide from it. Because you can run, but you cannot hide. And where you go, it's going to follow you there. And unfortunately, it has followed me. I mean...and I haven't told anybody this...I was a candidate for a position, a presidency in ...But I decided it wouldn't be worth it, spending time defending my stance on race and equity, especially when I would be trying to recruit more minority students. I'm not a feminist—I would have to say that every day. If I promoted a woman, I'd have to explain it. If I demoted a man, I'd have to explain it. And so I just decided that's not what I wanted to do.

Power used to Change and Adapt to Create a Different Kind of Environment on Campus that is more Open and Student-focused

Most of the participants in this study viewed their presidencies as a way to address student needs and to shift the focus on campus to create a more student-centered environment. Alice related her experience:

You've got to pick where you're going to plant your seeds of growth for the best return in the profession. And for me, it was with the students first. That was my work. Students first. So, students first. Then you've got faculty have to have what it takes to make students first. I also think Female presidents can say things to help students more comfortably than men can. I remember one of my scholars telling me she was not going to grad school but, since her mother had died, she was going to live with her boyfriend and his mom. When she got up to leave my office, I just stepped in her path and into her personal space, telling her she wasn't going anywhere but to accept

the fellowship she'd won to Florida State. It worked—and she's a top demographer and in a PhD program. I seriously doubt a man president would have gone to that level with a student, male or female. I realized that students from the very beginning needed something more than traditional ceremonies to be college students. They needed to—they needed encouragement and support. And so at the orientation, I would tell the parents, "Put them in my hands." And some of them literally did. We took pictures together. And they would tell me, "I'm giving you my son." But I also told them, "And I'm giving you back a man ready to lead." You give your heart. A man's more interested, I think, in seeing what the board thinks. Because he knows the board is paying the mortgage. Where I was really pleasing the students.

Most participants felt that spending more time showing up in places that students generally did not see presidents was a crucial strategy to be more visible and accessible to students.

And so as women, I think we peer more deeply into our students' lives—perhaps more than we should...They needed to see a president, and shake a president's hand. So I go to the cafeteria, sit down beside them. And pretty soon they say, "No, come over here. You went to that table last time." But at the beginning they would put their heads down so they wouldn't be noticed. And I'd go over to one with his head farthest down, and say, "How you doing today? What's my name? What do they call me? Now, what's your name? What are you going to do?" Nobody could ever pass me by. We had to wave. They had to wave and speak. So I walked. When I drove my car around campus, [I] put my hand up to say, "Hey," and they all responded.

Conclusions

The findings in this section build upon those in the first section to present various narratives of how the power endowed within the office of college president is reconceptualized in the context of African American women who utilized their marginal status to become change agents as leaders within higher education. The final section of this chapter explores how the participants developed strategies for challenging power structures within higher education that were reluctant to accept women in leadership positions.

Speaking Truth to Power: How Black Women Challenge Power Structures that Limit Their Access and Opportunity

African American men presidents [were] historically seen as haughty and arrogant, and in the old days, people believed that only men could be presidents. African American men did not have it easy but they did not give it easily to us [African American women]. We were, if not sex objects, put in our place. I found them sexist in general. But that good-ole-boy system still lives, and if you complain they call you a cry-baby feminist... I think women presidents need to help the brothers out by speaking up—not in a militant way. If you call them on it, they'll treat all women better.

Alice

Sexism in Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The majority of participants in this study expressed significant concern over the dearth of African American women leadership in higher education, but at historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) in particular. HBCUs have played important roles in the development of black students and providing opportunities for black professionals—they have been at the forefront of these issues. Despite their successes, given the large numbers of

African American women who graduate and work in faculty positions at these schools, they have made little progress in promoting African American women to leadership positions. This section of the paper addresses participants' responses to challenging hegemonic structures within HBCUs, other institutions, and society in general.

Four of six participants in the study spoke of a culture in HBCUs that was not receptive to women in leadership positions, a culture in which black women operated just below leadership levels in the institution.

I think historically black institutions have been perhaps less open...to women's leadership than majority institutions. I think that's all I'll say about that... But cracking – cracking the...public North Carolina HBCUs was very, very difficult. There were interim chancellors who were really effective, but none became chancellors. Yet, if you go in those institutions, the next tier – the worker bees – are all women. So I would argue that in fact...yes, women's leadership remains a huge problem in HBCUs. You can get over the hurdle of race. But...white institutions have been more open to gender. Yes. Because you know, the natural assumption [is] that people say, “Oh, well, it's a black institution,”—that they would understand these kinds of issues.

The majority of the participants also stated that when an HBCU selects a woman for a leadership position, the institution is usually facing a crisis. This was expressed by Barbara, who discussed a study conducted by the Women Administrators in North Carolina Higher Education (WANCHE) association in which the number of black female presidents in public HBCUs was found to be much smaller than that in private HBCUs.

There's a woman whose name I'm blanking right now who was at...St. [Johns] in North Carolina. Not the current president, the president before... And she writes on women's issues in leadership...She argued that in fact, by the time a woman gets to an institution, it is in much more trouble. Now, with the exception of Johnson C. Smith, when Dr. O'[Brian] went to [Mazola College] was in deep trouble. But the point I'm making is very often, by the time they turn to us – and that was—And she wasn't talking about HBCUs—she was just talking about women's leadership in higher ed. Because very often by the time a woman president gets to an institution, you know, with the exception of Ruth Simmons, you know. But by the time you get to an institution, they're in really difficult shape. And I would wonder if that is true of the place, you know, of what's happening in our historically black institutions.

Engaging Systems of Hegemony: Strategies for Success

The participants in the study developed a variety of strategies for challenging the organizational culture and climate as well as engaging individuals directly to bring change. One strategy that several of the participants mentioned for changing the culture and developing a consciousness of inclusion was organizing black women as a group to confront the system. Faith describes her experiences:

I said, "Okay, let's see what we can do about getting black women advanced as presidents at colleges." And so we got this meeting. And four of the presidents came and they were - we had a good discussion, and Dr. Jones [said] saying, "Now, madam vice president, and all you ladies here, let me just be frank with you all and tell you all the truth. The brothers ain't going to let y'all have these positions—not without a fight. And when it happens they're going to let y'all have some of the smaller

colleges, but they're not going to let y'all have these big colleges, 'cause they want to keep those." Those were his exact words. And so we said, "Okay, well we're going to organize." and I did this big paper and brought this issue to the table. And then I kept seeing all these flaky people in these leadership roles—that's the best way I can say it. And then I realized that in most cases, even in white schools, a lot of the people doing the work were the women at the next level under the deans. The women were not deans ... And I was active in ACE [American Council on Education]... When I went to Washington, I'll have to go back to that, when I worked at NIE, I headed up the Higher Education Unit, and of course, ACE was just starting out with its offices, and I help to organize the women in higher education. So I've been involved in that. And, of course, first there were only a few black women in it, and we eventually got a black women's program started, where they would bring in mentors. So all of these things I would say were paralleling an involvement in seeing the need to really empower women, white and black, to be able to move.

Another way of organizing and engaging black women's marginal status in higher education is networking among black women, as expressed by Cynthia.

Well, I think that we can do the same thing that we did with the women basketball players, and this is more like surround them, you know; they're not surrounded, you know, surround them in terms of other women surrounding them. You should be able to call on a group of six people who are there for you. It's create, it's almost like we know how to create every other kind of structure in terms of family structure, whatnot. We don't know how to create that system of surround, support that means people actually get you, and so if something happens they are willing to write a letter

on the opinion page, or they're willing to come to you and to be present., so it's somehow, it's sometimes we have these ideas other people will get them, but I think that black women need to be able to do this. It's like how do you cultivate women friends, and how do you get maybe two or three people to get it? When you're a doctoral student you have that—you have a few people to get it, but then after that they won't be there. Somehow at that doctoral level relationships have to be built that last and endure, and it's much more important that the relationships that you have with your mentors or advisees because they're going to go on to other people. But somehow—and it doesn't necessarily have to be all women—but you have to have a group of people who are going to surround you. I mean I found, like I thought it would be in my marriage, but that's not necessarily so. So you know, creating that—I think that's one way, that's important.

Several participants found that talking back individually and directly engaging those in power was an important tool, as expressed in this vignette by Alice.

And I went to one meeting—the first meeting. [Johnson] is the president. Yeah. He's a great man. But anyway, Whoever the main speaker was got up and told what I called a sexist joke. And I walked out. When it was over, I was coming back down the hall. And so [Johnson] said to me, "I saw you walk out of the room, and the speaker noticed it, too." I said, "Well, I'm glad. Is he available?" And I've forgotten even who it was. But he came up and we talked about it. And I told him, "In the old days all the presidents were men. And certainly what you did then, we all know about. But now we have some women. And it's just as disrespectful to tell those kind of jokes. I don't want you to think I'm a card-carrying feminist, because I am not. But

on the other hand, I don't have to hear off-color jokes." I wouldn't tell that. He apologized. Because he was living in the old days. And By that time we had – I think we had Johnetta [Brown]. We had...Dorothy [Johnson]. We had a woman from [South Mazola State]. I mean, there were just – I think about 10 of us. And you just don't do that any more. But I mean, they had that time. That time is gone. And it's never going to return. So they just—they needed to learn.

Barbara, the president of a majority institution, spoke of her strategy for confronting an employee of the college who disrespected her publicly.

