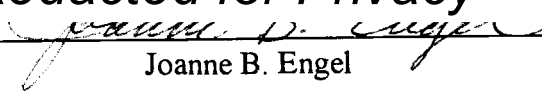AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Maurice McKinnon, for the degree of Doctor of Education in Education presented

on May 3, 2000. Title: Perceptions of an African American Woman Chief Executive

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Abstract approved: _____

Joanne B. Engel

Community colleges are in a strategic position to meet the growing demands

for educating a population that is in a dynamic state of change, a population that is

becoming more diverse with each passing year. A diverse population and other

critical issues have created a new challenge for community colleges. These

challenges require extraordinary educational leaders. Leaders of the 21st century

must be change agents with a moral purpose and commitment to educating the

citizenry.

This exploratory study contributes to our understanding of motivating and

constraining factors that influenced a Black woman leader in academia. By

examining the historical antecedents of slavery, racism, and sexism through the

lenses of the lived experiences of an African American woman chief executive

officer in a community college setting, aspiring young Black women will gain insight

into factors that may enhance their ability to achieve the CEO status.

Black feminist thought and critical social theory offered a framework for interpreting the perceptions of this phenomenal Black woman. The researcher employed the art of listening and the in-depth interview for data collection. These tools allowed the informant to use her own voice to tell her story. Relationships, the value of education, construction of a positive self-identity, leadership, and the ability to adapt to adversity/resiliency were the five major themes that emerged through thoughtful analysis. This woman embodies moral leadership, a leadership model that includes the ethics of caring and personal accountability. The findings illuminate a model of leadership for the 21st century.

Perceptions of an African American Woman Chief
Executive Officer in a Community
College Setting

by

Maurice McKinnon

A Thesis Submitted

to

Oregon State University

In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Doctor of Education

Presented May 3, 2000
Commencement June 2000

Doctor of Education thesis of <u>Maurice McKinnon</u>, presented on <u>May 3, 2000</u>

APPROVED:

___*Redacted for Privacy*_____

Major Professor, representing Education ✓

Redacted for Privacy

Director of School of Education

*Redacted for Privacy*_____

Dean of Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Maurice McKinnon, Author

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Without the consent and participation of the key informant, I would not have been able to complete this study. Therefore, I am deeply indebted to her for affording me this opportunity to search for the truth through her eyes as an African American woman who ascended to the position of CEO in a community college setting.

I will forever remember my cohort with whom I shared my thoughts during the earlier stages of this research. Their support was invaluable in my completing this long process. I will remember each and every one of them for the rest of my living experience.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Formal leaders in today's society are generated by a system that is operating under the old paradigm. Therefore, they are unlikely to have the conceptions and instincts necessary to bring about radical changes consistent with the new mindset. (Fullan, 1993, p. 39)

Implicit in what Fullan (1993) conceives as the new mindset is his belief that

the moral purpose of education is to make a difference in the lives of members

within the community. He contends that educational institutions must provide

students with critical thinking and other skills needed to function productively in

what has become a highly competitive multicultural global world, a world that is

remarkably complex and interconnected. This interconnection brings together a

variety of peoples with different worldviews in ways never before imagined.

With nearly 50% of the college student population attending 1,250

community colleges within the United States, these institutions are in a strategic

position to fulfill the lofty goal of providing an education in an environment where

30% of the student body are students of color (Almanac Issue, 1997). Although the

student population is diverse, this fact does not hold true for the faculties,

administrators, and staff within these institutions. African Americans,

women and other ethnic minorities have not had access to top-level leadership roles within America's community colleges.

Even though this phenomenon has become an important research topic within the past two years, the role of African American women in higher education is poorly understood. Furthermore, little is known about the factors that influence their ability to succeed in an environment with a documented history of racial and sexual barriers. It is within this context that the researcher explored the perceptions of an African American woman chief executive officer within a community college setting. This study attempted to explore factors impacting her personal and professional development, and their relationship to career choice and mobility.

This chapter provides the rationale and context for such a study. An overview of the significant factors influencing educational leadership and the status of African American women within community colleges, the purpose and significance of this study, along with the definition of terms, are presented. This chapter also includes the study's limitations.

The Problem Statement

Fullan (1993) contends that no single leader is capable of fully understanding the complexities of systems that are in a dynamic state of change. Therefore, it is the responsibility for every individual employed in a learning community to become a change agent with a moral purpose and commitment to continuous improvement in educating the masses. Sergiovanni (1992) suggests that we need an expanded

operational and theoretical foundation for leadership that will provide a balance and bases for authority. He refers to this as the moral dimension of leadership practice.

> Giving attention to the moral dimension may require us to reinvent the concept of leadership itself. For this to happen, many common, taken-for-granted notions about leadership will have to be challenged and changed. What now seems obvious may well turn out to be less important, and what now seems less obvious may turn out to be more important. (p. xiii)

Furthermore, Joseph (1994) asserts that the days of searching for leaders with the right credentials established by the elite are over. Leaders of the future will be ordinary people with extraordinary commitments, and their styles will be different. "Their accents will be different and so will their color and complexion" (Joseph, 1994, p. 5). While there may be agreement with Joseph's views on the kind of leadership needed, little is known about this special topic.

"The topic of leadership represents one of social science's greatest disappointments" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 2). Bennis and Nanus (cited in Sergiovanni, 1992) state:

> Literally thousands of empirical investigations of leaders have been conducted in the last seventy-five years alone, but no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from nonleaders, and, perhaps more important, what distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective leaders and effective organizations from ineffective organizations. Never have so many labored so long to say so little. (p. 2)

Although there are volumes of literature and research on leadership styles, levels of decision making, performance and organizational effectiveness, as well as other areas of leadership, little is known about this multifaceted topic. Concomitantly,

even less is known about women and individuals of color in the context of educational leadership.

Gardner (1990), a prominent author on leadership, devoted two pages to women and leadership, and literally nothing is said about African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and Asian Americans. While lamenting, "more serious are the barriers of prejudice and discrimination that still confront young women who have leadership potentialities" (p. 178), Gardner's book entitled *Leadership* is a quintessential demonstration of the very gate-keeping role that White men have played in maintaining top leadership positions in business, industry, and education. This point holds true for all major private and public institutions in the United States.

The dearth of significant literature reflects the historical fact that women and individuals of color have been excluded from top leadership positions in business and industry. This fact is true of education as well. Moore (1971) found that there were a disproportionate number of White males with the title of dean, vice-president, or president. In 1993 the typical president of American post-secondary education institutions was a 54-year-old White male (Ross, Green, & Henderson, 1993). Boggs (1988) asserts that former public school superintendents assumed top leadership positions within the community college system because they had the right temperament and professional experience that was a good fit with this emerging education institution that promised to provide the community with greater access to a college education. The first wave of community college presidents was the mirror

image of their four-year university counterparts in every respect including gender, ethnicity, education, and socioeconomic background (Brook & Avila, 1974).

Women and individuals of color began to assume more leadership roles in business, industry, government, and education during the 1980s. For example in California, by 1985 women held 10.6% of the presidencies in higher education. In 1995, they held 28%. At the same time individuals of color held 11% and 13.5% in 1985 and 1995 respectively. Whereas advances have been made in recent years, they remain inadequate. Inequities in employment, wages, and career advancement for women and individuals of color remain a reality. Furthermore, the notion of a "glass ceiling" has been posited to exist between middle-level and top-level jobs in institutions of higher education. In as much as the numbers of women in administrative positions have increased in the last two decades, most remain in entry or mid-level positions (Frances, 1981; Moore, 1983).

In a recent study on factors influencing the hiring of women as community college chief executive officers, Chaddock (1995) found that 28 women in a sample of 195 were chief executive officers in the Midwestern community colleges. Of the 28 women, 4 were African Americans. There were 9 African American men, with a total of 24 individuals of color. These data indicate a disproportionate number of White males serving in chief executive officer positions within community colleges. While White women have made gains, African Americans have experienced no major gains. Recent statistics show that 5% of all chief executive officers in

community colleges are African Americans. This percentage rate has fluctuated very little since 1985 (Phelps, Taber, & Smith, 1997).

Chaddock's study also found a significant difference in the salaries of men and women. Differences in salaries may be a reflection of the number of years that individuals in the study served as a chief executive officer. The mean number of years for the women was 3.7 with the men serving an average of 8.5 years.

If the "glass ceiling" has any merit at all, Black women are even more adversely impacted by the color of their skin. A 1991 study on Black women administrators of departments or higher levels at 65 community colleges in 19 states examined their perceptions of positive and negative factors that influenced their workplace performance and career advancement. Twenty-five of 38 of these people reported that their performance and 20 of 36 indicated that career advancement was negatively impacted by the color of their skin (Johnson, 1991).

As we enter into the 21st century, establishing a community college administrative staff that is diverse should be a top priority for the community college system. Achieving the goal of diversification could prove to be of benefit in dealing with complex issues related to human, finance, and physical capital. More specifically, their voices concerning technology, funding, enrollment problems, lack of accountability regarding the assessment of institutional effectiveness, governance, staff development, hiring, curriculum changes, teaching and learning, student success, as well as community relationships, and other commitments could add to the dialogue needed in problem-solving issues confronting organizations that are in a

constant state of change and oftentimes chaos. Furthermore, their voices could have a direct impact on policy development, establishing organizational culture and climate and other conditions that impact the new community of learners entering the doors of the colleges.

This study sought to increase our understanding of the experiences of African American women leaders in community colleges. This study also has implications for creating a diverse leadership pool needed to fulfil society's moral and ethical responsibility of educating individuals of different backgrounds with the capacity to live productive lives in a world that is constantly changing.

Critical reflection and analysis of the past history of chattel slavery, racial discrimination, Jim Crow segregation, and class and gender oppression must be examined as an integral part of gaining an understanding of issues related to the present status of African American women in American society. Understanding past antecedents and current demographics illuminates the need for a diverse leadership cadre. According to aforementioned statistics, African Americans are still underrepresented in top leadership positions as compared to White men and women within the community college system, and other higher education institutions.

In 1995, of all doctorates conferred, African Americans earned 3.7%, American Indians .3%, Asian 6.0%, Hispanics 2.2% respectively. Women earned 39% of all doctorates during the same year; White women earned 28% and African American women earned 2.1% respectively (Almanac Issue, 1997). Recent court decisions on affirmative action are expected to have a negative impact on the

numbers of individuals of color entering professional fields of study. The results of a decline in enrollment will have a direct negative impact on the candidate pool for teaching and leadership positions in education.

<div align="center">Statement of Purpose</div>

This study explored the perceptions of an African American woman chief executive officer in a community college setting. She was among the "first wave," or initial group, of Black women in the 1970s to begin integrating community college leadership. It is within this context that her experiences related to personal growth, professional development, and opportunities for career choice and mobility were examined. Identifying and gaining an understanding of a Black woman's perceptions and experiences related to her world view, opportunities, barriers, and personal characteristics that influenced her ability to ascend to a higher administrative position, within the community college setting, has the potential of providing insight, and inspiration for Black women aspiring to achieve the career goal of becoming a community college president.

Based upon the purpose and objectives of this study, the following research questions addressed the informant's perceptions and experiences:

1. What factors were perceived as positive influences or facilitators for personal growth, professional development, and opportunities for career mobility and choice?

2. What factors were perceived as negative influences or constraints for personal growth, professional development, and opportunities for career mobility and choice?

3. What is the relationship between perceived factors and opportunities that have an impact on the candidate pool for chief executive officers within the community college system?

Initially, this study planned to address three questions. However, during the data collection and analysis phase, it became evident that question #3 was beyond the scope of this study.

Definition of Terms

Influential factors--any perceived event, value, belief, worldview, characteristic, action or person with the capacity to facilitate or impede personal growth, professional development and opportunities for career choice and mobility.

Facilitator--any perceived event, value, belief, world view, characteristic, action or person having a positive influence in promoting professional development and opportunities for career choice and mobility.

Constraint--any perceived event, value, belief, world view, characteristic, action or person having a negative influence in impeding personal growth, professional development and opportunities for career choice and mobility.

Chief executive officer--any person with a title or position of president,

chancellor, superintendent/president, executive dean, or provost employed within

the community college system.

Career Mobility--movement to a higher position within the community

college system.

Background for the Study

During the past 10 years, numerous opportunities have existed to hire more

women and individuals of color into chief executive positions within the community

college setting. According to Chipps (1989), 1 of every 10 public community

colleges searched for a new president in 1985. Opportunities for achieving the

status of chief executive officer are expected to continue in years to come as a result

of expected retirements. With anticipated opportunities looming in the horizon, the

question becomes: is there a sufficient pool of women and individuals of color,

especially those of African descent, to fill some of these vacancies?

While there is speculation of a leadership vacuum, Joseph (1994) contends

that this is not the case, that we have been looking in the wrong places, and that

leaders can be found in every community. They are simply waiting to assume

leadership roles as opportunities arise. Data from 1995 show that of all doctorate

degrees granted in the United States, 1,667 were granted to African Americans.

Only 2.1% were granted to Black women and 28% to White women respectively

(Almanac Issue, 1997). In 1983, there were approximately 92,500 women faculty

teaching at the community college level and yet there were only 50 women

presidents among the more than 1,200 chief executive officers (AACJC, 1983).

Within 10 years they gained a significant increase in positions. In 1993, women

occupied 6% of all community college presidencies (AACC, 1994). When

undifferentiated statistics on women are used, minority women are overlooked or

misrepresented (Bernstein, 1985). In short, the number of African Americans

fulfilling this role has remained fairly constant at a rate of 4.5-5% since 1985.

Significance of the Study

Internal and external forces are shaping community college education.

According to Alfred et al. (1984), the forces of limited financing, economic change,

shifts in lifestyle and life expectations, and the demographics of the population are

primary factors that we must consider.

> At the same time, a call is emerging for new leaders with new ideas
> to adapt our institutions to changing external forces. Where are the
> new leaders to come from? What is the present status of untapped
> resources--women and minorities--in leadership positions in colleges?
> A focus on women may provide answers and insights for emerging
> leadership. (pp. 93-94)

This statement remains true today. As we enter the new millennium,

researchers must find answers to vexing questions related to leadership skills, styles,

competencies, and world views that are needed to meet the challenges of leadership.

Other factors that may have an influence on the diversification of the candidate pool

for leadership positions must be studied as well.

Furthermore, traditional leadership is too narrowly defined, and traditional

leaders are unprepared to meet the challenging demands of addressing the complex

social, economic, and educational issues confronting our society and rapidly

changing world. This study has the potential for increasing our understanding of the

experiences of African American women within community colleges. Individuals

aspiring for the presidency may gain insight into areas that may assist them in

competing for anticipated vacancies.

In spite of the prevailing definitions of what constitutes leadership, which

directly impacts those hired into leadership positions, some individuals of diverse

backgrounds are becoming leaders. Why is this the case? Once again, increasing

our understanding of how non-traditional individuals, who do not fit the White male

traditional characteristics, are becoming chief executive officers could play a

valuable role in cultivating and educating the new leadership of tomorrow.

Current conditions and climate demand new leadership. For example, more

women and individuals of color are attending college in comparison to the past.

African American enrollment has reached a new high. In 1995, African Americans

earned 164,930 degrees, including 47,142 associate degrees. African Americans

were granted the second largest number of degrees as compared to Whites in 1995

(U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Women comprised 50% of the student

population. According to the Center for Education Statistics, women are expected

to continue their current trend of attending colleges and universities. Noteworthy is

the fact that African American women earned a greater number of degrees across all

degree categories than Black men; however, Black men occupy a greater share of

this group of individuals with the title of chief executive officer in a community

college setting. Diversifying the teaching and administrative staff will play a vital role in providing successful role models for the diverse populations attending community colleges.

Desjardins (1989) raised a good question. With the increasing number of women attending colleges, why aren't more females applying for leadership positions in education institutions? While her study failed to answer this question, she found that more chief executive officers demonstrated characteristics of caring and connectedness in their moral orientation. Perhaps her findings are a reflection of the leadership style that is prevalent in education in general. Based upon the work of Gilligan (1982), Desjardins' study of 72 women and men presidents showed differences between women and men in their moral orientation. Overall, women were found to have an orientation that is grounded in connectedness and relationships, and men were more rational in their moral orientation. These data provide support for Gilligan's (1982) findings.

Community college presidents will need to collaborate, build consensus, connect and promote unity among diverse internal and external constituencies that may have divergent points of view and interests (AACJC, 1988). They will need to have a sense of purpose and vision, and a willingness to work more than the normal eight-hour day to fulfill the mission and goals of the colleges.

In addition to gaining an understanding of the perceptions of how educational, personal, and professional growth, as well as development impact career opportunities and choice, this study supports findings of previous studies in

this area. These findings may also prove to be useful in affecting the presidential pool and selection process of future community college presidents. Of the more than 1,250 community college chief executive officers, 61 are African Americans. Nineteen of the 61 African Americans are women. As stated previously, the African American population has remained fairly constant since 1985. There are currently 27 states in the United States without African American presidents (Phelps, Taber, & Smith, 1997). Community colleges are challenged with the need for developing and hiring diverse staff, faculty, and administrators. This task must be undertaken if we are to effectively address the needs of an increasing heterogeneous student body.

Creating a learning environment that is fully representative of the populations served is vital to the growth and development of the learner. "There is a natural tendency for people to learn and that learning will flourish if nourishing, encouraging environments are provided" (Cross, 1981, p. 228). Social learning theory posits that people learn from observing other people. Rotter's theory ascribes to the notion that human behavior takes place in a meaningful environment most of the time and is acquired through social interactions with other people (Rotter, June, & Phares, 1972). Observational learning and modeling provide great insight into social role acquisition and the nature of mentoring. Since adult learning takes place in a social context, leaders have a moral obligation to create a diverse environment that is caring and familiar, that is, the entire learning community in all of its layers and functions should reflect the populations served.

Study Overview

This study explored and analyzed the experiences and perceptions of an African American woman chief executive officer in a community college that is located in the western United States. The campus is one of three in a multi-campus district that provides comprehensive academic and professional technical programs preparing individuals to enter the workforce, or transfer to the university setting. The campus also has a center that provides community education and customized workforce training. The sample selection was purposeful. Permission to serve as the key informant and a signed informed consent were obtained prior to beginning the study. The study used the interview as the major tool for obtaining empirical data related to the informant's perceptions and experiences for her personal growth, professional development, and opportunities for career choice and mobility. Rationale for study methodology is presented in Chapter III.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study include the following:

1. Since this study is limited to one case, findings cannot be generalized. Results are confined to the context in which they were explored and researched. However, results could possibly stimulate further study utilizing traditional methodologies that are quantifiable, and from which generalizations regarding entire populations could be extrapolated.

2. This study was conducted by a single researcher, which limits the ability to check the initial findings. To enhance the trustworthiness of the results, triangulation was attempted through member check, interviews with her sons, and the literature review.

3. The researcher worked with the informant during the researcher's internship. Therefore, previous contact with the informant could have influenced interpretation and meaning of data.

4. Sharing the same ethnic and education background could possibly influence interpretation and meaning of data collected. However, it is well known and openly admitted that qualitative studies are value-laden and therefore contain a subjective character.

<div align="center">Organization of the Thesis</div>

Chapter II contains a review of the literature relevant to this study. It explores influential factors such as slavery, racial discrimination, and class and gender oppression within an economic, political, and cultural context. It also includes a section on leadership theory, and a summary of African American feminist epistemology and critical theory.

Chapter III provides the description and rationale for methodology and research design of this study.

Chapter IV presents the data and analysis as related to the purpose and questions guiding this study.

Chapter V highlights the conclusions and emerging themes of this study. It also includes a summary and discussion of the findings, and implications for institutions of higher education and recommendations for future study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides the historical and theoretical foundations for the exploration of emergent themes in this study. The historical examination of African American women and their complete prohibition from respectable and meaningful leadership positions in what is considered the most liberal of American institutions, academia, is a prominent issue in this qualitative study. The past record of racial segregation, based on false beliefs of white supremacy and black inferiority, cannot be underestimated as to its deleterious effects on its victims and as to its tenacity in present day American institutions.

> The concurrence of the country as a whole in the segregated school system evolved by the South, in pursuing its Lost Cause social myth, received the highest legal confirmation, in 1896. During that year, the Supreme Court of the United States, in Plessy v. Ferguson, laid down the "separate but equal" rule for the justification of the segregated school system in the southern states, despite the countervailing provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment. (Osterweis, 1973, p. 117)

A dispassionate examination of the causes and development of historical racial exclusion in higher education in the U.S. is critical to analyzing and evaluating the great movement toward integration, diversity and equal opportunity as applied to our multicultural society. Moreover, the historical facts related to slavery and racial discrimination up to the present time cannot be ignored in any contemporary study of African American women. This in-depth look at history primarily focuses on critical social theory historiography that illuminates the arduous path of the

informant and other contemporary Black women who comprised the first wave of professional and intellectuals to begin the integration and diversification of America's college leadership positions in the 1960s and early 1970s. Fundamental to critical social theory is the concept of social justice and in this vein analyzes backgrounds and histories of contexts characterized by injustice. This is not a new theoretical framework; rather it is grounded in moral leadership, claims resiliency as its close friend, and is the heart and soul of a flourishing Black feminist epistemology. Moreover, Black feminist thought has befriended science and objectivity without blushing in the presence of passion and humanism.

A second major emerging theme is leadership theory and paradigms in the context of addressing obstacles or barriers related to the advancement of women and other oppressed groups. Traditional leadership paradigms related to the dominant ideologies can be seen in opposition to the historical march toward diversity and equal opportunity. Moral leadership's role in overcoming this retrograde obstacle is a significant issue in the findings of this study.

Lastly, resiliency stems from assertive moral leadership in the struggle to overcome historical exclusion and to create a new and more enlightened leadership. African American women, facing the double-edge sword of gender and class discrimination and oppression, are typically models of resiliency. As such, major concepts of African American feminist thought and critical theory are presented as one framework for examining significant findings in this study. Black researchers attribute the paucity of scholarly studies on Black women to the worldview and

philosophical thinking of a moribund stereotype, but a tenacious and combative

stereotype nevertheless.

> Black feminists criticize the value of imaging a racially and culturally
> homogeneous "woman"--one who is really a bourgeois, White,
> western woman as the agent of a more progressive history and
> culture. They insist that "knowers" are racially and culturally
> specific, not just of specific genders as many White women have
> implied. (Harding, 1987, p. 97)

This literature review synthesizes major studies and scholarly works dealing

with the historical backdrop of racial exclusion and examines literature devoted to

studying African American women in leadership roles and positions of power inside

and outside the community college system. The fascinating ascension of Black

women as leaders with voices of compassion and stories of resiliency is role model

material for those aspiring to the presidency and important positions of decision-

making.

<div align="center">

Slavery in America and the Development
of Race Ideology

</div>

Slavery in America was a historical anachronism that developed as a source

of colonialist accumulation and profiteering centuries after the disappearance of

slavery of antiquity (DuBois, 1935; Smedley, 1993; Williams, 1961). The strange

appearance of chattel slavery that evolved into racial slavery of Africans was linked

to the power of property and the capitalist sanctification of wealth accumulation.

The evolution of racial slavery was economically expedient and grew as a

contradiction to espoused principles of the American Revolution's political

democracy. This contradiction eventually exploded into civil war, but race ideology proved to be tenacious and politically pragmatic. It was not until the "second reconstruction" of the 1950s and 1960s that racial discrimination and violent repression against the Black people in the U.S. were challenged and the "second-class citizens" began demonstrating their true strengths and intelligence.

This historical overview will analyze literature dealing with these issues: English ideology of race; the decline into slavery in America; late eighteenth-century crystallization and entrenchment of racial worldview; antislavery and the end of slavery in the U.S.; science and white supremacy in the twentieth century; and lastly, the defeat of the political, social, and cultural constructs of race.

<div style="text-align:center">

English Race Ideology and the Idea
of the "Savage"

</div>

The English political and economic system was responsible for the enslavement of Africans in America. The Puritans, Anglicans, and other Englishmen brought with them to the New World values that elevated property rights to a divinely sanctioned position, that resulted in the colonization of Ireland and the east coast of America, that justified the purchase and exploitation of slaves. The right to unfettered wealth accumulation became superior to all other rights. John Locke crystallized the bourgeois thinking of seventeenth century English society when he made a positive value out of unequal appropriation of most of the wealth by a few individuals, reasoning that such accumulation was a natural right. And as such civil society must be organized to protect that most sacred right of property and made it

the centerpiece of the social contract. Political liberty became directly associated with the rights of merchant and farming property and was directed against the arbitrary and capricious abuses of the aristocracy and feudal monarchies. The notion of liberty and democracy was reserved for the more advanced economic systems, against the more backward peoples and systems. Locke (cited in Ebenstein, 1991) contended:

> God gave the world to men in common, but since he gave it to them for their benefit and the greatest conveniences of life they were capable to draw from it, it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational and labour was to be his title to it; not to the fancy or covetousness of the quarrelsome and contentious. (p. 442)

On the issue of slavery, Locke maintained in his "Two Treatises of Government" that enslavement was preferred over death.