The most important thing, I think, is to be able to sort out who owns the problem: you, or some one else, or institutional biases. It is very important to figure that out. But if it is blatant racism or sexism, I think you have to name that. Having named it, you should be mature enough to decide how you're going to respond to it strategically, rather than just exploding in anger. It would be hard for me to imagine that someone would get to this level of executive administration and find that she is encountering racism and sexism for the first time. You must have faced it before you got to this level of responsibility. So – so how are you going to respond? I'll give you a minor example. Shortly after I was appointed, the director of admissions met with me and began to give me a lecture: "Here's how we do it at the college. These are our values." He was doing this in a year when the goals for the incoming class had not been met, even though in prior years the goal had always been realized. Moreover, the college had been very unsuccessful recruiting classes of color. And of course, he had an excuse for that, which absolved him of any responsibility. The whole tone of his presentation was that I had nothing to contribute. (Not a way to speak with a new

president and not a way to address someone who began her career in college admissions). When he stopped, I looked at him and I said, "The good news is I began my career in college admissions and the bad news is I began my career in college admissions." And I said, "Here's what I want. First of all, I want admissions and advancement working together." He immediately began to explain to me why this was not possible. "The next thing I want is a set of initiatives around recruiting students of color." He never provided what I requested. Then, in February (8 months after I had arrived), we had a big admissions event at which he introduced me in a very off-handed manner: "Oh. I see we have a special visitor, our president, she arrived last July. You know, she's like you, she's a neophyte." Later, he made some off-handed remark that associated the color black with something "wrong."

Generally I am uncomfortable about making a fuss when it refers to me personally. But I'm very comfortable making sure that the presidency of the college—and, by extension, the president—is treated with respect. His direct supervisor was not present at the event. So I e-mailed her to explain what happened and to explain why it could not happen again. First of all, his remarks suggested that he had no confidence in the leadership, at a time when parents are making decisions about where they will send their children to college. Secondly, it was disrespectful to the presidency. It was absolutely egregious, thirdly. So, I said to her that she and I would need to figure out how to respond to the situation. And I reminded her, "On top of it, the things that I asked for last year have not been delivered."

Now, I could've blown up. But had I blown up, I wouldn't have gotten what I wanted. Because it would've been all about his racism. But, in addition to being

racist, he was unable to embrace the direction in which I wanted the admission unit to go. And so I went home and tried to ask myself, “How am I going to do this?” I received an incredible piece of advice from a friend, a very good friend, when I got this job. She said, "You need to understand the one thing that is different—the one thing that you have never had before: Now you are the permission-giver, not the permission-seeker. What that taught me was that a permission-giver has such great power, that she does not have to react immediately. Now, there are times when you need to react immediately, or you want to react immediately; but it’s important to remember that you don’t have to. In this particular situation I am sure that I am dealing with the sexism and the racism and I need to figure out what’s in the best interest of the college and how to make that happen—make what needs to happen. So my goal in this situation was to have the appropriate supervisor work with me to ensure that the correct response occurred.

Conclusions

This section extends the findings from sections one and two to provide a greater understanding of how the women in this study are able to challenge power structures within higher education that limit their ability to become leaders. Because the majority of the participants served as presidents of historically black colleges, there is special emphasis placed on their experiences developing strategies that addressed gender hegemony at these institutions.

Summary of Findings

The findings from this study revealed that gender, race, and class have had profound and negative impacts on the lives of the participants in this study. The results also show how

the cumulative effects of gender, race, and class serve as sources of empowerment in which family and community, black teachers and principals, and the black church were instrumental in helping participants construct alternative paradigms of themselves that were positive and reaffirming. This reconceptualization of self is central to their survival and advancement to college presidencies. Rooted within their marginalization are tools that enabled them to challenge existing hegemonic structures and provided them with insights into how the power of the college president could be used to create an environment in higher education that is more open, inclusive, and participatory. There was a special focus in some of the participants' narratives on social class as being particularly influential in shaping their experiences. Some spoke of how nationality—when factored into the intersectional paradigm of gender, race, and class—creates a phenomenon in which race is sometimes perceived as a proxy for class. Historically black colleges and universities were highlighted for being particularly resistant to hiring and promoting women to leadership positions.

The following chapter provides a broader discussion of these findings and how they contradict or affirm conclusions drawn in the literature. The subsequent chapter takes a deeper look at how the institutions of family, school, and church operate to create this dual narrative of how the intersectional paradigm of gender, race and class operates in the lives of the participants.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the study from the perspective of the participants in their own voices. This chapter seeks to examine two overarching questions related to these findings: (a) What do these findings mean in the broader context of higher education and civil society? (b) How do these results confirm or contradict conclusions drawn from the literature? The discussion explores more deeply the institutional influences of family and community, schools, and the black church that produced a cumulative effect of gender, race, and class that enabled participants to survive and succeed within a society that limited their personal and professional opportunities.

Additional discussions in this chapter focus on two issues that were significant in the participants' experiences and that were not found in the literature: (a) class location within the gender, race, and class construction; and (b) gender hegemony within historically black colleges and universities and the impact on the aspirations of African American women for leadership positions.

Family and Community

All of the participants in the study describe in their narratives the importance of family in developing positive self-images and helping to define their identities. This perspective is consistent with the core principles espoused within black feminist standpoint theory, which posits that self is not defined autonomously but draws upon the interaction with family and community (Collins, 2000a). The term *family* as used by participants extended beyond the nucleus core of parents and siblings to other individuals and

organizations. Family, as presented in the findings, is best described in this comprehensive definition by Patricia Hill Collins (2000c).

Families constitute multiple sites of belonging, as understood as kinship groups linked by a common biology; to communities conceptualized as imagined families occupying geographically identifiable, racially segregated neighborhoods; to so-called racial families historically codified in science and law; and to the nation-state conceptualized as an imagined national family marked by citizenship and alien status (p. 48).

According to Ross (2003), black women's strengths derive from each other. Women nurturing women and collaborating in black women's organizations is significant for building extended kinship relations, self-esteem, unified principles, and resilience.

The importance of family and community also plays a profound role in the desire of black women to use their success in ways that help their families and communities. A study by Higginbotham and Weber (1992) found that the greatest gift a black family has been able to give to its children has been the motivation and skills to succeed in school. In such families aspirations for college attendance and professional positions are stressed as family goals and the entire family makes sacrifices and provides support to the child. This race-uplift theme is found prominently in the literature about African Americans and is particularly relevant to black women. Historically, education for black women served as a tool for uplifting the race, i.e. to assist with economic and social improvement of the black community (Noble, 1988; Perkins, 1988). Originally, implementation of the race-uplift objective, including educational programs, was primarily accomplished by black women. For example, black women in the South created charitable organizations and other related

institutions to aid the black race. In *Bone Black* (1996), bell hooks reinforces this notion of group identity in her memories of growing up in the South, recalling that she was always being told by parents and teachers to be articulate and dignified as a way to uplift the black race.

In a study of African American girls, Joyce Ladner (1971) found that the strongest conception of womanhood among all pre-adult females is the idea that the woman has to take a strong female role. Success was measured not only in terms of training or the jobs acquired, but also by the extent to which they could support their families. Higginbotham and Weber (1992) report that upwardly mobile black Americans receive more requests to share resources from their working-class kin than do middle-class black Americans. Many mobile black Americans feel a "social debt" because their families aided them and provided emotional support in their achievements.

Participants' knowledge of how family and community are structured and operate within their lives was key to developing strategies that were crucial to advancing their career goals in higher education. Patricia Hill Collins (2000a) reported that stressing the importance of black women's interconnectedness with group experiences was significant in black women's development. An example of this can be found in the findings, in which Cynthia described how working in groups enabled her and her colleagues to achieve their scholarship goals as faculty members with multiple roles and responsibilities. Cynthia and other black faculty, for instance, co-wrote and published jointly to meet the research requirements of their department.

Higginbotham and Weber (1992) argue that black people have only been able to advance in education and attain higher status and higher paying jobs with the support of the

wider black community. This widespread community involvement has enabled mobile people of color to confront and challenge racist obstacles in institutions, and it distinguishes the mobility process for individuals in racial-ethnic communities from that of individuals in the dominant culture. Family and community involvement and support in the mobility process means that many black professionals and managers continue to feel linked to their communities of origin. Faith describes the moment when she and her husband decided to go back to the South and teach in a historically black college after she finished her doctorate at a predominately-white university:

I guess my husband and I both decided... Well, we decided we were going to work in black colleges. Both of our committees at the university, he was a sociology student and they were very upset with us because... In fact, one of them said, "You're going to take this *good* university education down there to *those* colleges." And so we said, "What do you mean *those* colleges?" He said, "Well they're all - the presidents are all dictators." And I said, "Oh, I don't believe that." "Well, that's why we need to take that good university education down there." So we started South.

The influence of family and community connections was also seen in how participants chose to use power in more open, inclusive, and participatory ways. In *A tradition that has no name: Nurturing the development of people, families and communities*, Belenky, Bond, and Weinstock (1997) describe a type of leadership that has its origins in the tradition of African tribal societies, leadership that is organized around democratic consensus-building and assisting the most vulnerable and marginalized members of the community.

Last, for most of the participants, family life as presented in the findings reveals the importance of the relationship participants had with spouses. Five out of six participants had

supportive and nurturing relationships that provided a continued sense of community and emotional support that was key to their success as they advanced in higher education and moved to different parts of the country where they often felt isolated. Five of six participants married professional black men. One participant expressed her concern that the choices for finding a partner are going to be fewer for her daughter than they were for her, given some of the challenges facing young black men today. This concern about the small pool of professional black men is well documented. The problem is getting worse as black women continue to outnumber black men on college campuses (*Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 2003).