> Indeed, having by his fault forfeited his own life by some act that deserved death, he to whom has forfeited it may, when he has him in his power, delay to take it, and make use of him to his own service; and he does him no injury by it. (p. 440)

MacPherson (1962) and Macfarlane (1978) claim that John Locke's theories represented the rising middle classes in England, which had become the center of a new oceanic world, where innovations and discoveries in science, medicine, navigation, philosophy, economics and politics made her the most creative of all modern nation-states. Government's role is to protect men in the exercise of their property rights and subsequent accumulation, even to the extent of wars of brutal conquest, as occurred in Ireland and the New World. Not only did Locke's theories help propel the successful Glorious Revolution of the Whigs in 1688, but he also

helped direct colonial policy for the new government. He helped write the Fundamental Constitutions of the Carolinas, which guaranteed religious freedom but codified African slavery as a form of rightful property.

Furthermore, Thomas Jefferson, as a disciple of the Enlightenment and John Locke, believed that an indelible color line had been drawn by nature between the two races and this line determined the rights and liberties to which they were entitled in America. The economic profiteering from slavery, not to mention the social control of a racial ordering, drove Jefferson to defend slavery and the privileges of the White planters (Brodie, 1974).

Seventeenth century English ethnocentrism, which was summed up by Locke's view that the "rational and industrious" have a right to claim other people's land and to subject the "guilty" to slavery, must be traced through its evolution: the colonization of Ireland, the settlement and seizure of native lands in America, and the slave trade and African slavery in the American colonies. The contradiction between political democracy and slavery is striking. The justification for human slavery is inextricably linked to the notion that England had a superior, more democratic political system, and that rational liberalism allowed religious toleration and competition among the propertied minority, and that exploitation and injustice toward the less developed people was only natural. Ultimately, this philosophical underpinning served the long-term interests of the world market and the spread of Christianity.

Leonard Liggio (1976) raised a central question: How is it possible to explain the fact that the English developed the most racist attitudes toward the native peoples wherever they expanded or established overseas colonies? In his study, Ireland provides the backdrop for understanding English great nation chauvinism and the idea of the "savage."

The first invasion and attempt to settle Ireland occurred under Henry II in 1169 and 1171, following the Norman invasion of England. The Anglo-Norman barons who were given title to Irish lands were unable to bring all of Ireland under their control. In fact the "Old English" adopted many Irish customs and intermarried and were seen as a new enemy. The Statutes of Kilkenny were enacted to forbid Englishmen to wear Irish dress, to speak the language, or to intermarry or trade. The objectives of the English crown were to confiscate the lands, establish an agrarian economy to supply English needs, and to subdue and exploit the independent-minded pastorialists of Ireland (Liggio, 1976).

Pastoralism was sustained in Ireland by clans who shared commonly held land. These Irish people developed a lifestyle requiring the human community to adjust itself to the needs of the herd. Because they were a herding people, cattle were the most valued form of wealth and also provided the basis of exchange within and outside of the clan structure. No centralized system of governance existed then in Ireland. Additionally the Irish pastorialists loved their freedom of movement and were disdainful of the sedentary farmer.

At the time Columbus was building settlements and forts in the so-called New World, Henry VII in 1494 embarked on a new policy of forced colonization. Defensive forts and a standing army were established in the fertile areas, and the Irish refused to submit to English rule. Irish resistance infuriated the colonialists, who now frequently described the Irish as heathens who knew neither God nor decent manners and who lived with their wives and children in filth along with their animals. It was from this seminal belief that the Irish were savages that the English developed the view that the Irish were better off as slaves of the cultured aristocratic English. It was better than their backward way of life without culture. This became a dominant European credo applied in the New World toward Indians and Africans (O'Farrell, 1971).

The Irish were forcibly removed from the best lands in the Nine Years' War and during Cromwell's barbarous extermination campaign. The Irish prisoners were shipped to the West Indies sugar plantations as slaves and those who remained in Ireland became indentured servants and cheap labor for the sons of the English gentry. Now the English jural system dealing with rights in property provided the downtrodden Irish with an introduction to enlightened education and justice.

Myers (1983) explains that the final victory over "the O'Neill" in 1603 marked the passing of Gaelic civilization and the beginning of England's first meticulously planned effort to culturally subjugate an alien people, paved the way for English plans to create a colonial outpost along plantation lines. The idea of the "savage" became part of the English ideology that helped justify the subsequent

African slave trade, which became centered in the English ports and business communities, as well as the colonial conquests in the New World, and the Middle East, India, Burma, South Asia, China, and Africa. It was not until the middle periods of the Enlightenment, in large part due to the French Revolution, that the racist notion of the savage is challenged in Europe.

<div align="center">Decline into Slavery</div>

William (1961), Bennett (1969), Fox-Genovese and Genovese (1983), and Franklin and Moss (1994) assert that slavery and the slave trade were a product of merchant capitalist development in Europe, especially in England.

> Europeans fought each other for the privilege of managing the trade. Portugal, who ran the first leg, was ousted by Holland who in turn surrendered supremacy on the African coast to France and England. Portugal, one trader said, "served for setting dogs to spring the game." Once the game was sprung, all Europe rushed to the playing field. Spain, barred from Africa by a papal bull which gave her most of the New World, made her money by giving other powers a contract to supply her colonies with slaves. This contract, the infamous Asiento, was the national status symbol of that day: it symbolized commercial and political supremacy. In the eighteenth century, when England held the Asiento, the slave trade was the basis of European commerce, the cause of most of her wars and the prize politicians competed for. (Bennett, 1969, p. 39)

English and American merchants became rich as the result of the transatlantic slave trade. On the eve of the American revolution, it formed the very basis of the economic life of New England; about it revolved, and on it depended, most of her other industries. The vast sugar, molasses and rum trade, shipbuilding, the distilleries, a great many of her fisheries, the employment of artisans and seamen,

even agriculture--all were dependent upon the slave traffic (Fox-Genovese & Genovese, 1983).

In England, Liverpool developed as a great slave-trading center. Williams (1961), in *Capitalism and Slavery*, relates that several of the principal streets of Liverpool had been marked out by chains and the walls of the houses cemented by the blood of the African slaves. In 1795, Liverpool controlled almost half of the whole European slave trade. One street was nicknamed "Negro Row." The red brick Customs House was blazoned with the heads of Africans. There is a famous story told about a drunken actor in the town who was hissed by an audience for declaring with offended majesty, "I have not come here to be insulted by a set of wretches, every brick in whose infernal town is cemented with an African's blood" (p. 63).

Some historians argue that the English ideology of race, as it was earlier applied in the conquest of the Irish and the Indians of North America, was readily applied to the Africans. Degler (1960) and Jordan (1968) raised the question of causal priorities and suggest that discrimination against Africans led directly to the racial slavery of colonial America. But Oscar and Mary Handlin (1972) argue that the first Africans were not slaves and that slavery had no actual meaning in law; at most, it was a popular description of a low form of labor. Africans were introduced into a society where bonded labor, or indentured servitude, sometimes was a lifelong proposition. Morgan (1975) showed that Black men engaged in trade and other

commercial activities and business dealings equally with Whites and experienced the same degree of civil rights in legal proceedings in the early colonial period.

Nash (1982) analyzed the legal transformation of Africans into chattel slaves. In rapid succession Blacks lost their right to testify before a court, to engage in any kind of commercial activity, either as buyer or seller. They were not allowed to hold property, to participate in the political process, to congregate in public places with more than two or three of their fellows, to travel without permission, and to engage in legal marriage or parenthood. Some colonial legislatures even prohibited the right to education and religion, for they thought these might encourage the germ of freedom in slaves. From human status, slaves descended to property status. Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, and South Carolina prepared severe penalties for interracial marriage and established servitude for life by 1690. By 1723 the right to vote was denied in the southern colonies for all Africans, whether free or slave.

English colonists gradually yet inextricably developed the basis for the racial worldview, advancing from the enslavement and deportation of the Irish to the West Indies, the removal and slaughter of the Indians after the initial period of discovery and coexistence, and the full-scale enslavement of Africans. The economics had been completely connected to the politics. Moreover, the American Revolution failed on the question of slavery.

As Tocqueville (1945) so prophetically put it:

If ever America undergoes great revolutions, they will be brought about by the presence of the black race on the soil of the United States; that is to say, they will owe their origin, not to the equality, but to the inequality of condition. (p. 2:270)

After the Asiento treaty of 1713 that favored British slave-traders, the African population grew in the 13 colonies from 50,000 in 1710 to 462,000 in 1770. When the colonies became independent, the foreign slave trade was soon made illegal. However, the illegal trade was expanded, new territories acquired, and natural increases enlarged the Black population to more than a million at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first slave codes resembled labor codes based on a feudal plantation system, where the laborers were primarily Black and held for life, and above them were the free White artisans, and on top was the master class. This system, as exemplified in the Virginia plantations, could be simultaneously paternalistic and brutal, depending on how the master wielded his enormous power over his retainers. Out of this older type of slavery in the northern part of the south evolved a new plantation system that produced a staple product on a large and ever westward moving scale. Between the master and laborer were the overseer and the drivers. The slaves were whipped and driven to a mechanical task system. Absentee land-lordship was common in this new cotton kingdom, where in the early nineteenth century nine-tenths of the slaves were driven mercilessly (DuBois, 1915, pp. 184-192).

It seemed that black slavery was doomed after the revolutionary war. A series of laws emancipated slaves in the North from 1779-1804 and slavery was excluded from the Northwest Territory in 1787. Although segregated, Black churches were linked to White ones and beneficial and insurance societies spread in the North. Black soldiers participated in the War of 1812 in large numbers, as they

did in the revolution against Britain. A number of respected Black thinkers

including Benjamin Banneker, John Chavis, and Phyllis Wheatley emerged. They

were active in the North and South.

But around the turn of the century, a number of remarkable inventions

revolutionized the methods of making cloth. Industrial producers in Europe and in

the northern industrial centers needed a cheaper and larger supply of fiber for

weaving. It was found in the cotton plant in the South, and the invention of the

cotton gin removed the last obstacle. Cotton production increased from 650,000

bales in 1820 to 2,500,000 in 1850 to 4,000,000 bales in 1860. The economic

foundation of the new slavery had been established, and the slave-owning

establishment defended it as an economic system that was organic and natural (pp.

194-201).

According to Bracey, Meier, and Rudwich (1971) slave codes were made

harsher and the enforcement of the slave trade laws became feeble, almost

nonexistent. The southern and northern politicians in Congress clamored for

legalizing the African slave trade as a regular part of secessionist threats. The status

of free Blacks deteriorated, legislation grew more restrictive and the status became

increasingly similar to that of the Black slave. Free Blacks had to carry a certificate

of freedom on his or her person otherwise he or she could be claimed a slave. They

could not serve on juries nor give testimony against Whites. They were liable to

sustain more severe punishment than that imposed on White men if convicted of a

crime. The right to assembly was proscribed. Evening activities were subject to

curfew and in some areas meetings were totally prohibited. Between 1807-1837 five northern states including New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, and Rhode Island had enacted disenfranchisement provisions.

Slave revolts increased and with the Nat Turner insurrection in 1831 extreme measures were taken in the South to silence the slaves. Memories of the successful slave rebellion in Haiti hung over the heads of the southern slaveholders like a dark and foreboding cloud.

The revolt of the slaves continued, not so much by fighting, but by running away. Free Blacks agitated as leaders of the abolitionist movement, commensurate with the agitation of the slave owners for more land and power. A great collision took place, a civil war that at first attempted to segregate slavery away from the conflict. But the Emancipation Proclamation was necessitated by the need to not only paralyze southern industry but also for manpower in the prosecution of the war.