School

The participants in the study, who were in their late fifties and sixties, grew up in a Jim Crow segregated society. One unexplored aspect of growing up in a segregated society is the strong support black children received from black teachers and principals in these segregated schools. Milner and Howard (2004) found that for many African American students, African American teachers represented surrogate parent figures; they acted as disciplinarians, counselors, role models, and overall advocates for their academic, social, cultural, emotional, and moral development. In addition, Milner and Howard (2004) found that low-achieving African American students benefited most from their relationships with African American teachers. African American teachers tended not to rationalize student failure by blaming family or society; rather, they tended to accept their students and did their best to help them achieve.

Within the findings of this study, black teachers and principals were considered role models who inspired and took personal interests in the holistic welfare of the students, in not

only teaching students academic skills but life skills, as well. An example of this is expressed by Faith:

He [the principal of her school] was always telling us to use our brain. He said, “Think things through.” So he said, “Now Mr. [Man] over there,” who was one of the biology teachers, and another teacher were very dark skinned, “and I go hunting in east [Town].” East [Town] is a real racist part of [State], I don’t know if you ever heard that, but anyway. “And sometimes we’re real late coming back. Last week we were late coming back and we were very hungry.” And, of course, you couldn’t go and sit down; black people couldn’t go into a café. “I told him to pull off to this place, we’re just hungry, and we’re not going to go back to [Town].” And he got out and he went in and told the manager, he said, “I got a couple of colored boys out here in the car with me, they been helping me, and we’re hungry and we’re on our way to [Town].” Now he never said he wasn’t colored. He said, “If we sit in the back can we come in here and eat, just sit in the back, we’re not going to bother anybody.” So the man told him, “Yeah.” So he shared that with us as a way of understanding and thinking on how to use the system and make things happen, that this is one of the ways... He was always empowering us like that, he really was.

Studies have documented that, following the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, which desegregated public schools in the United States, there was a dramatic decrease in the number of black teachers and principals. A study by Lyons and Chesley (2004) found that with desegregation came massive layoffs and demotions; approximately 38,000 African Americans teachers and administrators in 17 states lost their positions between 1954 and 1965. These numbers do not tell the full story of the effect that these layoffs and demotions

had on some black communities. Milner and Howard (2004) reported that according to U.S. census data at the turn of the 20th century, the number of black teachers had risen close to 70,000—close to half of the black professional population at the time. This loss has had a negative and profound effect on black students' achievement (Hudson and Holmes 1994). Data from the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) has shown that over the past decade African American students have consistently underachieved (Milner and Howard, 2004). Their data also revealed that over the past eight years a majority of African American students in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades had not reached grade level proficiency in core subject areas such as reading, mathematics, history, and science. Less than one quarter of African American students were at or above grade level in these same subject matters. A mere 3% of African American students were at advanced levels in these areas (Milner and Howard, p. 286). In the findings of this study, Faith lamented the fact that students in the post-Brown era have not had the same opportunities and support from teachers and school administrators as she did.

The dismantling of the separate-but-equal doctrine was a profound victory and huge step forward for civil rights in the United States, but the unintended consequence of displacing significant numbers of black teachers, principals and educators has produced a gap in the educational system that has been harmful to many black children. Unfortunately, the literature does not provide any clear answers as to how to address these serious challenges, as the problem continues to grow and many of the support systems that were critical to the development and success of the participants in this study are no longer available.

Black Church

The participants in the study expressed a deep connection to their black churches and credited the churches as being foundational in the development of their identity and values. This section discusses the black church and its historical and contemporary meaning to African American lived experiences.

It has been long recognized that black churches have had significant influences in the development of black communities. They have served as bulwarks of spiritual and moral strength, centers for the total life of the people, and sources of leadership that have, through the years, guided black people toward the goal of increasingly fuller participation in American life (Kinney, 1971). Following the Civil War, blacks were yearning for freedom in many ways; perhaps the most important way was their desire to worship in their own way and establish their own churches (Kinney, p. 458). Black churches were created out of protest; black Baptists were obliged to establish their own centers of worship because white Christians were not prepared to accept them as equals. A study conducted by Marilyn J. Ross (2003), found that the most sacred institution in the black family's life is the black church. According to Ross, the spiritual-religious connection is reinforced throughout the lives of black people by their mothers, grandmothers, or both. The religious-spiritual aspect of the black family's existence is a lifeline for survival.

The Sunday schools played an important role in the development of blacks. Children as well as adults studied the scriptures, and learned much about the periods of history covered by the Bible, as well as principles of morality, philosophy, and psychology. All received practice in learning to read as they studied the scriptures in the Sunday schools and at home, and were thus better prepared for reading other materials and for participation in the

life of the community (Kinney p. 459). In the findings of this study, Faith described how her black church was foundational in forming her values and identity.

Both historically and currently, religion and religious institutions have played a crucial role in the lives of black Americans. Black churches have been responsive to the needs of communities whose access to traditional social institutions has been restricted. Black churches are perhaps able to assume this unique position because, unlike other institutions in black communities, churches are completely financed, built, and controlled by blacks (Taylor, Thornton & Chatters, 1987). The multifaceted roles and functions of churches in black communities make them second only to the family as important social institutions (Taylor and Chatters, 1988). Taylor and Chatters go on to say that church members benefit from their association with the church in three ways. First, they exchange material, emotional, and spiritual assistance with one another, as well as providing information and advice. Second, churches are designed to assist church members and others in the community with food, clothing, and other vital necessities. Finally, the church is particularly prominent in the role it plays in the positive appraisal of self. Taylor, Chatters, and Thornton (1987) found that black churches build upon the sense of community and group connections that are important to African Americans.

Related analyses on these data indicate that African American women attended religious services more frequently and expressed higher levels of devotion than did black men (Taylor, 1988). The literature also found that although African American women occupied larger numbers in the black church than black men, they were less likely to hold leadership positions. This issue becomes particularly significant regarding historically black

colleges, many of which were started by the church and maintain strong affiliations to the church today.

Social Class

Although the analysis in this paper posits that African American women experience gender, race, and class simultaneously in an intersectional paradigm, it is clear from the findings that as the participants negotiated and renegotiated issues within that paradigm at various stages in their lives, an interesting phenomenon emerged. The influences of gender, race and class on their experiences became nuanced by factors of nationality and culture. Two participants who were born or spent significant time living and working in countries that are dominated by blacks developed a particular way of looking at the world. In the findings, Barbara, who was born in the United States but lived in Africa, found that living in a country where blacks were the dominant race enabled her to understand the power of class without race and that people who look like her could also be unfair and discriminatory. This finding extends the literature and provides greater insight into how the intersectional paradigm operates in the lived experiences of African American women.

In a study found in Dill (1983) on black women, Elizabeth Higginbotham explored the impact of class origins upon strategies for educational attainment. She found that class differences within the black community led not only to different sets of educational experiences, but also to different personal priorities and views of the black experience. Other studies that have examined social class within the black community have found that the boundaries between race and social class are even more blurred, as race is really a proxy for social class. William Julius Wilson's research finds that blacks are becoming more polarized

around class lines and that the life chances of blacks have more to do with their economic class position than with their race (Hwang, Fitzpatrick & Helms, 1998).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

In the findings, five of six study participants had served or were current presidents of historically black colleges or universities (HBCUs) and saw them as crucial in the history and development of higher education, particularly for African Americans. However, the majority of participants found that historically black colleges were not as open and inclusive in promoting women to leadership positions as majority-white institutions. This finding is significant in looking at gender hegemony within HBCUs at the presidential level. To provide a full understanding of these issues, it is important not only to present the discussion as revealed in the findings, but also to extend the discussion to provide a balanced analysis of the role that historically black colleges and universities have played, given their acknowledged importance by the participants in this study.

The majority of historically black colleges were founded after the Civil War. Following Reconstruction, when the federal government removed troops and relinquished control of the South there was a backlash against ex-slaves. Denying blacks access to education was considered a crucial component in the strategy to create and maintain a new caste system to replace outright slavery (Peeps, 1981). This new caste system would relegate blacks to vocational or industrial education. It was the view of white Southerners that higher learning would not only lead blacks to increased dissatisfaction with their inferior status but would, in turn, render them less submissive and unwilling to labor in the fields. Complementing this racist ideal was Social Darwinism, in which blacks were seen as falling

very low on the evolutionary scale. They were considered genetically inferior to whites and not mentally capable of learning in an academic curriculum (Peeps, p. 258).

Early missionaries, however, believed that blacks had the same capacity to learn as whites. By 1870, Howard, Fisk, and Atlanta Universities were established. Their vision of black higher education was to create a cadre of teachers to educate the masses of black people who could not read or write. For a population of ex-slaves who had been denied the most basic civil liberties, education presented unimaginable opportunities for social and economic mobility; there is no doubt the influence of HBCUs on black higher education in America was profound (Peeps, 1981).

Well into the twentieth century, private black colleges carried the substantial responsibility of educating blacks at the college level, accounting for 72% of black student enrollment in 1926. However, by 1935, public black colleges accounted for 46% of black student enrollment and shortly thereafter surpassed the private black colleges (Wilson, 1990). Before desegregation these institutions, both public and private, educated the overwhelming majority of black college graduates in the nation, including the majority of physicians, lawyers, and teachers. Indeed, until as recently as 1965, nearly 60% of blacks in college were enrolled in the HBCUs. These institutions were noted for extraordinary achievement in the face of considerable obstacles, such as discriminatory public funding, hostility of the white power structure, low church support, and minimal response from the white philanthropic community and foundations (Wilson, 1990).

Wilson (1990) goes on to say that during the more than 100-year history of HBCUs, they were almost the exclusive avenue for black students who wanted to obtain a college degree. HBCUs were able to accept the best and brightest students as well as many who

would not have been readily admissible to any college. According to Wilson, HBCUs were able to educate teachers successfully in defiance of the traditional standardized tests. Moreover, the HBCUs provided a major source of employment for the educated black professional and, second only to the church, were the most respected institutions in the black community (Wilson, p. 447). Faith expressed why historically black colleges are so important for black students to attend.

One of the reasons I think that a number of students really need to go to historically black colleges is that there's a support system, that you don't have the additional anxiety level. And, I'm sorry, whatever student goes to a white institution, they may not understand it, but they have an additional anxiety level, it's there.

In the early 1990s, a report by the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (1991) on the impact of HBCUs produced these findings:

1. 80% of all black Americans who received degrees in medicine and dentistry were trained at the two traditionally black institutions of medicine and dentistry—Howard University and Meharry Medical College.
2. HBCUs have provided undergraduate training for three-fourths of all black persons holding doctorate degrees, three-fourths of all black officers in the armed forces, and four-fifths of all black federal judges.
3. HBCUs are leading institutions in awarding baccalaureate degrees to black students in the life sciences, physical sciences, mathematics, and engineering.
4. HBCUs continue to rank high in terms of the proportion of graduates who pursue and complete graduate and professional training.

Currently, HBCUs account for 14% of all African American students enrolled in higher education, although they constitute only 3% of America's 4,084 institutions of higher education. In 1999, these institutions matriculated 24% of all African American students enrolled in four-year colleges, awarded masters degrees and first professional degrees to about one in six African American men and women, and awarded 24% of all baccalaureate degrees earned by African Americans nationwide (U.S. Department of Education White House Initiative on HBCUs, 2008).

Despite the excellence of HBCUs in many aspects of higher education, the majority of the participants in this study reported that HBCUs lagged behind in promoting women to leadership positions. In the findings, when Barbara indicated that HBCUs were less open to women in leadership than were predominately white institutions. The latest edition of the *American College President* (2007) reports that approximately 59% of the presidents at minority-serving institutions are most likely to be from a minority group. Specific data of the breakdown between African American men and women were not available. Overall, African American men hold nearly 6% overall of the presidencies and African American women less than 2%, even though black women have earned at least 60% of all doctorates earned by African Americans since 1992 (*Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 2004). Several participants raised the issue that when a black female is selected for a leadership position at an HBCU, it is generally when the college is facing tremendous difficulty. They noted that public HBCUs, which tend to be better funded, were less likely to select a female for president. One of the participants referred this researcher to a report written by the Women Administrators in North Carolina Higher Education (WANCHE) organization, which indicated there was a significant gap between the number of African American females at

public HBCUs and the number of white females at predominately white institutions (Pulley, 1993). In our findings, when she was asked about HBCUs turning to women when in crisis, Cynthia reported that when this happened, the woman was then perceived as the source of the institution's problems:

Absolutely true. It is, I've seen it over and over again., and the attitude there... Well, two things happened. and I think that one thing they realized was that a woman was going to be focused. She's going to use all these things that we do in terms of nurturing, building. She's going to use all of her perspective and a woman's way of doing things and apply to it. Then the other thing that happens is a sort of abandonment. You know, The woman is there, she's doing her job, and she may be saying, you know, we've got to do this or we've got to do that, and there is, a distancing that happens. It's almost like she knows too much, she's uncovering. Well, sometimes when a woman comes in and uncovers a problem, it's perceived that she's creating it, and I think that happens more for women.

The *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (2004) conducted a comparison study of HBCUs and predominately white institutions and found that HBCUs lag behind predominantly white institutions in the hiring and promoting of female faculty members, as well. The *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* findings indicated that in the nationwide count at all colleges and universities, black women in full-time faculty positions have a significant and nearly equal presence to black men, but at the historically black colleges and universities black men still hold a very large lead over black women in faculty posts, even though black women hold a large lead over black men in enrollments, degree attainment, graduation rates, honor-roll status, and in almost every area of higher education.

In 2000, 3,078 blacks were employed as full professors at all colleges and universities in the United States. Black women totaled 45% of the black full professors, up from 28% in 1980. In 2000, 44% of all associate professors were black women, an increase of 9% since 1980 (JBHE, 2004).

At HBCUs, 8,301 full-time black faculty members were teaching at the nation's black colleges. Of these, 4,411 were men and 3,890 were women. The gender gap is even greater in favor of men if faculty of all races at historically black colleges are included; more than 58% of all faculty at HBCUs are men (JBHE, p. 31). One of the reasons for the disparity suggested by the JBHE is that HBCUs tend to be socially conservative institutions that are affiliated with religious organizations, and due to cultural biases in favor of men may be less likely to hire women to faculty posts. In our findings, Faith reported that working in an HBCU provided a comfortable environment with regards to race, but she felt that gender hegemony was present and that black men had learned this behavior from white males:

I found it much less stressful to be in an HBCU, without that second layer [race] of having to always either second-guess... That's got to be the bottom line of it. Now I found that as a black woman in the HBCUs, in many cases, was to help bring women along, because, again, the assumption was, very much rolled over from the white world, with white males being in charge of everything.

A report completed by the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund (Geiger, 2005) found further gender disparities at public HBCUs. With regards to faculty, the report noted female faculty at public HBCUs were dissatisfied with lack of openness about salary, gender, and equity issues. A majority of female faculty believe that they were not given the same kinds of compensation packages as men of similar rank and experience. They also perceived that their

situation would be improved under the leadership of a female president (Geiger, p. 10). To address some of the gender disparities within public HBCUs, the study made these recommendations:

1. Public HBCUs should regularly review data to compare the professional experiences of male and female faculty with appointments, tenure, promotion, and salary equity.
2. Public HBCUs should fully disclose institutional salary data.
3. Public HBCUs should establish a Joint Center for African American Gender Studies to examine the impact that race and gender issues have on their students and faculty and in the larger community.

There is tremendous concern these days about the survival of historically black colleges and universities and whether they are still relevant and crucial to the development of African Americans. With a larger share of African American students attending predominately white institutions, and with tougher competition for federal and private dollars, many HBCUs will not survive. In Henry Drewry's book, *Stand and Prosper: Private Black Colleges and their Students* (2001) and in the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund report (Geiger, 2005), the key to survival is the ability to adapt and change. Based on the findings in this study and others, central to this change at HBCUs is the ability to expand their perspective with regard to African American women and gender as a whole. This will enable historically black colleges and universities to continue to play a critical role in educating African Americans and to be in a stronger position to survive the challenges and thrive in the 21st-century world of higher education. HBCUs have the opportunity to be at the vanguard of providing access to African American women who aspire to leadership roles in higher education, as they have

for three centuries with African American students. In our findings, Ebony felt that the survival and success of HBCUs had a direct impact on the future growth of African American women in leadership positions.

Let me put it this way...the higher the survival rate of the historically black colleges, the more likely it will be that our rates will increase [African American women presidents]. The higher the attrition rate, the less likely we [African American women presidents] will increase. Because, you know, these colleges [historically black colleges and universities] are living on borrowed time.

Summary

This chapter examined the organizational structures that were crucial to the way participants redefined how gender, race, and class were experienced in their lives. Family and community, black teachers and educators in public schools, and black churches were discussed to provide a fuller and deeper understanding of how these institutions operate in the lived experiences of the participants in this study. How these women are able to reinterpret self from the negative, hegemonic images advanced by dominant groups to positive and reaffirming identities is rooted in their connectedness with the larger black community, which operates within their sphere as a supportive extended family. It is important to note in this analysis that these institutions are not operating in isolation in the black community but in collaboration with one another to produce holistic, cumulative influences in the positive development of participants' identities.

Special attention in this discussion provided a more detailed examination of how social class operates within the intersectional paradigm, in light of the importance placed on class by participants in the study. At the center of this discussion was how race becomes

more nuanced in the intersectional paradigm when other constructs such as nationality are included.

The discussion on historically black colleges and universities provided a balanced assessment of the important role HBCUs play in higher education but also recognized the gender hegemony that exists within these institutions. The historical connections between HBCUs and religious organizations are among the reasons given in the literature for their reluctance to provide leadership opportunities to African American women. To continue their critical role in higher education, historically black colleges and universities need to change and adapt to become more open to hiring and promoting women.

The final chapter will build upon the previous chapters in this dissertation to provide a discussion of implications for additional research based on the findings and conclusions presented in this study.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This study suggests that African American women presidents are disproportionately underrepresented in leadership positions in higher education due to a historical and contemporary system of hegemony within higher education that has limited their access to positions of power. The purpose of this study was to examine the ways gender, race and class constructed as an intersectional paradigm influence the professional and personal development of African American women prior to and during their tenure as college presidents.

The intersectional paradigm enabled this researcher to gain a greater understanding of the width, breadth, and complexity of African American women's experiences by considering their marginalization as a whole, rather than simply considering the individual constructs alone. This locus of analysis was particularly beneficial when examining the many ways in which the participants' marginal status was perceived and negotiated and renegotiated in different environments at various stages of their lives. Black feminist standpoint theory posits that the intersectionality of gender, race, and class sets black women's perspective apart from other groups by placing their experiences at the crossroads of multiple oppressions (Collins, 2000a). Critical race feminism was useful as a second theoretical tool to further explain and extend the application of themes found in black feminist standpoint theory.

The choice of African American women presidents of four-year colleges and universities as study participants was important in exploring the intersectional paradigm because participants had attained positions in higher education that few minorities and

women have (ACE, 2007). Their inclusion in the study was central to providing the kind of insight to understand better how black women negotiate their marginal status to survive and succeed. Based on the research and findings from this study, this researcher draws the following implications for future research related to theory and practice.