Reconstruction in the South

Abraham Lincoln, who was not an abolitionist when he was elected in 1860, rationalized the Emancipation Proclamation from a war strategy perspective:

> The slightest knowledge of arithmetic will prove to any man that the rebel armies cannot be destroyed with Democratic strategy. It would sacrifice all of the White men of the North to do it. There are now in the service of the United States near two hundred thousand able-bodied colored men, most of them under arms, defending and acquiring Union territory . . . Abandon all the posts now garrisoned by black men; take two hundred thousand men from our side and put them in the battlefield or cornfield against us, and we could be

compelled to abandon the war in three weeks. (Wilson cited in DuBois, 1915, p. 204)

After the war, a virtual reign of terror in the South was unleashed against the freedmen. The Radical Republicans, led by Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens, came to the aid of the freedmen and launched an experiment in political democracy in the South known as Reconstruction. The Democratic Party in the South, led by ex-confederates pardoned by President Johnson, attacked the freedmen with a new series of black codes and with mob violence as well as terrorist shootings and arson. Congress took over Reconstruction from the discredited President and from 1867-1871 the political landscape was changed. New governments led by White and Black Republicans instituted democratic rule, established free public schools, and set in motion new social legislation that was entirely new in the white supremacist South. These reconstructed states upheld the Bill of Rights and the Civil War amendments and they annulled the bonds of the Confederate states. The ballot box was opened to the freedmen who immediately showed a spirited enthusiasm for democracy; and the ballot box and the jury box were opened to thousands of White men who had been debarred by a lack of earthly possessions. Home rule was introduced to the South. They abolished the whipping post, the branding iron, the stocks, and other forms of sadistic punishment. Huge sums were appropriated for public works and schools. The main body of Reconstruction legislation remained in place, even after the Democratic Party created the "solid South" by force arms and deception. The Reconstruction governments would have never allowed the election of 1876 to happen, the infamous election of hidden polling places, of murdered

Republicans, of armed takeovers of government buildings, the omnipresent cannons

of the Democratic Party trained on the voting public (DuBois, 1935; Foner, 1988;

Franklin, 1961, 1994).

Lerone Bennett, Jr. (1969) captured a poignant and revealing moment in

Reconstruction history:

> There were tears too in South Carolina. When officials tried to
> reclaim land that had been distributed with temporary titles, the
> Negroes picked up stones and drove them away. General O. O.
> Howard the head of the Freedmen's Bureau, went to South Carolina
> to explain the situation. The land had been given in good faith, but
> President Johnson had pardoned the owners and the land was to be
> returned to them. General Howard called a large assembly and stood
> on the platform looking out into the sea of black faces. He tried to
> say it, but the words wouldn't come. How does one tell a people that
> they have been taken again? To cover his confusion and shame,
> General Howard asked the people to sing him a song. One old
> woman on the edge of the crowd was up to the occasion. She
> opened her mouth and out came words tinged with insufferable
> sadness. "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen." Howard, a gentle,
> one-armed humanitarian, broke down and wept . . . There were tears,
> there were rivers of tears, but there was little land and no mules.
> Without land, without tools, without capital or access to credit
> facilities, the freedmen drifted into a form of peonage: the
> sharecropping system. (pp. 189-190)

When President Grant refused to intervene to stop the violence and when the

Hayes-Tilden agreement was brokered, Reconstruction came to an ignominious end

when the federal army was withdrawn from the South. There were no 40 acres and

a mule; Congress failed to carry out land reform in the South. The Republican Party

withdrew from the struggle for Black equality and political democracy; instead

Lincoln's party embraced big business and the emerging "Gilded Age" on America's

hundredth anniversary (Foner, 1988).

All efforts to construct political democracy in states such as Louisiana came to a halt when the Federal troops were withdrawn and the state Republican regime became a casualty of so-called national reconciliation. Racist attacks against Black voters became common place throughout the South. "Separate but equal" was fully reestablished by law by 1890. The Jim Crow codes of the 1890s were far reaching. The 1880s produced a segregation system much more rigid and harsh than any thing that had existed before that time. Segregation was used to control urban Blacks. Separation in jails and hospitals was universal. They were excluded from public parks and burial grounds, hotels and restaurants. They had separate street cars as well. While this was not the case in the North, custom enforced segregation in public facilities (Franklin, 1994; Woodward, 1966).

Blacks were also impacted by the great influx of Whites into the U.S. The immigration of five million Whites shortly before the Civil War posed an alarming threat to their meager employment opportunities. Free Black workers employed as longshoremen, railroad workers, hodcarriers, waiters, barbers, porters and bootblacks were displaced by Irish workers. Black women began losing positions as maids, cooks, and washer women.

Oppressive Inequality Faced by Black Women

Black slave women earned the respect of their children and husbands, and played a central leadership role in the slave community. As teachers and organizers, and as survivors of one of the most oppressive systems known in human history, one

that combined paternalism and brutish savagery, Black women's personalities enveloped pride, strength, and resiliency in spite of the sexual depredations and humiliations suffered at the hands of their White oppressors. This experience gave Black women a sense of their critical role and function in the survival of their ethnic group and of their families. Over time they developed an unrelenting confidence in their own self-worth. While being reduced, on one level to depersonalized objects of oppression during slavery, these women refused to surrender neither their dignity nor hope of freedom (Blassingame, 1972; Lerner, 1973; Rodgers-Rose, 1980).

During Reconstruction, Black women played an energetic and spirited role in defending political democracy; this is why at Memphis, New Orleans, Hamburg, and other scenes of political violence against freedmen and their Republican allies, Black women fought and died in defense of their new found freedom. And in the waning years of Reconstruction, Black women stood up against the violent racism of the Democratic Party and the tendency to capitulate to the onslaught of white supremacy in the South.

> Negro Republicans counterattacked. Negro women refused to marry, talk or cohabit with Negro men who weakened and deserted the Republican party. Landladies evicted Negro Democrats. Enraged women pulled the clothes off "Uncle Toms" who wore the distinctive red shirts of the Democratic party. Wives showed their husbands to the door . . . (Bennett, 1961, pp. 216-217)

In the recent period, certainly in the last two decades, African American women scholars have developed an epistemology that focuses on the lives, accomplishments, struggles, and victories of Black women. The issues of class and labor, of gender and race, are essential elements in understanding the long struggle

of women of African descent to achieve some semblance of respect as leaders in American society.

Etter-Lewis (1993), Jewell (1993), and Jones (1985) provide insight into how Black women were defined by family and work. From backbreaking work, in the lowest rungs of an apartheid-like caste system, deprived of political liberty, and eschewed by proper society, sprang a Black woman leader and educator in the modern period. To fully appreciate this seminal and irreversible development, Jones (1985) gives the historical backdrop.

Work played the central role in defining the Black woman's experience in America. From the early system of concubinage, as slave to the omnipotent master, the woman slave began her journey in the slave economy. She advanced to the cotton economy, after Reconstruction as sharecropper, and because of the intense race, gender, and class oppression in the South, journeyed North in large numbers by 1900, where the most common occupation was a domestic worker. Jones pointed out the contradiction between this menial labor and the position of the Black woman in the family:

> Beginning in the slave era, the family obligations of wives and
> mothers overlapped in the area of community welfare, as their desire
> to nurture their own kin expanded out of the private realm and into
> public activities that advanced the interests of Black people as a
> group. In contrast to this type of work, which earned the Black
> women the respect of their own people, participation in the paid
> labor force reinforced their subordinate status as women, as Blacks
> within American society. (p. 3)

It is important to analyze the political climate at the turn of the century. The Supreme Court had ruled the Civil rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional in 1883,

thereby providing an important stimulus to the enactment of segregation statutes throughout the country. These statutes were comprehensive and generally accepted primarily because they received their inspiration from a persistent preaching of the doctrine of black inferiority. Opposition to the creed of white supremacy was bludgeoned and denounced by every mainstream organ of society. In the South, the first statutes involved segregation on public carriers and by the end of the century "separate but equal" was the law of the land. Legal segregation was enforced at work, play and home. Workers could not drink from the same place, or even use the same lavatory. There were separate parks, zoos, beaches, fishing and boating facilities, including cemeteries. Separate but equal permeated every aspect of life in America. Two worlds were created, entirely unequal yet completely oppressive for the poor Black worker and farmer. A southern White minister remarked that it:

> made our eating and drinking, our buying and selling, our labor and
> housing, our rents, our railroads, our orphanages and prisons, our
> recreations, our very institutions of religion, a problem of race as
> well as a problem of maintenance. (Franklin, 1969, p. 12)

The segregation and oppression of the African American people resulted in a national tragedy, but it also resulted in huge profits for the rich monopolies and planters. The Black people were a major source of cheap labor. This impacted White labor because segregation became a centrifugal force dividing and cheapening all working people and their labor. The rapid development of segregation up to the time of the Plessy decision was an outgrowth of a people's failure to stand up for political democracy and to reject White chauvinism and supremacy (Cell, 1985; Franklin, 1969; Smedley, 1993; Smith, 1999; Woodward, 1966).

Overcoming the Constructs of Race in
the Twentieth Century

Before directly investigating the literature of the last three decades dealing with the advance of Black women in American society in general and in academia specifically, it is necessary to review the discrediting of the constructs of race and racial exclusion in the fields of science and politics. It is instructive to see how this prepared the pathways for formerly excluded people and how women, such as the subject of this qualitative study, advanced in a changed society.

To justify racial discrimination and oppression, the study of human biology focused on racial differences and justified the perceived inferiority of the Black people and substantiated the superiority of the Anglo-Saxons, or White race. In the nineteenth century a so-called race science, which in effect is now nearly universally regarded as an unconscionable waste of scientific energy and money, developed in order to respond to the rise of abolitionism and the possibility of dramatic social change in the mid-nineteenth century. Morton published his quantitative studies on the differences in human crania and concluded that Whites were biologically distinct and superior but also that the two races were distinct species, with discrete development and biologically determined intelligence according to a complex series of cranial measurements. He became known as the founder of the science of craniometry. Additionally, Morton is known as the creator of the first school of American anthropology, which trained generations of the foremost thinkers in this field (Fredrickson, 1971; Stanton, 1960).

Although Morton diverged from the southern White Baptist interpretation of man's "fall from grace" and his subsequent degeneration, he fueled the fire of racism with his "proof" of low cranial capacity and his definition of species as "primordial organic form" (Stanton, 1960). Upon his death in 1851, one biographical memoir stated, "We can only say that we of the South should consider him as our benefactor, for aiding most materially in giving to the Negro his true position as an inferior race" (Stocking, 1968, p. 144).

The ideas of Morton and his colleague Louis Agassiz helped ground the political argument that the Black slave was naturally suited for the cotton fields and that he was incapable of free thinking and independent political judgement. Agassiz's chapter in the book *Types of Mankind* identified eight primary human types that occupied specific zoological provinces, which connected to primordial qualities of difference, wherein the Black and White races were so morphologically and physiologically distinct as to constitute separate species. The entire academic world in America accepted the basic premises of this race ideology. "Every notable teacher of natural history in the United States for the second half of the nineteenth century was either a pupil of Agassiz or of one of his student" (Luric, 1954, p. 227). Haller (1971) summarizes the "scientific" race ideology of this era: "Almost the whole of scientific thought in both America and Europe in the decades before Darwin accepted race inferiority, irrespective of whether the races sprang from a single original pair or were created separately" (p. 77).

This ideology laid the groundwork for the racial exclusion and segregation that reared its ugly head in the twentieth century, in terms of court decisions, laws, violent oppression, hiring practices, city ordinances, and the enforcement practices of the state apparatus. A racial obsession marked American thought through the first half of the twentieth century; it took a world war and the atrocities of Nazi Germany to shake the consciousness of the people. Racist ideology and cultural beliefs provided the rationalization and justification for wars of conquest, and it encouraged aggressive imperial states to pursue commercial ambitions without serious and troubling opposition. Hitler took the notion of a natural aristocracy of races to an extreme imperialistic level, where the Aryans were destined to rule the world and eliminate the inferior races.

In America, Franz Boas led a movement in physical anthropology to disprove and deconstruct the foundations of white supremacy, to divorce the physical features of "races" from learned behavior, such as language and culture (Gould, 1981). He asserted that races are not stable and immutable and in fact change on the basis of environmental factors. Boas challenged official science to prove that any race is incapable of participating in any culture or even in creating it (Haller, 1963; Hoover, 1976).

Benedict (1947) contributed to the new liberal and progressive doctrines on race by publishing *Race: Science and Politics*. In this publication she argues that racism represented a step backward for mankind and that the future of man

depended on its defeat. Benedict marshaled the new scientific thinking in elaborating a penetrating criticism of the race doctrine.