Implications for Future Research—Theory

Traditional feminist theory was developed during the second wave of feminism, which began after World War II (Lather, 1991) and lasted through the 1960s. However, traditional feminist theory failed to consider the needs of women of color or poor women in their analysis. Black feminist theory offered African American women a framework for examining their lives that included gender, race, and class. This study utilized the intersectional paradigm as the locus of investigation for analyzing the experiences of African American women presidents. From these findings, the researcher concluded that when nationality is factored in with gender, race, and class, a different perception is created about race and class within the intersectional paradigm. More research is needed to better understand how the intersectional paradigm is influenced by factors such as nationality and culture. This study restricted its participant group to African American women. Valuable data could be generated from analyses of other groups of women of color and ethnicity and their experiences in the intersectional paradigm. These additional studies would add to the growing body of work in gender studies and feminist scholarship.

Implications for Future Research—Practice

Issues of equity and fairness continue to confront higher education and education as a whole. Affirmative action and other programs designed to create diversity are undergoing changes and challenges that limit their scope and effectiveness. This study found that social

class played a prominent role in the participants' perceptions about the intersectional paradigm and its influences on their lives; in one case, race was seen as a proxy for social class. This finding provides support for considering other factors such as class instead of relying solely on race to promote diversity.

The findings from this study can be used to examine issues of leadership and management within higher education and other organizations. The intersectional paradigm revealed a different way in which participants governed that was open and participatory, as well as a different way in which they used power within their administrations that was more instructive than punitive. Much could be learned from additional research in this area to improve the culture and climate within colleges and universities and other institutions.

In the findings, Cynthia suggested that more research focused on African American women was necessary to better understand the problems of underrepresentation and to identify strategies and solutions to foster greater participation by African American women who aspire to become leaders in higher education.

I think also what you're doing now in terms of your research, the dissertation commitment and from this comes your book...the dissertation is the beginning, not the end. How do you build upon this? There is, you know, like I said, there is no quick fix—it isn't going to be turned around, you know. It's going to be something in which you're just passionately involved with, and what you're passionately involved in—at least in terms of what you are saying—is how do you get, how do you first of all free up your own voice? And then after you free up your own voice, you know, courageously look at a way to address the problem.

Conclusions

General conclusions from the results reveal a dual narrative of the intersectional paradigm of gender, race, and class in shaping the life experiences of the participants. One narrative presented a portrait of African American women growing up in the margins, denied many opportunities afforded to the dominant culture that would enable them to reach their full potential. Concurrently, the influences of the intersectional paradigm created a cumulative effect, wherein their marginal status became a source of empowerment that was central to their personal and professional success and ascension to leadership positions in higher education. This cumulative effect resulted from the influences of family and community organizations that functioned within their environments to help participants develop identities and reconstruct images of self that were positive and affirming. These women were very conscious of these influences as they developed a deep understanding of how these structures operate. They learned to utilize this knowledge to formulate strategies to adapt and negotiate systems of hegemony within their personal and professional spheres. Specific conclusions are organized around the research questions of this study.

Conclusions—Research Question 1

Concerning the first research question of how do African American women college presidents perceive gender, race, and class in shaping their experiences, the following conclusions are made:

Based on the literature, African American women are underrepresented in leadership roles in higher education. Historical and contemporary hegemony within higher education perpetuates a climate that plays a major role in limiting opportunities for African American women to obtain leadership positions. Black feminist standpoint theory provides a theoretical

framework for examining the lives of black women leaders in the context of gender, race, and class.

The results of this study showed that although black women have a shared history of discrimination, their experiences, when analyzed using the intersectional paradigm as the locus of investigation, are not homogenous. In fact, there are many variations of how participants perceive their marginal status, depending upon the sphere in which the intersectional paradigm is operating. For instance, one participant who grew up in a housing project where everyone was poor and black with limited opportunities considers herself marginalized even within this group because she perceived the circumstances of her marginality created even greater challenges for her survival within that environment.

The results of the research revealed a phenomenon described by this researcher as the cumulative effect of marginalization, in which these women learn to survive and succeed in their personal and professional lives, despite their marginalized status. What the research shows is that social institutions within the black community operate collaboratively to provide an alternate way of thinking and looking at the world for these women that challenge the views espoused in the dominant culture.

Within these findings, there is a reconceptualization of participants' place in society that is positive and affirming. This became a source of empowerment that was key to their advancement to leadership positions. This reconceptualization was accomplished with the support of family and community, teachers, and the black churches throughout their lives. This is consistent with the literature found in black feminist standpoint theory that identifies family and community as being central to black women's development (Collins, 2000a). The concept of family as presented in the findings is best described in a definition by Patricia Hill

Collins (2000) that extends beyond the nuclear core of parents and siblings and those groups linked by common biology to communities conceptualized as imagined families. It is important to note that the black churches offered more than just a deep sense of spirituality and faith but also structured institutions that provided resources in the form of values, financial, and emotional support that were important to the participants' life experiences.

Next, social class location occupied a prominent role in the experiences of most of the participants. The intersectional paradigm of gender, race, and class factored with nationality created a perception whereby race was more nuanced in its influences on black women's experiences.

Finally, despite the profound impact of historically black colleges and universities in providing educational opportunities for African Americans, HBCUs lagged behind predominately white institutions in hiring and promoting women to leadership positions. Key to addressing this issue and important to the survival of HBCUs—especially with increasing competition for students and funds—is their ability to adapt and change their organizational culture and climate to be more inclusive of women at the faculty, administrative, and executive levels of their colleges and universities.

Conclusions—Research Question 2

The second research question in this study asked how gender, race and class contributed to and challenged African American women college president's ability to negotiate positions of power within the academy?

These conclusions can be drawn from the literature and research:

The influences of family, community, black churches and schools was crucial in participants' development of tools and strategies for negotiating their marginal status and

advancing to leadership positions in higher education. For instance, one participant spoke of the many roles that African American faculty members are forced to assume in predominately white institutions. That participant reported that working collectively with other faculty members of color on campus helped the members of the group to write and publish articles together to meet the scholarly requirements of the department that they could not achieve working alone. Collaboration and group strategy was also seen in the findings as important in fostering black women's success in attaining leadership positions.

Concurrently, participants also perceived that the skills and knowledge gained through their multitasking were beneficial to their growth and development and helped prepare them for the complex role of serving as college and university presidents. How these women utilized their positions of power is also rooted in the skills they acquired through their marginalized status. The intersectional paradigm of gender, race, and class created different ways in which participants thought about and used power as presidents that was more open, participatory and inclusive of different groups within the organizational structure. Last, the participants saw themselves as change agents and made conscious efforts to implement policies focused on dismantling the "good-old-boy" system that was seen as antiquated and corrupt.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS FOR RESEARCH STUDY

I. Overview

This interview session focuses on your perceptions of how gender, race and class has influenced your professional and personal life. The process should last approximately 90 minutes to 2 hours and will cover three major areas, your experiences growing up, path to the presidency and finally a discussion on your presidency and your opinions about African American women in general in leadership positions in higher education. Before we begin, I need you to sign the informed consent form.

II. Background

I want to start our interview by asking you some follow up questions to the demographic questionnaire you completed.

1. Can you tell me more about your life growing up?
2. Was race discussed in your home growing up?
what about gender?
what about class?
3. What are some of the important messages you received growing up that shape your life today?

II. Professional development

Now, let us discuss your professional development and path to the presidency

4. What influenced your decision to become a college president?
5. Can you tell me a story or give an example about this important event?
6. Describe your career path?
7. Tell me about your support system as you moved up the professional ladder?
8. What specific obstacles did you overcome/deal with as you progressed through your career, professionally? What about you personal life and balancing work and home?

9. What specific instances of discrimination (differential treatment) have you encountered ?
What was your response?
In retrospect, would you have handled it differently?
10. What lessons have you learned from your experiences as you progressed through your career?

III. Current Status as President

Finally, I want to discuss your current status as president and your opinion about the environment in general in higher education for African American women leaders

11. How did the campus community first react to your presidency? How did you respond? What were strategies? Has their opinion of you changed over the time?
12. Why do you think there are there so few African American women presidents at four-year colleges and universities?
13. What role do you think gender, race or class plays? In the presidency, daily work, what?
14. Do you feel that there is anything collectively and individually to foster more black women in leadership positions in higher education? Do you mean that can be done?

IV. Conclusion

As we finish, are there any more stories that come to mind you want to share?

1. Thank you for your participation in this study.
2. May I contact you if necessary to clarify/augment answers?
3. Summary of the results will be made available. May I forward a copy

APPENDIX C

IRB FORMS

**North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board For The Use of Human Subjects in Research
GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

An **Informed Consent Statement** has two purposes: (1) to provide adequate information to potential research subjects to make an informed choice as to their participation in a study, and (2) to document their decision to participate. In order to make an informed choice, potential subjects must understand the study, how they are involved in the study, what sort of risks it poses to them and who they can contact if a problem arises (see informed consent checklist for a full listing of required elements of consent). Please note that **the language used to describe these factors must be understandable to all potential subjects, which typically means an eighth grade reading level**. The informed consent form is to be read and signed by each subject who participates in the study **before** they begin participation in the study. A duplicate copy is to be provided to each subject.

If subjects are **minors (i.e. any subject under the age of 18)** use the following guidelines for obtaining consent:

0-5 years old – requires signature of parent(s)/guardian/legal representative

6 – 10 years old - requires signature of parent(s)/guardian/legal representative and verbal assent from the minor. In this case a minor assent script should be prepared and submitted along with a parental consent form.

11 - 17 years old - requires signature of both minor and parent/guardian/legal representative

If the subject or legal representative is *unable to read and/or understand the written consent form*, it must be verbally presented in an understandable manner and witnessed (with signature of witness). If there is a good chance that your intended subjects will not be able to read and/or understand a written consent form, please contact the IRB office (919-515-4514) for further instructions.

For your convenience, attached find a sample consent form template that contains necessary information. In generating a form for a specific project, the principal investigator should complete the underlined areas of the form and replicate the bold areas.

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: A Study of African American women presidents at four-year colleges and universities: Examining the intersection of race, class and gender

Principal Investigator Gwendolyn L. Wright
Faculty Sponsor (if applicable) Dr. Colleen Wiessner

We are asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine how race, class and gender have influenced the professional and personal experiences of African American women presidents at four-year colleges and universities.

INFORMATION

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 1.5 to 2 hour face-to-face interview. The interviews will be conducted on the participant's home campus in the privacy of her office. All interviews will be documented on audio tape and converted to written transcripts. In addition, the researcher will make use of other artifacts as necessary during the course of the study, such as curriculum vitae, articles, books and other publications written or about the subject. The researcher will document all field notes using a research journal. This journal will also serve as the primary resource for documenting informal correspondence with participants during the course of the study.

All participants will be contacted after the interview to review the accuracy of the interview transcripts and to confirm the accuracy of any other information compiled about the participant from the study.

RISKS

Maintaining anonymity will be a potential risk factor. This researcher intends to allow the use of pseudonyms when requested; however, because there are so few African American women college presidents at four-year colleges and universities, complete anonymity will be very difficult to achieve for this study.

As another way to safeguard participants' privacy, the researcher will conduct all interviews either on their home campuses or other locations designated by them. Once the interviews are completed, each participant will be supplied with copies of the transcripts and given the opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the information.

BENEFITS

The potential benefit of this research lies in its ability to expand the body of literature about African American women in US higher education and increase more widely the knowledge and understanding of the culture and heritage of black women. Further, this research will serve as an important resource to empower black women and other underrepresented groups to seek to become college presidents, a crucial goal within higher education given their limited presence in senior executive positions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely in a safe place accessible only to the researcher. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Gwen Wright, at 919-668-1687 or gwright@duke.edu. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148)

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed at your request.

CONSENT

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time.”

Subject's signature _____ **Date** _____

Investigator's signature _____ **Date** _____

**North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research
Submission for New Studies**

Title of Project: Examining the intersection of race, class and gender: A Study of African American women presidents at four-year colleges and universities

Principal Investigator Gwendolyn L. Wright Department Adult and Higher Education

Source of Funding (**required** information):
(if externally funded include sponsor name and university account number)

Campus Address (Box Number) Box 7801

Email: gwright@duke.edu Phone: 919-668-1687 Fax: 919-684-5661

RANK: Faculty
 Student: Undergraduate; Masters; or PhD
 Other (specify): Ed.D.

As the principal investigator, my signature testifies that I have read and understood the University Policy and Procedures for the Use of Human Subjects in Research. I assure the Committee that all procedures performed under this project will be conducted exactly as outlined in the Proposal Narrative and that any modification to this protocol will be submitted to the Committee in the form of an amendment for its approval prior to implementation.

Principal Investigator:

Gwendolyn L. Wright _____
(typed/printed name) (signature) (date)

As the faculty sponsor, my signature testifies that I have reviewed this application thoroughly and will oversee the research in its entirety. I hereby acknowledge my role as the principal investigator of record.

Faculty Sponsor:

Colleen Wiessner _____
(typed/printed name) (signature) (date)

PLEASE COMPLETE in duplicate AND DELIVER, along with a proposal narrative, TO:
Institutional Review Board, Box 7514, or email as an attachment to
debra_paxton@ncsu.edu

For SPARCS office use only

Reviewer Decision (Expedited or Exempt Review)

Exempt Approved Approved pending modifications Table

Expedited Review Category: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8a 8b 8c 9

Reviewer Name

Signature

Date

**North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research
GUIDELINES FOR A PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

In your narrative, address each of the topics outlined below. Every application for IRB review must contain a proposal narrative, and failure to follow these directions will result in delays in reviewing/processing the protocol.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Briefly describe in lay language the purpose of the proposed research and why it is important.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to provide a deeper understanding of the experiences that challenge selected African American women college presidents and contribute to their achievement in obtaining high level positions in academia and to thereby offer a unique perspective into how the interlocking nature of gender, race and class influences the professional and personal lives of African American women in higher education.

The importance of this research lies in its ability to expand the body of literature about African American women in US higher education and increase more widely the knowledge and understanding of the culture and heritage of black women. Further, this research will serve as an important resource to empower black women and other underrepresented groups to seek to become college presidents, a crucial goal within higher education given their limited presence in senior executive positions.

2. If student research, indicate whether for a course, thesis, dissertation, or independent research.
Dissertation

B. SUBJECT POPULATION

1. How many subjects will be involved in the research?
Approximately 6-10 participants will be involved in the study.
2. Describe how subjects will be recruited. Please provide the IRB with any recruitment materials that will be used. The recruitment of subjects will be from a list of African American women presidents who fit the selection criteria. Each potential subject will be contacted and asked to participate until the desired number of subjects is achieved.
3. List specific eligibility requirements for subjects (or describe screening procedures), including those criteria that would exclude otherwise acceptable subjects. The selection of subjects for this is based on the following criteria:
must be female and of African American descent;
must be a current president at an accredited (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) four-year college or university;

must be president of institution located in the southeastern United States;

4. Explain any sampling procedure that might exclude specific populations. Subjects for this study must be African American female presidents. Members of populations not meeting these criteria will not be selected.
5. Disclose any relationship between researcher and subjects - such as, teacher/student; employer/employee. There is no relationship between the researcher and any potential subjects.
6. Check any vulnerable populations included in study: N/A
 - minors (under age 18) - if so, have you included a line on the consent form for the parent/guardian signature
 - fetuses
 - pregnant women
 - persons with mental, psychiatric or emotional disabilities
 - persons with physical disabilities
 - economically or educationally disadvantaged
 - prisoners
 - elderly
 - students from a class taught by principal investigator
 - other vulnerable population.

If any of the above are used, state the necessity for doing so. Please indicate the approximate age range of the minors to be involved. N/A

C. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

In lay language, describe completely all procedures to be followed during the course of the experimentation. Provide sufficient detail so that the Committee is able to assess potential risks to human subjects.

Potential subjects will be sent a letter to determine their willingness and availability to participate. Since the sample pool is very small, a follow-up telephone call will be made to each potential subject to answer any questions she might have regarding the study.

Once subjects are selected, they will be asked to participate in a 2-3 hour face-to-face interview. The interviews will be conducted on the participant's home campus in the privacy of her office. All interviews will be documented on audio tape and converted to written transcripts. In addition, the researcher will make use of other artifacts as necessary during the course of the study, such as curriculum vitae, articles, books and other publications about or written by the subject.

The researcher will document all field notes using a research journal. This journal will also serve as the primary resource for documenting informal correspondence with participants during the course of the study.

All participants will be contacted after the interview to review the accuracy of the interview transcripts and to confirm the accuracy of any other information compiled about the participant from the study.

How much time will be required of each subject?

Approximately 2-3 hours

D. POTENTIAL RISKS

1. State the potential risks (physical, psychological, financial, social, legal or other) connected with the proposed procedures and explain the steps taken to minimize these risks.

Maintaining anonymity will be a potential risk factor. This researcher intends to allow the use of pseudonyms when requested; however, because there are so few African American women college presidents at four-year colleges and universities, complete anonymity will be very difficult to achieve for this study. Each potential participant will be consulted about this issue during the initial contact and a consent form describing the potential risks will be secured by the researcher.

As another way to safeguard participants' privacy, the researcher will conduct all interviews either on their home campuses or other locations designated by them. Once the interviews are completed, each participant will be supplied with copies of the transcripts and given the opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the information.

2. Will there be a request for information which subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive (e.g. private behavior, economic status, sexual issues, religious beliefs, or other matters that if made public might impair their self-esteem or reputation or could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability)?

Some of the questions described on the survey might be considered personal by the subject. However, the subject will have the option not to respond to any questions that she does not want to answer.

a. If yes, please describe and explain the steps taken to minimize these risks. See response to 2 above.

3. Could any of the study procedures produce stress or anxiety, or be considered offensive, threatening, or degrading? If yes, please describe why they are important and what arrangements have been made for handling an emotional reaction from the subject.
They should not.

4. How will data be recorded and stored?
Data from the interviews will be collected using an audio recorder and then converted to written transcripts. Information will be stored in a safe place in the researcher's private home. How will identifiers be used in study notes and other materials? Pseudonyms will be used in written materials and audio tapes.

How will reports be written, in aggregate terms, or will individual responses be described? The final report will be written in both aggregate and individual responses. When using individual responses, pseudonyms will be applied.
5. If audio or videotaping is done how will the tapes be stored and how/when will the tapes be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. Upon approval of the dissertation by the advisory committee, all audio tapes and verbatim transcripts related to the research will be destroyed.
6. Is there any deception of the human subjects involved in this study? If yes, please describe why it is necessary and describe the debriefing procedures that have been arranged.
No

E. POTENTIAL BENEFITS

This does not include any form of compensation for participation.

1. What, if any, direct benefit is to be gained by the subject? If no direct benefit is expected, but indirect benefit may be expected (knowledge may be gained that could help others), please explain. Indirect benefits include providing knowledge that benefits others and that could help improve the status of those who hope to achieve the position they now have.