To combat this new liberal trend in science and as part of the general reaction to increasing demands for equality in American society, racial differences in intelligence through IQ testing were accentuated. And a persistent "eugenics" movement linked to dubious genetic conclusions about defective genes actively promoted imagined hereditary traits as a new justification for a neo-race ideology (Chase, 1980; Ludmerer, 1969).

However, Hulse (1962) promoted the dominant contemporary theory that each breeding population undergoes adaptation of environmental factors, such as gene drift, mutations, and differential fertility that bring about changes in the gene pool. While being dynamic in its approach to the development of human groups, his analysis showed how people evolved and were modified over long periods of time, that human groups were necessarily not a static and fixed phenomenon.

William Provine (1973), in an article in Science magazine, offered this insight into the connection between politics and scientific research and analysis:

> It is necessary and natural that changing social attitudes will influence
> an area of biology where little is known and the conclusions are
> possibly socially explosive. The real danger is not that biology
> changes with society, but that the public expects biology to provide
> the objective truth apart from social influences. Geneticists and the
> public should realize that the science of genetics is often closely
> intertwined with social attitudes and political consideration. (p. 796)

In the 1970s a diverse group of scientists known as the "lumpers" presented a frontal assault on the assumptions of American race science and challenged the use

of race as a means to classify people and to discriminate against them on that basis. They preferred the use of the term "ethnic group." They criticized the need for a taxonomic classification for subunits of the human species and objected to these assumptions: (a) certain subunits were naturally inferior, such as "Negroes" in America; (b) the taxonomy was always ambiguous and therefore anti-science; (c) no consensus ever existed and was ever considered; (d) the criteria for racial groups were nebulous and inconsistent; and (e) these classifications became arbitrary and non-biological characteristics such as language, religion, and nationality were applied in the "analyses" of various ethnic groups. The effort to establish racial classifications for all human populations distorts the reality of biological variation so that it is useless for the study of human evolution. These classifications tell us nothing about how such variations originated. The compartmentalization of races, along with a historical grasp of the use of race science in American history, prevents any understanding of existing variability and the development of physical and mental features. Race concept in biology is static, suited to rigid mechanical thinking and opposed to the modern understanding of the dynamics of genetic processes or the evolutionary significance of human diversity (Brues, 1977; Lieberman, 1968).

In analyzing and reviewing the literature on racial exclusion in the United States and its impact on African American women, several themes emerged. The nearly magnanimous acquiescence of official science, academia, and the political establishment on the issue of providing validation for white supremacy, the acceptance of racial segregation, and violence against the Black population, is

astonishing. In a classic work of social psychology, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, Dollard (1957) used qualitative research methods to get at the heart of the irrational personality of racial segregation and racial caste and culture. Particularly enlightening in his interviews in a small southern town is his analysis of White caste aggression against the Black citizens and the way the majority of Whites were coerced into supporting racism, including lynch mob attacks. The whole of society was mobilized by the local power brokers to march in line or be ostracized or worse. The pulpit, the school, the police, the court, and the workplace became centers of indoctrination and mind control, headquarters of acquiescence and hatred. Fear prowled this town like the grim reaper waiting for the next caste member, be they White or Black, to get out of line.

In the struggle to right the wrongs of the past, to enter society and academia as equals and as enlightened members of society, Black women scholars have led the way in research, literature, and practical experience. They have produced an impressive array of critical social theory that is reflected in Black feminist thought. Black women scholars argue that they must tell their own story because they have been neglected historically by White men and women and Black male researchers. What can be said with certainty is that by the 1970s the political situation had been created whereby the Black people had increasing access to education and job opportunities, which resulted from their struggle for civil rights. Open and virulent racism was becoming unacceptable throughout American society. And it was

becoming more difficult to discriminate openly against people of color, a result of the mass movements against racial and gender inequality.

Black Feminist Epistemology

The informant in this study was among the first wave of African American women to begin the process of integrating higher education in the U.S. It is this group of women who prepared the way for future generations of increasingly diverse faculty and administrations in the college setting. It is noteworthy that the informant grew and developed in a nurturing, loving, and hardworking family environment; and juxtaposed to this source of strength was a racist and sexist society determined to keep her excluded and marginalized. In this determined struggle to break the bonds of the past emerged resiliency and a moral leadership as enduring qualities. In their own voices, a generation of Black women intellectuals began to sum up the experience of this first wave as a way to understand their journey and prepare future generations.

Traditional scholarship has been dominated by White men, who represented the status quo and who acquiesced in the exclusion and discrimination prevalent throughout American society. Their interests dominated the themes, paradigms, and epistemologies of scholarly work throughout academia. In reaction to the one-sidedness and distortions of this "taken-for-granted" scholarship emerged Black feminist thought that reflected a distinctive African American woman's standpoint and that did so by using alternative methods of producing and validating knowledge.

As a subordinated group that has experienced the oppression of the dominant culture in terms of race, sex, and class, Black women began to ask "why" in assessing the status quo and started using their own standards to arrive at a theory of knowledge. This epistemology helps explain how power relations shape public opinion and even ideological directions in scholarly work. Which version of the truth will prevail is an epistemological question that Black women intellectuals are sorting out and using to advance their quest for justice and knowledge (Collins, 1990, 2000; Harding 1998; hooks, 1989).

Harding (1998) contends that Western social and political thought contains three competing epistemologies. First, positivist science since the European Enlightenment asserts that absolute truth exists and that scientific research is used to develop objective and unbiased tools of science to measure these truths. Critics recall the history of race science and eugenics, not to mention other social inequalities, as a product of this search for "truth" by White males in positions of power. The second approach insists that the oppressed people, especially the working class, have a clearer view of truth, but that this Marxist approach tends to recapitulate the positivist belief in one true interpretation of reality. Lastly, postmodernism represents an extreme relativism in that any group's thought is equally valid or equally suspect and represents, in theory, the antithesis of positivist epistemology. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are typically identified with Western sciences but research methodologies need not be attached to any particular group's interests. Black feminist epistemology is a contribution to better

understanding the life and struggle of Black women in America and should be viewed as an additional standard to assess knowledge and evaluate belief systems (pp. 12-15).

Widely accepted among African American women is an epistemology that uses definite standards for assessing truth. Collective experience and a resultant worldview based on the history of women's work, both in the Black community and in paid employment, shape this standpoint. When shared and passed on, these experiences become the embraced wisdom of a Black woman's standpoint. In brief, Black women scholars have naturally dealt with the central questions facing them, in specific political, social and historic contexts characterized by injustice. The standards used to assess knowledge relate to a commitment to social justice for African American women and for other historically oppressed groups. The lack of concern for justice, or the acceptance of oppression as a norm, led to the development of an opposition epistemology to the traditional positivist methods. Alternative methodologies and paradigms have been built into the beliefs of the intellectuals in the first wave of Black women educators. The ultimate of understanding the world is to bring about change.

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Lived Experience as a Criterion
for Credibility

</div>

For Black women, survival was always in the forefront of concerns because of poverty and violent repression perpetuated by the dominant society. Knowledge of this predicament and wisdom evolving out of lived experiences are powerful

factors in making knowledge claims. Intellectuals trained in Black feminist thought

began using examples from the lives of Black women to deconstruct the prevailing

notions of Black women, to counter negative stereotypes, and to set the record

straight. The narrative method was used to illuminate and it relied on the vast and

revealing experiences of the ordinary people. The temptation to dissect every

objective detail and tear apart others in quantifiable methods was challenged by the

wisdom of the narratives of Black women. Increasingly researchers made use of

stories to validate knowledge. Women were more likely than men to use lived

experience as a method for enriching theory and practice (Belenky et al., 1986;

Gwaltney, 1980; Ladner, 1972; Mitchell & Lewter, 1986).

Black women lived and still live at the bottom of the social hierarchy, on the

margin. Their stories of survival and transcendence out of this abyss gave hope that

justice would be served, that a better life awaited their children if they endured as

leaders of their families, churches, political organizations and communities, and if in

their lives they demanded personal accountability. People are expected to be

accountable for what they do and what they claim is knowledge or truth. Personal

accountability characterizes Black feminist epistemology because knowledge claims

made by individuals respected for their moral and ethical connections to their ideas

carry more weight than those espoused by less respected persons. Zilpha Elaw

(cited in Andrews, 1986) describes the key players during slavery, "Oh, the

abominations of slavery! . . . Every case of slavery, however lenient its infliction

and mitigated its atrocities, indicates an oppressor, the oppressed, and oppression"

(p. 98). African Americans have shown that individuals need to have definite positions on issues and assume full responsibility for their actions. One terribly troubling feature of traditional American positivist methods of research is the failure to criticize the perpetrators of injustice and the willingness to rationalize and acquiesce in supporting the status quo.

However, the social protest movements of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s changed dramatically the intellectual and political climate in the United States. Accordingly, scholars challenged older conventional thinking and questioned accepted practices and beliefs. Black feminist thought focused on another way, an additional epistemology, to uncover truth about what reflects reality for African American women. By using a paradigm that included lived experience, dialogue among women, the ethics of caring, personal accountability, and Black women as agents of knowledge, a new appreciation for Black women emerged in the academic and everyday environments.

As Collins (1990a) points out in *Black Feminist Thought*:

> Partiality, and not universality, is the condition of being heard.
> Individuals and groups forwarding knowledge claims without owning
> their position are deemed less credible that those who do . . .
> Alternative epistemologies challenge all certified knowledge and
> open up the question of whether what has been taken to be true can
> stand the test of alternative ways of validating truth or reality. The
> existence of a self-defined Black women's standpoint using Black
> Feminist Epistemology calls into question the content of what
> currently passes as truth and simultaneously challenges the process of
> arriving at that truth. (pp. 270-271)

Alice Walker (1983) offers these insights:

> What is always needed in the appreciation of art, or life, is the larger perspective. Connections made, or at least attempted, where none existed before, the straining to encompass in one's glance at the varied world the common thread, the unifying theme, through immense diversity. (p. 5)

The renowned writer revealed the special relationship Black mothers have with their children and how her overworked mother helped foster creativity in her. "And so our mothers and grandmothers have, more often than not anonymously, handed on the creative spark, the seed of the flower they themselves never hoped to see" (p. 240).

In her essay "One Child of One's Own," Alice Walker (1979) relates the significance of children affirming their mothers and how this affirmation runs against the grain of the sexual politics of Black womanhood in the United States:

> It is not my child who tells me: I have femaleness White women must affirm. Not my child who says: I have no rights Black men must respect. It is not my child who has purged my face from history and her story, and left mystery just that, a mystery; my child loves my face and would have it on every page, if she could, as I have loved my own parents' faces above all others. (p. 75)

The issue of social exclusion preoccupied Black women during the decades after WWII. In Portland, Oregon, Elizabeth McLagan (1980) chronicled race discrimination before the war. She said:

> Oregon, progressive in many ways, resisted the necessary legislation which would correct historical inequalities in the treatment of blacks and other minorities. In the absence of a significant black population before 1940 that could effect legislation, it remains a West Coast ecological paradise with a peculiar resistance to change. (p. 172)

After the war, exclusion of Black people in public education and in the universities was challenged by progressive Oregonians and by the mid 1950s, 46 Black teachers were employed by Portland Public Schools. The experience of Black people in Oregon mirrored the national experience.

McLagan consummates her study with these profound words:

> In many ways the black people of Oregon are our community's twentieth century pioneers. Like pioneers of any age, they are accustomed to survival. Many of the values that our society has forgotten are retained in the black community: the value of education, strong family and religious ties, a sense of tradition and respect for the elders and a sensitivity to the needs of the less fortunate. We ignore these deep and pervasive values at the peril of our collective human spirit. (p. 182)

Job Opportunities and Affirmative Action

Responding to the mass movements against racial and gender discrimination, President Johnson in 1964 issued Executive Order number 11264, later amended as 11375, that outlined affirmative action to counteract discrimination by federal contractors against minorities. This followed on the heels of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that banned discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, and national origin. In 1972, responding to the pervasiveness of sexual inequality in education, Congress passed Title IX of the Educational Amendments, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex in any program or activity, including sports, operating with the assistance of federal financial assistance (Mezey, 1992).