F. COMPENSATION

1. Explain compensation provisions if the subject withdraws prior to completion of the study.

No compensation is provided.

2. If class credit will be given, list the amount and alternative ways to earn the same amount of credit.

N/A

G COLLABORATORS

1. If you anticipate that additional investigators (other than those named on Cover Page) may be involved in this research, list them here indicating their institution, department and phone number.
No other collaborators
2. Will anyone besides the PI or the research team have access to the data (including completed surveys) from the moment they are collected until they are destroyed

No

H. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. If a questionnaire, survey or interview instrument is to be used, attach a copy to this proposal.
2. Attach a copy of the informed consent form to this proposal.
3. Please provide any additional materials that may aid the IRB in making its decision.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE CODEBOOKS

Codebook for Study of Gender, Race and Class as Experienced by African American Women Presidents-Faith		
Code	Definition	Key words or phrases from transcript
1. PTP a. Faculty-administrator b. Administrator only c. Outside Academy d. President of HBCU e. Number of Presidencies f. Current Status	Path to Presidency. Background information on participant's professional and personal experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Faculty • College Administrator, • Multiple roles as faculty and administrator • Married • Ph.D • President of HBCU • Retired
2. SEC a. Middle Class b. Working Class c. Upper Middle Class	Social and Economic background growing up.	<p>My neighborhood was a neighborhood of row houses in Houston, I don't know if you know about those, John Biggers artwork depicts the row houses in Houston.</p> <p>There were lots of children in neighborhood, all the parents worked outside the home, there was only one lady who didn't work, and I never knew what she did, but she was a seamstress so she was working at home.</p> <p>The children were allowed to play with each other, there was a lot of structure in our neighborhood, and you were polite, you didn't go to people's houses and do certain things. You had rules about how long to play, and... It was a structured neighborhood but very, very positive.</p> <p>Of course segregated in Houston, Third Ward in Houston on Sawyer Street. Very much segregated but a really healthy environment, and adults who all looked out</p> <p>My father was a chef cook in downtown and my mom was a domestic woman, she also worked at department soda fountain over the years. In my early young years she was</p>

		<p>domestic and worked] occupations, and my older sister and I we'd go with her sometimes and baby-sit. Then when I was in high school, my mom, who was a very bright woman, decided that she was interested in becoming a nurse, so she took exams and went to the high school and learned - and became a registered nurse - LVN's is what they were called, licensed vocational nurses, so she became a licensed vocational nurse and that's how she spent the rest of her life,</p> <p>My parents had a very good relationship, and they had structure for us and demanded that we do well.</p>
<p>3. MEN a. Within Higher Education b. Outside Higher Education</p>	<p>Mentors. Individuals who played significant role in supporting career development.</p>	<p>"So that's what my mom did, she to the elementary school, and my 1st grade teacher was [Martha]] who later became one of my major mentors, [Brownsville] and he was very white skinned, and he talked with this long drawl, Indiana drawl. And if you did not know that he was black, you would have no way of knowing if he didn't tell you. But he never passed or anything.</p> <p>But he was an excellent principal because what he would do, he would try to help us understand, and that's another part of my foundation, I guess I should say. Mr. [Jones] would help the whole school understand... He was the principal of all these black children, most of whom were not from middle class families, and his thing was to require his teachers to teach, to make every kind of growth opportunity. He would invite people to come and speak about Russia, and all kinds of things. He made you have respect.</p> <p>And he was a graduate student in Government, and at the end of the time that he finished the doctorate, then the woman in the Government Department, who was the chief secretary, and observed me and she asked me if I'd like to work in their</p>

		<p>department. So I worked in the Government Department for the whole time I was an undergraduate. And that was good because I got to know four men who eventually became presidents of the University, who were all Government Department faculty.</p>
<p>4. IDN a. Strong positive self image b. Knowledge of history, culture of black people c. Emotional attachment to family and concern for issues related to black community d. Aptitude for learning</p>	<p>Identity. Experiences or activities that help define identity</p>	<p>I was a child who went to church early. I lived across the street from the church, and by the time I was six, I went to church. My family was not in church at that time, my mother and my father went to church. I learned a lot through the church, Sunday School and other things, choir, and got a lot of my grounding, really a lot of it, by listening and learning to listen to the sermons, and listen to the lessons, Sunday School lessons, and think things through.</p> <p>I was always a very top-level student. In fact, they wanted to skip me when I was in the second grade.</p> <p>My parents had a very good relationship, and they had structure for us and demanded that we do well.</p> <p>One of the things I really learned that my parents helped me most that <i>you're</i> in charge of your own self and that you should never let anybody else penetrate that by degrading you or whatever.</p> <p>Of course you'd have things to happen, and my mother, I remember saying, "Nobody can insult you unless you give them permission to do so." So anything like that skin color incident, and things like that, she said, "Well, that was those people's problem. As long as you know what you're doing is right, and it's fair, then don't worry about what somebody else thinks about it.</p> <p>The other was that they also taught us that there was a greater spiritual being and that we had to acknowledge that, and that that relationship, however, was one with you</p>

	<p>and your God, it is not one to be given to a preacher... My father was very much against organized religion, he had very bad experiences, but he was a Christian, and we had Bible study (Chuckle) and all of that. And those things are the things that are substantial.</p> <p>The other thing I would say that helped me in a way, and they didn't really say this, but I learned it, that you never know with whom your interacting. Well, you know that there are always people two and three times removed. You don't know. So that you have to always be very careful about what you say, you don't talk about other people to people, you keep your own counsel</p> <p>In retrospect I found that there were a lot of - not a lot, there were some teachers who were, this sounds strange to say for a student, but envious of my ability</p> <p>We always knew I was going to college, however, and I was going to very likely have to go on scholarship and work because my family [Inaudible] money at all. One of the reasons I kept grades and things up.</p> <p>And he [Mr. Jones] talked to us one day about skin color, about how people would try to do things and how racism was very prevalent, of course, in Texas. And he shared with us from the podium, and I'll have to come back to a lot of this later about he ventured politically. He said, "You little people. I don't want to hear anybody using the word nigger here because it is not appropriate, and nobody should even be calling you that, and you should not be looking at people's skin color." You never know sometimes what's motivating these things, but he said, "Let me tell you all about how these redneck crackers are." and he would say the word like that. He said, "Now, crackers is a word that is derogatory</p>
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	<p>just like nigger is a word for blacks it's the word white people." He said, "Neither one of them is appropriate. But you have to be careful about people who are white because they don't really because they're afraid of us, they don't want us to advance. So, if you use your head..."</p> <p>He was always telling us to use our brain. He said, "Think things through."</p> <p>So he [Mr. Jones] shared that with us (Chuckle) as a way of understanding and thinking on how to use the system, that this is one of the ways... He was always empowering us like that, he really was.</p> <p>So this was the kind of a very rich exceptional, but supportive and generational environment in which he created things, and would stand up for the students, I mean, really, and for the institution as black kids or whatever.</p> <p>And part of my early training and all was to always know what you're doing, get your facts together. I don't remember where along the way it was, one of my teachers said that there are four levels that you have to think about. One is feelings [Inaudible]. Anybody can feel and nobody can question those feelings 'cause those are your feelings, and that's just pure hardcore - that's just fundamental, primitive - feelings are primitive, they're there. And then if you add a little bit more understanding to it you can have a <i>belief</i>, so feeling is the most fundamental, primitive - then believing, 'cause you're adding some other things to it. Then thinking about it, you're adding thought, but knowing is the hierarchy of it. <i>Know what it is</i> and document.</p>
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Codebook for Study of Gender, Race and Class as Experienced by African American Women Presidents- Ebony		
Code	Definition	Key words or phrases from transcript
1. PTP a. Faculty-administrator b. Administrator only c. Outside Academy d. President of HBCU e. Current Status	Path to Presidency. Background information on participant's professional and personal experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Faculty • College Administrator, • Multiple roles as faculty and administrator • Married twice • One child • Divorced • Ph.D • President of HBCU • Retired
2. SEC a. Middle Class b. Working Class c. Upper Middle Class	Social and Economic background growing up.	<p>I was born in [Maryland], so I just had my 69th birthday, oh, was it this week or last week? My grand, my mother's parents are from the [Islands], and so I'm a second-generation [Islander] if you want to call it that born in the States.</p> <p>Considered to be "smart" little girl when I was growing up. I went to, I can't figure out exactly how old I was when I went to the elementary school, but I know, I think I was approaching five if I wasn't already five, went to the elementary and high school. I skipped sixth grade, my teacher felt that I could go to seventh from fifth, so after taking a test they sent me to seventh grade, and then in the eleventh grade I was sent to Miami, I think along with some others but I don't know who else went to take an exam that was being given by the Ford Foundation.</p> <p>Won a scholarship to [College] and that's how I ended up going to [College] right after my fifteenth birthday in 1953.</p> <p>I was the first Negro student to have ever won a countywide anything against white students, you know, so this was the kind of thing that I think was sort of expected.</p>

		<p>I really grew up under the tutelage so to speak of her mother and father because my mother was a very, a very bright woman. I mean I could tell that even though she never, I think she had to stop in about the eighth or ninth grade at school, but she had a cleaners as a young woman, she was in her early twenties, had to be because I was just a young girl, and she was always a business woman, but by the time I was in eighth grade she was thinking about college for me, and I had three brothers, she didn't think that she could send my brothers to school, working down here, so she went to live [up north] from I think around '50 or so.</p> <p>She was very proud of my brothers but she was especially focused on me as the girl.</p> <p>I always said that everybody in Fort [Smith] was working class. The only people who were a little bit "better off," as they used to say, were the professionals and they were professionals in the sense of the educators, teachers and administrators and what else, that was about it.</p> <p>We all had basically the same kind of houses, these shotgun houses as they call them, or something close to that, you know, made out of wood with shingle roof and walk into the house, usually people would have enclosed porches, walk into the porch, then the living room. In the case of our house the, we had, it wasn't quite a shotgun because we had the living room on one side, the bedroom on one side, then you walked into the dining room and then another bedroom, then you walked into the kitchen and another bedroom and then the back porch and the bathroom. But we were all, in the case of my family because my grandparents were [Caribbean], we lived in a practically, not exactly all [Caribbean]</p>
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		<p>neighbor, but it was predominantly [Caribbean].</p> <p>My grandmother used to talk about “the American people” all the time. She didn’t appreciate hardly anything about the American way of life as far as her own preferences, she felt like their values weren’t the same as the Bahamians and, of course, they didn’t speak the same, and I read something that I had written a long time ago about the fact that when I was in first grade my grandmother was the one who taught me how to read before I went into first grade, right. When I got to first grade, I discovered that I mispronounced a lot of words because I had learned how to pronounce them from the way my grandmother did.</p> <p>I was born, one end of it was predominantly Bahamian and you would cross over one of the main, you know, transecting streets, and the people on the other side were predominantly African American.</p> <p>You have to remember this is in the 40’s and 50’s, class was not an issue even though there were some people, a few people whose children were better off, I use that expression, but the only way you could tell it was that they might have more expensive clothes, you know, and people would notice that, but they were, you could count those people on one hand, certainly on two hands. And so class doesn’t come into it as far as one’s being judged or having opportunities that might be open or constrained by class. There was no such thing as that down here.</p>
<p>3. MEN a. Within Higher Education b. Outside Higher Education</p>	<p>Mentors. Individuals who played significant role in supporting career development.</p>	<p>I was thinking that, you know, if you’re a president of an institution, you have an opportunity to really make a difference in terms of students, providing access for the students, helping them to persist through to their degrees, Faculty, everything from</p>

		<p>promotions and tenure, salaries, and it was during that time, I think, that I became interested in the Presidency. I wasn't thinking of Presidency but I was just interested in what was involved, and ACE then had a program that brought together women who were in certain administrative positions and helped them to prepare for the Presidency.</p> <p>There was a woman who had met me somewhere, recommended me to somebody who was on the Search Committee at the [Washington]. I think, wait a minute, let me see, I know that her name was [Mary], where was she? She was teaching or an administrator at one of the colleges in the [north],</p>
<p>4. IDN a. Strong positive self image b. Knowledge of history, culture of black people c. Emotional attachment to family and concern for issues related to black community d. Aptitude for learning</p>	<p>Identity. Experiences or activities that help define identity</p>	<p>Changed birth name to African name</p> <p>I never had any sense of being disadvantaged until I went to [College].</p> <p>I enjoyed [the predominately white institution]], but I tell you, all my best friends are from [my years at the HBCU], and I was so aware of the difference between the way I related to the people who I'd been with at [HBCU] and those at [predominately white institution]. Now it's true that I spent one year longer, because I was at [HBCU] two and a half years, at [predominately white institution] one and a half, but when we went to our 50th this past May, oh, it was just wonderful. People that I hadn't seen from [HBCU] in 50 years, I felt close to them, and they were so happy that I had come back even though I had... I didn't graduate from [HBCU], but I had been associated with [HBCU] over the years. I remember that I associated with [predominately white institution] for maybe - [predominately white institution], whatever they call themselves, maybe about 10 years, and after that we just drifted apart. It would have to be the Central</p>

		<p>Administration and particularly the President's office, so I would say at that time I had no interest in being a president because I was the opposite, I was the anti-President if you will, but I'm just saying that it was at that point that I began to have a (excuse me) and so those letters that concerned the Central Administration, and I would say that to some extent that interest continued in a parallel fashion for the rest of my years at [the University]</p>
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APPENDIX E

LIST OF DISSERTATIONS REVIEWED FOR STUDY

Dissertation Title	Year	Author and University
A study of the pathway to community college presidency for African American women: An oral history	2007	Penny Lee Logan, University of Texas at Austin
The leadership style of Dr. Mable Parker McLean: First female president of Barber-Scotia College and first female president of the Presidents Council of the United Negro College Fund	2007	Dianne B. Rhoades, Capella University
Voices of three African American female college presidents: A qualitative study of their journeys	2007	Maria Teresa Alves Williams , University of Nevada, Las Vegas
An African-centered critique of the personal leadership experience stories of selected women community college presidents of African descent	2007	Newman L. Miller, Morgan State University
Female African American presidents: Their stories and their retirements	2006	Earlene Johnson Roberts, Morgan State University
Creating, designing and implementing a national conference commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954 and documenting its significant role in advancing leadership opportunities for women and minorities in higher education administration	2006	Olivia G. White, Union Institute and University
African American women in higher education administration: Their professional position and the relationship of professional socialization and systematic barriers in their career path	2005	Cassandra D. Dixon, Capella University
A three state study of the experiences and perceptions of African American community college presidents	2005	Muriel Ann Brown Mickles, University of Virginia
A phenomenological study of the career accession of African American females into community college presidencies	2005	Kim A Critchlow, University of Phoenix
African American women administrators in higher education: Exploring the challenges and experiences at Louisiana public colleges and universities	2004	Germaine Monquenet Becks-Moody, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College
The underrepresentation of African	2004	Mary Kathryn Sanders, University

American female presidents at major colleges and universities		of Phoenix
African American female college and university presidents: Preparation, career paths, experiences and perceptions of barriers to the presidency	2003	Sandra Smith Jackson, Stephen F. Austin State University
The efficacy of using an integrated leadership model to assess the leadership styles of African-American women in the college presidency	2003	Mary Louise Grimes, University of South Carolina
An intersectional analysis of the life experiences of Mary Elizabeth Branch, the first black female senior college president	2003	Cassandra Paulette Evans-Heerring, Georgia State University
Leadership styles of African-American women presidents of colleges and universities: Lifting as we climb	2003	Renee Thurston Moore, University of the Incarnate Word
Career satisfaction and life choices of Black women president in traditionally	2003	Valerie Eugenia Brown-Kingelhofer, University of North Colorado
Leadership styles of executive female administrators in Tennessee community colleges	2003	Sherry Aaker, Tennessee State University
Leadership styles of African American female presidents at 4-year comprehensive institutions of higher education	2003	Donna Wilcots Dabney, Walden University
Who wants to be a college president? Forms of capital and the career aspirations of senior college administrators	2003	Paul David Umbach, University of Maryland
Personality attributes of emerging and established community college leaders	2003	William Lee Heiser, Morgan State University
Educational leaders as transformative intellectuals: Examining leadership discourses of African American women administrators in Historically Black colleges and universities	2002	Gaetane Jean-Marie, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Challenge, negotiation and power: The construction of identity and ethos by three African American university presidents	2002	Pamela Lyvonne Martin, The Ohio State University
A case study of the presidency of Dr. Yvonne Walker-Taylor: The first female president of Wilberforce University (1984-1988)	2001	Sharon A. Brooks, The University of Akron

Perceptions of women and minority community college executive leaders o the internet as a means of keeping community colleges competitive	2001	Gemma Adelaide Williams, Argosy University/Sarosata
A study of the characteristics of four-year college and university presidents who have served as senior Student Affairs officers	2001	Joanne Risacher, Ohio University
Socialization factors and African-American women college presidents	1999	Thelma Marie Bowles, Eastern Michigan University
The development of cognitive leadership frames among African American female community college	1999	Dorothy Echols Tobe, Columbia University Teachers College
The perception of race and gender on the leadership of four African American female community college presidents	1999	Dawn Della DeVeaux, George Mason University
The seventh daughters: African American women presidents of predominantly White four-year colleges and universities	1999	Barbara V. Bush, The Claremont Graduate University
Increasing the number of women of color for executive-level administration in higher education: A focus on strategies used at selected Historically Black Colleges and Universities	1999	Valerie Kizziah Thompson, University of Minnesota
The leadership styles of African-American female college presidents at four-year higher education institutions	1998	Runae Edwards-Wilson , State University of New York at Buffalo
Differences in the career lines of Black and White women college presidents	1997	Jacqueline Anne Kane, State University of New York
The involvement and participation of African-American women college presidents in out-of-class activities during their collegiate experience: A descriptive study	1997	Anna Edwards Beck, The American University
Preparing African-American women for the community college presidency: Implications for adult continuing education	1996	Florine Cato Robinson, Northern Illinois University
A descriptive study of the characteristics of Black women college presidents/chief executive officers	1994	Shirley M. Arnold, Georgia State University
Reconstructed and relationalized leadership: Toward a theory grounded in the experience of women community college presidents	1994	Barbara Witczak Hartnett, Northern Illinois University
Self-perceived administrative leadership	1994	Hamad Abdulkareem Ali,

styles of presidents, vice presidents, and deans in public community and junior colleges in Texas		University of North Texas
Black women chief administrative officers of colleges and universities: Motivators and life experiences that helped them achieve their positions	1993	Kathi Denore Harris, The University of Toledo
Presidential profiles in higher education: Perspectives from African American women	1993	Pamela Telia Barber Freeman, The University of Oklahoma
An examination of the role of mentoring in the attainment of the college presidency: A study of study of historically black college and university presidents	1993	Paula Erness Young, University of Cincinnati
A profile of black women college president and chief executive officers	1990	Judith Leslie Sanford-Harris, Boston College
Black women college presidents: Perceptions of their major job roles, problems expectations and experiences	1987	Pearline Chase, Harvard University