Commenting on this period of civil rights legislation, and perceiving what was happening to the first wave of Black professionals ostensibly benefiting from these new laws, Martin Luther King Jr. (1967) offers this insight:

> However much it is denied, however many excuses are made, the hard cold fact that many White Americans oppose open housing because they unconsciously, and often consciously, feel that the Negro is innately inferior, impure, depraved and degenerate. It is a contemporary expression of America's long dalliance with racism and white supremacy.
>
> No Negro escapes this cycle of modern slavery. Even the new Negro middle class often finds itself in ghettoized housing and in jobs at the mercy of the White world. Some of the most tragic figures in our society now are the Negro company vice presidents who sit with no authority or influence because they were merely employed for window dressing in an effort to win the Negro market or to comply with federal regulations in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. (p. 119)

The man most vilified in his lifetime, now a virtual icon and the patron saint of racial harmony and justice, continues:

> After 348 years racial injustice is still the Negro's burden and America's shame. Yet for his own inner health and outer functioning, the Negro is called upon to be as resourceful, as productive and as responsible as those who have not known such oppression and exploitation. This is the Negro's dilemma. He who starts behind in a race must forever remain behind or run faster than the man in front. What a dilemma! It is a call to do the impossible. It is enough to cause the Negro to give up in despair . . . Our dilemma is serious and our handicaps are real. But equally real is the power of creative will and its ability to give us the courage to go on. (p. 120)

The first wave of African American women to enter higher education with advanced degrees showed tremendous courage and fortitude in dealing with the invidious problem of marginalization on the job resulting from the tenacity of institutional racism. Two forces were locked in struggle: the retrograde one trying

to diminish the effect of the civil rights demands of the people, both Black and White, both women and men; and the other insisting on the opportunity to demonstrate intelligence and leadership, showing in practice the moral leadership that has come to be recognized as an enduring trait of Black women professionals. The informant in this study is a striking example of the "power of the creative will," as King described it. She showed the quality of resiliency required in overcoming marginalization and discrimination in academia.

Hacker (1992), in his insightful *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*, concludes his study of contemporary race relations by stating that legal slavery may be in the past but segregation and subordination have been allowed to persist and to infect the political system in an all-sided fashion. "Even today, America imposes a stigma on every black child at birth" (p. 218).

In 1990, in an effort to counter growing signs of renewed discrimination and growing inequality, the Civil Rights Act of 1990 was presented to Congress. In the Senate, the Kennedy-Hawkins Bill contained the following provisions: (a) Allowed suits for racial harassment in employment; (b) Prohibited employers from using race, color, religion, sex, or national origin as motivating factors in employment decisions; (c) Required employers to prove a business need for practices that adversely impact minority and women workers; and (d) Provided for attorney fees to be recovered from losing intervening parties as well as defendants. The Bush administration vigorously campaigned against the bill and it was defeated.

Mezey (1992) contends that it was a bitter defeat for racial minorities but an even worse defeat for women's equality on the job. This situation is compounded by the appearance of anti-affirmative action initiatives on the state level, such as in California, Washington, Texas, and Florida. These initiatives are an expression of the sentiment to reverse the verdict of the civil rights movement against racial and gender discrimination.

Affirmative action refers to "any measure, beyond simple termination of a discriminatory practice, adopted to correct or compensate for past or present discrimination or to prevent discrimination from recurring in the future" (United States Civil Rights Commission, 1979, p. 189). The Commission believed that by securing equal access to the job market the effects of past discrimination by employers, unions, and colleges would be countered.

Legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (1997) points out that the same laws designed to protect African American women from social exclusion have increasingly become used against Black women. New models for equal treatment under the law refer to the equal treatment of individuals by not discriminating among them. Under this new rhetoric of color-blindness, first popularized by the Reagan administration, equality meant treating all individuals the same, regardless of past discrimination. "Having determined, then, that everyone was equal in the sense that everyone had a skin color, symmetrical treatment was satisfied by a general rule that nobody's skin color should be taken into account in governmental decision-making" (p. 284).

In effect, the new legal models for equal treatment maintain longstanding hierarchies of race, class, and gender while appearing to provide equal treatment in words only. One of the effects of the rhetoric of color-blindness has been to foster a certain kind of race thinking among Whites; implicit in this kind of thinking is the overarching notion that the legal system has formally declared that individuals have equal access to schools, housing, and jobs. Therefore, unequal treatment against ethnic groups is somehow their fault and can be seen as a cultural problem. The assumption is that the U.S. matrix of White male domination now provides equal treatment because race and gender are ignored altogether. Beliefs such as these have lead to punitive actions based on race and gender, the most pervasive being the assault on affirmative action and the legal difficulties of proving racial harassment (Williams, 1995).

In a February 10, 2000, report issued by the American Council on Education, it is reported that more than 86% of the faculties at two and four-year institutions said that diversity plays a critical role in teaching and learning. But the study also notes that "more and more constraints are being placed on campus leaders' ability to make decisions that ensure racial and ethnic diversity are a part of their institutions" (Staff, 2000, p. 8).

Additionally the report cautions that political momentum for ending race sensitive practices in the community colleges is growing and that increasingly decisions about diversity are being made in courtrooms, voting booths, and governors' offices (Staff, 2000). Jeffrey F. Milem and Kenji Kakuta, professors who

authored a special focus part of the report, cites four misconceptions commonly promoted in the political sphere by opponents of affirmative action. They listed these misconceptions as: (a) Past inequalities have been addressed and no longer require attention; (b) Merit can be defined by test scores; (c) Policies that are race-neutral meet the test of fairness; and (d) Diversity programs only benefit students of color. The authors maintain that the national media focuses on the political controversy surrounding affirmative action but ignores the research that validates the benefits of diversity on campus. The American Council on Education acknowledged in the report that attracting a diverse student population and hiring diverse faculty and staff is essential to its mission to provide quality education and prepare the work force for the twentieth first century. The end results of the recent attacks on affirmative action that include court decisions, and the court of public opinion now require that the benefits of diversity, and that evidence of continuing discrimination be documented. The authors of this special report warn academicians and administrators to study diversity outcomes so that long term patterns of racial segregation will continue to be challenged by the colleges (p. 8).

White American politicians from the two major political parties talk of "street crime" and lazy "welfare mothers." Such talk or characterizations accompany the increasing imprisonment and impoverishment of the Black people, especially the youth. They are contemptuous of the evidence that shows poverty and discrimination breed crime and unrest.

However, the White male dominated establishment is rushing against a strong historical current that dates back to the anti-slavery movement that legally abolished slavery and tried to democratize the whole country. Open racism is no longer culturally acceptable among the general population and now African American women and other formerly disenfranchised and oppressed groups are represented in powerful social institutions. Legal strategies have worked to advance the cause of Black women. Inside the colleges and corporations of America the advances prepared by the first wave of Black women are marching inexorably forward despite the new legal challenges.

Concepts of Leadership

Leadership is an old concept. Of the thousands of investigations that have been conducted during the past 75 years, little is known about this complex, multidimensional concept. Studies have produced more questions than answers. Reasons for the dismal results may be due to methodology utilized in these studies. Ironically, the overwhelming majority of leadership studies have focused on leadership traits, styles, characteristics and processes with a juxtaposition of concepts or variables such as tasks and relationships.

Theorists basically sought to identify the different types of leadership with a specific focus on characteristics, qualities or situation elements. And there are others who assert that leaders have little to do with organizational outcomes and effectiveness (M. C. Brown, 1982). Pfeffer (1977) suggested that leaders only have

a limited impact on organizational outcomes in comparison to external forces. He further suggested that people want to believe that they have control over the environment; therefore, they have a tendency to attribute outcomes to leaders rather than the complex internal and external factors impacting an organization. Other researchers contend that leadership played a leading role in the great revolts that have taken place during the centuries. Without leadership could the revolutions in France, Russia, India, and China have taken place?

The concept of leadership has changed since the days of antiquity. No longer is the autocratic leadership style effective. Today's conditions require a leadership form or process that is shared by members within an organization. Leadership is critical and a higher level is required if organizations are to respond to rapid changes in technology, market demands and remain on the cutting edge in a society that is in constant flux. While the definition of leadership remains ambiguous, it is closely associated with personality, group process, personal influence or persuasion, power, the initiation of structure and human consideration, and as a way to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

The personality and compliance-induction theorists believe that leadership is basically leader-centered and is the unidirectional exertion of influence of the leader on the follower. Furthermore, one cannot ignore "that much of leadership is authoritarian, directive, and even coercive" (Bass, 1990, p. 13).

Sergiovanni (1992) asserts that this topic presents one of social science's greatest disappointments. Even less is known about leadership from a social

cognition perspective, that is, how people think, feel, and experience leadership within organizations. Furthermore, most studies on educational leadership tend to overlook how human relationships provide the context through which people enact life within an educational organization.

Researchers remain unclear as to how academic leaders participate with others, especially faculty, in the construction and reconstruction of campus realities, be those transitory or continuous features of the campus culture (Neumann, 1995). Researchers are also unclear about how leaders who are persons of color or women cognitively construct leadership. Therefore, there is much to be learned about the worldview, thinking, feelings and beliefs of Black women who are in leadership positions or positions of power. Bass' (1990) *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership* has a chapter with only 21 pages dedicated to African Americans and other persons of color. John Gardner's (1990) *On Leadership* had less than one page on women and absolutely nothing on people of color. Such findings are related to the fact that women and people of color have not reached parity with White men who remain in more than 90% of the top leadership positions in higher education. Nevertheless, there is a growing interest among doctoral students and Black feminist scholars to gain an understanding of issues affecting the educational and professional development and career advancement opportunities of African American women.

Leadership is a reflection of the social-political-economic system. Historically, this can be seen in the myths about leaders and their subordinates that

have been promoted. Bass (1990) purports that in examining mythology the realities of leadership are distorted in relationship to socioeconomic injustice; the greater the injustice, the more distorted the realities of leadership, its powers, morality and effectiveness. Leadership is a universal concept that can be found in humans and many other species (Bass, 1990). Allee (1951) speculates that all animals classified as vertebrates that live in groups have leadership and a form of social order. Furthermore, it is suggested that no society exists without some form of leadership, although many may lack one overall leader who makes and enforces decisions.

Overall traditional leadership models such as the trait, the situational, organizational and power theories can be described as decontextualized views of leadership. They all fail to address the relationship between a person's place in the economic and social systems relative to gender, ethnic background, or class and the implication for leadership theory and are devoid of historical context.

While gains were made in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the combination of poverty, isolation and racial discrimination continue to perpetuate an environment that makes it almost impossible for African Americans to prosper. The 1990 census painted a bleak picture. African Americans are underrepresented in the workforce. Unemployment was 8.9% for Blacks and 4.3% for Whites. African Americans were also underrepresented in higher education with only 30% enrolled in colleges and universities, and only 11.9% of all Blacks completed a four-year degree. Furthermore, African Americans continue to live in dire poverty within the inner

cities of this country and while they makeup 11% of the population, they are overly represented in the prisons. Thirty-four percent of Black population lives below the poverty income level. The infant mortality rate is higher than that of Whites, 14.4% for Blacks and 7.7% for Whites. Furthermore, an African American woman can expect to live seven years less than her White counterpart. Overcoming these oppressive conditions is no easy task. Reid-Merritt (1996) states:

> When you look at the total statistical picture, black women hold the lowest-paying domestic and service jobs and, earning an average of $11,527 annually, are the poorest of all wage-earning Americans. They are the least likely to be married, and the most likely to have their children living with them in poverty. Fifty-five percent of all black children live in poverty with their mothers. (p. 22)

These data make it even harder to explain the sudden, unprecedented appearance of African American women in positions of power. On the one hand, the interlocking concepts of race, gender, and class oppression have made it virtually impossible for African American women to ascend to positions of power and authority. On the other hand, these same conditions have serendipituously created a strong survival instinct and resiliency in Black women that allowed Black women to play a central role in the social, political, educational, and economical development in what is known as the Black community.

The few that have ascended to positions of power have had to overcome the stereotypes of the sapphires, aunt jemimas, and other such names. They have deconstructed and reconstructed the meaning of being a Black woman in America. Black women leaders have also constructed their own reality of what leadership

means. Leaders are found at every level including the church, community, education, businesses, and other enterprises.

Reid-Merritt (1996) points out, "Sisters are clearly visible, but their presence is still new enough to raise doubts about their permanency. Many people are still surprised and confused merely to see them in places where they have never been seen before" (pp. 23-24). In the 1980s, there were less than 10 African Americans women college presidents. Today, there are 40 including one in Utah. These brave women live in two worlds; they have one foot in dominant American values and culture, and the other in Black community values and culture. Because they live in both worlds, these women are able to have an outsider-insider view of the world of academia. The outsider-insider view has added value to problem solving the unique problems facing community colleges and other issues impacting education. Their unique position is also a major cause of stress, illness, divorce, and feelings of isolation. Black women are either unnoticed or over-noticed and misinterpreted. Converging factors of racism, sexism and class oppression have influenced the concept of leadership among African American women. Historically, leadership has been defined within the context of socioeconomic structure of any given society.

The majority of the women interviewed in Reid-Merritt's book were born and raised in the South, and lived in the major metropolitan areas such as Washington, DC, Chicago, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. Most assumed their positions after the age of 45. Some of the women gained early experiences in the Civil Rights and labor movement. Having played a founding role in some

organizations, they continue to support organizations with a focus on issues impacting women and people of color. Furthermore, of the 46 women, only 12 were leaders in corporate America, the others were employed in public service areas (Reid-Merritt, 1996).

The Economic and Social Costs of Racial Discrimination in the U.S.

Andrew Brimmer, a former member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and a respected scholar specializing in the economic cost of racial discrimination, estimated that discriminatory treatment against Black Americans cost the U.S. economy $241 billion in 1993. Taking into account underemployment and utilization, as well as the lack of education and formal training commensurate with that obtained by their White counterparts, the above staggering figure equals 3.8% of the gross domestic product. Contrary to much of popular opinion in the 1990s, Brimmer's study revealed that more than half of this gross domestic product (GDP) loss is due to not utilizing the skills of the Black worker or professional, that in actuality Blacks tend to be overqualified for their positions. Strangely enough, the failure to use the talents and abilities of historically excluded sections of the labor force is not part of today's discussion on affirmative action. But it is certainly part of history. As Brimmer (cited in Simms, 1995) points out:

For example, for many years, the U.S. Postal Service employed thousands of black men with college degrees in mathematics, chemistry, and other sciences who could not find jobs in the private sector. There were numerous cases where blacks with B.A. and M.A. degrees in business administration worked as warehouse and stockroom clerks--while their white counterparts held managerial jobs in areas such as banking, insurance, and real estate. Even today, despite the lessening of restrictions because of equal opportunity laws and the spread of affirmative action practices in industry, many blacks are still concentrated in positions which do not make full use of their talents. If racial discrimination were to be eliminated, blacks could migrate more freely from low to high productivity occupations where their contribution to total population would be increased. The result would be a gain in the nation's total output of goods and services. (p. 13)

In terms of high-ranking occupations, Brimmer projected that in 2205 African Americans will be over-represented in jobs at the lowest rungs of the occupational ladder. At the higher end, Black occupational profile will change little from 1990.

The projected deficits in money income, based on a share of the population, civilian labor force, or employment, African American income disparity will roughly remain the same in 2000 compared to 1993 (p. 16).

In Tables 1-5, Brimmer (1991) gives a detailed accounting of the economic costs of racial discrimination against Black Americans.

Table 1

Economic Cost of Discrimination Against Blacks, 1967-1993 (Estimated Loss of Gross Domestic Product)

Year	Gross Domestic Product	Gain From Full Use of Present Education		Gain From Full Use of Improved Education		Total Gain From Full Use of Present and Improved Education	
		Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
1967	$ 814.30	$ 12.10	1.49	$ 11.10	1.36	$ 23.20	2.85
1973	1,349.80	22.90	1.70	19.40	1.43	42.30	3.13
1979	2,488.60	45.80	1.84	38.20	1.53	84.00	3.38
1993	6,374.00	137.00	2.15	103.90	1.63	240.90	3.79

Amounts in billions of dollars. Source: Brimmer (1991, p. 19).

Table 2

Distribution of Total and Black Workers, by Years of School Completed, 1990

Years of School	ALL WORKERS		BLACK WORKERS		
	#	% Dist	#	% Dist	% of all Workers
Total	117,914	100.00	11,966	100.00	10.15
Less Than High School	17,922	15.20	2,381	19.90	13.29
High School	46,340	39.30	5,157	43.10	11.13
1-3 Years of College	25,353	21.50	2,669	22.30	10.53
7 Years of College or More	28,299	24.00	1,759	14.70	6.22

Numbers in thousands. Source: Brimmer (1991, p. 20).

Table 3

Occupational Distribution of Employment, by Race, 1990 and 2005

Occupation	ALL WORKERS				BLACK WORKERS					
	1990		2005		1990			2005		
	#	% Dist	#	% Dist	#	% Dist	% of all Workers	#	% Dist	% of all Workers
All Occupations	122,573	100.0	147,191	100.0	12,573	100.0	10.0	16,340	100.0	11.1
Executive, Administrative, Managerial	12,451	10.2	15,866	10.8	747	5.9	6.0	1,269	7.8	8.0
Professional Specialty	15,800	12.9	20,907	14.2	1,106	8.8	7.0	1,882	11.5	9.0
Technicians and Related	4,204	3.4	5,754	3.9	378	3.0	9.0	604	3.7	10.5
Marketing and Sales	14,088	11.5	17,489	11.9	845	6.7	6.0	1,259	7.7	7.2
Administrative Support, including Clerical	21,951	17.9	24,835	16.9	2,415	19.2	11.0	3,186	19.5	12.8
Service Occupations	19,204	15.7	24.806	16.9	3,265	26.0	17.0	3,857	23.6	16.0
Agricultural, Forestry, Fisheries	3,506	2.9	3,665	2.5	210	1.7	6.0	201	1.2	5.5
Precision Production and Craft	14,124	11.5	15,909	10.8	1,130	9.0	8.0	1,511	9.2	9.5
Operators, Fabricators, and Laborers	17,245	14.1	17,961	12.2	2,587	20.6	15.0	2,571	15.8	14.3

Numbers in thousands. Source: Brimmer (1991, p. 21).

Table 4

Estimates and Projections of the U.S. Population, Civilian Labor Force, Employment, and Money Income, by Race, 1991-2000

	1991		1992		1993		2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
POPULATION								
Total	252,177	100.00	254,922	100.00	257,927	100.00	274,815	100.00
White	210,899	83.63	212,648	83.42	214,778	82.78	224,574	81.72
Black	31,164	12.36	31,673	12.42	32,137	12.62	35,525	12.93
Other Race	10,114	4.01	10,601	4.16	11,012	4.27	14,696	5.35
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE								
Total	125,303	100.00	127,000	100.00	128,000	100.00	141,900	100.00
White	107,486	85.78	108,776	85.65	109,222	85.33	120,374	84.83
Black	13,542	10.81	13,780	10.85	14,080	11.00	15,893	11.20
Other Race	4,275	3.41	4,444	3.50	4,698	3.67	5,633	3.97
EMPLOYMENT								
Total	116,877	100.00	117,600	100.00	119,300	100.00	133,700	100.00
White	101,039	85.45	101,583	86.38	102,789	86.16	114,568	85.69
Black	11,863	10.15	11,960	10.17	12,192	10.22	13,985	10.46
Other Race	3,975	3.40	4,057	3.45	4,319	3.62	5,147	3.85
MONEY INCOME								
Total	3,627,960	100.00	3,761,200	100.00	3,956,400	100.00	5,725,668	100.00
White	3,228,041	88.198	3,347,468	89.00	3,517,240	88.90	5,055,765	88.30
Black	377,552	7.65	284,347	7.56	300,686	7.60	455,191	7.95
Other Race	122,367	3.37	129,385	3.44	138,474	3.50	214,712	3.75

Numbers in thousands. Money income in millions of dollars. Source: Brimmer (1991, p. 22).

Table 5

Black Money Income Deficit, 1993 and 2000

Benchmark	1993 % Share of Total Income	Amount of Income	Deficit Amount	%	2000 % Share of Total Income	Amount of Income	Deficit Amount	%	Deficits as % of GDP 1993	2000
Gross Domestic Product		6,374,000				8,942,000				
Money Income: Total		3,956,400				5,724,668				
Black Income										
Actual	7.60	300,686			7.95	455,191				
Parity										
Population	12.46	494,967	-192,281	-39.10	12.93	740,329	-285,138	-38.52	-3.02	-3.19
Civilian Labor Force	11.00	435,204	-134,518	-30.91	11.20	641,275	-186,084	-29.02	-2.11	-2.08
Employment	10.22	404,344	-103,658	-25.64	10.46	590,905	-135714	-22.97	-1.63	-1.52

Amounts in millions of dollars. Source: Brimmer (1991, p. 23).

Literature Review in Perspective

The informant in this study is characterized as resilient and morally fit to lead as chief executive officer in a community college setting. The literature review provides the historical foundation that allows us to fully appreciate and understand the developmental process of this phenomenal woman. It is my hope that other Black women will gain information or strategies that will assist and educate them along their path to college administrative positions.

The historical background of the role that racial exclusion has played in the denial of opportunity is prerequisite knowledge in developing an analysis of contemporary Black women professionals and intellectuals. The first wave of women to break down the color barrier in the academy was molded by their own history, which reflected the political, social, economic, cultural, and psychological realities of American society. This history produced unique characteristic features of Black women, particularly a resiliency, evolved from their dealings with injustices based on sex, race and class. Because of these barriers, African American women have learned to operate effectively in multicultural and diverse settings. The historiography in the literature review relied on intellectuals who were themselves, for the most part, grounded in critical social theory, who were unwilling to acquiesce in the notion that African American women are somehow inferior. To the contrary, this history shows the great determination and potential of Black people, as reflected in the successes of the first wave of women to integrate and diversify the American colleges.

In this qualitative study, the literature review assists in completing the picture of the informant and answers questions raised not only in the narrative of progression to executive administrator but also in present day context such as the question of affirmative action that has directly or indirectly impacted women professionals. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) state:

> Feminists are beginning to articulate the values of the female world and to reshape the disciplines to include the woman's voice, while continuing to press for the right of women to participate as equals in the male world. (p. 6)

This literature review also provides an overview of Black feminist epistemology and its reliance on Black women gaining their voice and telling their stories, adding a critical dimension to the understanding of what this qualitative study has to offer. The human side to this story is remarkable and is something that can inspire a youngster to dream wonderful dreams. This study offers a new way of thinking, acting, and being. As the demographics of our colleges change, so will the demographics of leadership.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of an African American woman chief executive officer in a community college setting, and to describe factors impacting her personal and professional development, and their relationship to career choice and mobility. Research questions were specifically designed to identify factors that were perceived as positive influences or barriers and obstacles to career choice and mobility.

As with any study, decisions about methodology are primarily determined by the nature of the identified problem. Since the questions presented in this study did not share the aim of testing and quantifying theory, the researcher chose a naturalistic approach of inquiry to explore the perceptions and life experiences of the informant. With the review of the literature indicating that little is known about African American women entering roles that have been historically dominated by White men, an emergent design was selected. This decision reflects the desire of the researcher to base inquiry upon the reality and worldview of the individual in this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Naturalistic methods of inquiry attempt to deal with issues of human complexities by exploring them directly; a heavy emphasis is placed on understanding the human experience as it is lived, shaped, and created by these experiences (Polit & Hungler, 1997). With these methods, the researcher seeks to

discover what the informant is experiencing, how he or she interprets their experiences, and how their world is socially and culturally structured.

Basically, qualitative researchers utilize strategies and procedures that allow them to consider experiences from the informant's point of view. The researcher does not approach the subject in a neutral manner. Therefore, the process reflects a dialogue between the researcher and his or her subjects (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Reality is consequently "socially constructed" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

Historically, the bulk of the research and literature on Black individuals, families and communities has focused on pathologies and deficiencies. Too often the literature is harsh and condemning, citing inadequacies, passivity and weakness in the face of institutional and personal discrimination (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1994). This research, on the other hand, seeks to tell the unique story of an African American chief executive officer who moved "up and out" as characterized by Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994). Understanding and interpreting data grounded in reality of the respondent provides a powerful basis for understanding and controlling the world (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Change is an eventuality or possible outcome of research. The researcher hopes to add to the small body of knowledge on African American women, thereby influencing the conditions for changing their lives.

This chapter examines several methodological approaches to the study of phenomena, social processes, and human interactions. It also provides justification for the methodology utilized by the researcher. Discussions of research site and

study population, data collection methods, role of the researcher, analysis of data, and methods for enhancing the trustworthiness and validity of this study are also included.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Methodologic Approaches to Emerging Phenomena</h3>

Traditional research, known as positivism, is rooted in Newtonian and Lockian philosophical thought. Positivism asserts that reality exists and can be studied. Proponents of this approach believe that nature has order and regularity, and that reality exists independent of anyone's observation. Researchers utilizing this paradigmatic model seek to discover the underlying causes of natural phenomena (Polit & Hungler, 1997). Basically, the positivists research design is orderly and disciplined, and seeks to test ideas about the nature and relationships of phenomena.

The goal of traditional scientific methodology is to understand phenomena in a general sense, not in isolation, so that the findings can be generalized. However certain phenomena do not lend themselves to this approach because of their complexity and richness. For example, certain moral and ethical problems are extremely difficult to study with this methodology. A major limitation of this approach is that it seeks to narrow and attempts to control human experience, which is complex and diverse. This narrowing can lead to obscuring insight (Polit & Hungler, 1997).

A naturalistic paradigm, known as the phenomenologic paradigm, represents a major alternative for conducting disciplined research. This approach purports that reality exists within context and is the construction of those participating in the research. In other words, everything is relative and there is no real process for determining ultimate truth. Truth is relative and basically determined by the informant and there is no attempt to manipulate the research setting.

The naturalistic approach posits that knowledge is maximized when there is a close relationship between the phenomena and the inquirer. The voice and interpretations of the informant are fundamental to understanding the phenomena and subjective interactions are the primary way for accessing them (Polit & Hungler, 1997). The findings from this approach are the product of both the inquirer and the informant; therefore, generalizations are contextually limited. Basic assumptions about the informant influence the nature of the study, the methodology used for data collection, analysis, and ultimately the research findings.

Sackman (1991) characterizes the differences in methodology as the outsider and insider perspectives. The outsider's approach is based upon a functionalist perspective with the goal of generalizing and establishing universal laws. The researcher introduces concepts that are relevant to the specific questions of the research problem or site, and uses a deductive process. Specific variables of a phenomenon and relationships are predicted and controlled.

The insider's approach, in contrast, is based on an interpretive perspective with the aim of gaining an understanding of a phenomenon within a specific context.

Knowledge obtained through this approach is qualitative in nature. The interactive process is an emergent one that is inductive. Naturalistic researchers tend to emphasize the dynamic, holistic, and individual aspects of the human experience and tend to capture phenomena in their entirety, within the context of those who are experiencing them (Polit & Hungler, 1997).

Morgan and Smircich (1980) argue that the use of qualitative methodologies in educational research is appropriate because they allow for comprehensiveness that considers the constantly changing interactional factors that influence human behavior. They believe the best that educational researchers can hope for is gaining an understanding of the current state of affairs, rather than predictable generalizations and control.

Naturalistic inquiry always takes place in the field. Data collection and analysis are done concurrently. As the researcher sorts through the existing information, insights are gained, new questions emerge, and further data are gathered to confirm these new insights. The researcher encourages the participant or informant to elaborate, provide incidents and clarifications, and discuss events at length. The depth, details, and richness of the data are what Walcott (1973) and Geertz (1973) referred to as thick description. Thick description is grounded in the informant's personal experiences and forms the material that researchers gather, synthesize, analyze as part of understanding the meaning of the data. Through an inductive process, the researcher integrates the evidence needed to develop a theory

that is used to explain the processes or interactions that have been observed (Polit & Hungler, 1997).

While the findings of qualitative research are thick and in-depth, there are limitations in using these methodologies. The use of human beings as the major tool for data collection can on the one hand lead to rich insights into a complex phenomenon, and on the other hand, can lead to petty or insignificant findings depending upon the experience of the researcher. Questions related to validity are also raised as to whether it is possible for different researchers studying the same phenomenon, in the same setting to come up with the same results. Again this limitation is related to the subjectivity involved with human beings as the inquirer and the instrument for data collection. Researchers have accepted the fact that personal philosophy and worldview of the inquirer help shape the types of questions asked as well as interpretation of the findings. There are also questions about the generalizability of the findings from naturalistic studies because small samples or populations are frequently used in qualitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Hungler, 1997; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Table 6 summarizes the differences and similarities between quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Description

Descriptive research provides new information regarding phenomena. Quantitative methods seek to observe, count, describe and classify measurable

attributes of a phenomenon, while the researcher utilizing a qualitative method

describes the dimensions, variations, and importance of phenomena.

Table 6

<u>Research Purposes and Research Questions</u>

Purpose	Types of Questions: Quantitative Research	Types of Question: Qualitative Research
Identification		What is this phenomenon? What is its name?
Description	How prevalent is the phenomenon? How often does it occur? What are the characteristics?	What are the dimensions of the phenomenon? What variations exist? What is important about it?
Exploration	What factors are related to the phenomenon? What are the antecedents of the phenomenon?	What is the full nature of the phenomenon? What is really going on here? What is the process by which it evolves or is experienced?
Explanation	What are the measurable associations between phenomena? What factors caused it? Does the theory explain it?	How does the phenomenon work? Why does it exist? What is its meaning? How did it occur?
Prediction and control	What will happen if we alter a phenomenon or introduce an intervention? If phenomenon X occurs, will phenomenon Y follow? How can we make the phenomenon happen, or alter its nature or prevalence? Can the occurrence of the phenomenon be controlled?	

Source: Polit and Hungler (1997, p. 19).

<u>Exploration</u>

Exploratory studies seek to gain an understanding of the full nature of a

phenomenon, the manner in which it is manifested as well as other related factors.

Exploratory qualitative studies are done when little is known about the phenomena.

This kind of research is designed to shed light or insight on the ways in which a

phenomenon is manifested and its underlying processes. Quantitative studies can also be exploratory in nature.

Explanation

According to Polit and Hungler (1997), the goal of explanatory research is to understand the underpinnings of a specific phenomenon, and to explain the specific systematic relationships among phenomena. Research of this type is usually linked to a theory. Explanatory research attempts to provide an understanding of the underlying causes or full nature of a phenomenon. Utilizing the qualitative approach, the researcher looks for explanations about the why or how of the existences of phenomena, or the meaning of phenomena so that a theory can be developed, a theory that is grounded in rich, experiential data. Glasser and Strauss (1967) argue that grounded theory emerges from the bottom up, from disparate pieces of evidence that are interconnected. Whereas with the use of quantitative methods, theories are used deductively for the purpose of providing explanations that are then tested empirically (Polit & Hungler, 1997). This process enriches or further develops theory.

Predictability and Control

With the use of quantitative methodologies it is possible to control variables and predict outcomes without necessarily understanding the nature of various phenomena.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982, 1992) data are considered to be soft, rich in description of people, and conversations and events are not easily handled statistically. Research questions are formulated to investigate topics in relationship to their complexity and in context. They are primarily concerned with understanding behavior from the informant's point of reference. Therefore, data are collected through sustained contact with people in settings where informants spend their time. Participant observation and in-depth interviewing are the embodiment of qualitative research.

Both quantitative and qualitative research are based upon major assumptions and/or theoretical underpinnings. In quantitative research, theory is usually restricted to a "systematically stated and testable set of propositions about the empirical world" (Bodgan & Biklen, 1992, p. 33). In a naturalistic design, theory can be defined as a paradigm. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994)

> a paradigm maybe viewed, as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimate or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world," the individual place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts. (p. 105)

Basically a paradigm is a loose collection of assumptions, propositions, and concepts that orient thinking and research. Bodgan and Biklen argue that good researchers have a theoretical orientation that is used to assist them with data collection and analyses. Theory allows the researcher to avoid aimless accumulation of data and promotes data coherence.

Theoretical Framework

A fundamental assumption for this study was that the researcher could, through in-depth interviewing, ascertain the informant's perceptions of critical events and experiences that influenced her personal and professional development, and career choice and mobility. The researcher assumed that perceptions of positive and negative experiences and events influenced career choice for women ascending to positions and roles that have been historically dominated by White males.

While there are many ways of knowing, viewing, interpreting and constructing the world, this researcher employed three major theoretical underpinnings to construct a shared meaning of the informant's perceptions of reality. This researcher contends that neither feminist nor androcentric theories and research methodologies alone will provide the discipline with an understanding of the problem identified in this case study. The study was framed as a case study. To discover answers to the questions raised, it was necessary to use an approach that would allow exploration through a naturalistic design with an interpretive, critical theorist and an African American feminist perspective. Descriptive and interpretive data about the career choice and mobility of African American women who ascend to a chief executive position in a community college setting can contribute significantly to what is already known by practitioners in the community college setting. It was apparent from the literature review that African American women have been excluded from top leadership roles and research. White males, females and Black males have not researched issues related to Black females; therefore, the

need for African American women to engage in research is pivotal to increasing our understanding of how their worldviews and experiences may be unique compared to those of their counterparts. Collins (1990) states, "Women's studies has offered a major challenge to the allegedly hegemonic ideas of elite White men. Ironically, feminist theory has also suppressed Black women's ideas" (p. 87). Although Black women intellectuals have expressed a unique feminist consciousness about the interrelations between race and class in structuring gender, they have been historically excluded as participants in feminist organizations. And women of color have criticized the feminist movement and its scholarship for being racist and overly concerned with White, middle-class issues (Andolsen & Hilkert, 1986; Cross et al., 1982; Davis, 1989; Dill, 1983; hooks, 1981; Moraga & Anzaldua, 1981).

Theories advanced by White feminists such as those presented in Gilligan's study on the moral development of women and men relied on White, middle-class samples. The absence of women of color from traditional and postmodern research places them in a position to challenge the hegemony of mainstream scholarship (Collins, 1990). Since African American women have been historically excluded from top leadership positions, it would appear that racism, sexism, and classism are factors that could certainly impact the lives of African American women as they seek opportunities to significantly contribute to the leadership of the nation's community colleges. In spite of cultural, social, and economic barriers that inhibit access to male dominated professions, small numbers have demonstrated resiliency and have been successful in overcoming these barriers. This researcher hoped to discover

information that could be valuable to others in overcoming racism, sexism and other barriers.

African American women's epistemology is grounded in the two major concepts of gender and race. This paradigm posits that to accurately portray the experiences of African American women one must embrace the notion of being a woman and African American. Proponents of this worldview contend that the interlocking nature of gender, race, and class oppression are influential in creating the unique experiences and perceptions of Black women in America.

The Informant

The identification of the key informant was critical to the development of the research design. After establishing the definition of chief executive officer and other criteria, the informant was approached about the possibility of serving as the research sample and population. Prior to contacting her, the researcher engaged in an exhausting dialogue with her major professor and colleagues about ethical issues related to anonymity and confidentiality. Because of the informant's high profile in her current position, and concerns related to risks of not being able to ensure anonymity, the researcher was hesitant in seeking her permission. During the negotiation process, concerns were openly shared with the informant who did not express or voice disagreement with issues raised by the researcher. Her only question was "What do I have to contribute?" While she may have had questions

about the value of studying her life and experiences, she willingly agreed to serve as the sample and population in this study.

The informant in this study was a woman who was in her first year as a chief executive officer, a woman new to this role but who had experience in a top leadership position within the community college setting, a woman with a reputation of being a hard working, dedicated professional, a woman who was known for her commitment to community college faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders. She was a woman who was geographically available and agreeable to enduring the process of being scrutinized in a research project.

As stated previously, during the initial discussion with the informant, she expressed doubt and questioned her worthiness of study since she probably would not have anything to contribute to research on such an important topic where so little understanding exists among researchers. Although she expressed doubt, she agreed to serve as the key informant in this study. Perhaps her decision was influenced by previous experiences with the researcher during her internship.

Originally, the researcher conceptualized a field study, but soon abandoned this idea to avoid the possibility of disturbing the rapport and trust that was developing between the informant and members of her staff. During the internship the researcher had an opportunity as a participant-observer to gather preliminary data that resulted in the decision to gather data through in-depth interviewing.

This study, as conceptualized by the researcher, was discussed with the informant. She was told that the purpose of the study was to explore and describe

perceptions of her personal and professional growth and development. The research aimed at identifying perceived factors that may have influenced career choice and mobility. This woman was considered as a model candidate for this study.

The researcher assured the informant that extreme care would be taken to minimize risks in maintaining her anonymity, and that other critical considerations such as confidentiality, trustworthiness, and professionalism were a high priority. She signed the informed consent after reading it and the date for our first interview was set. The researcher also assured the informant that all interviews would be audiotaped, and would begin and end on time. The informant agreed to devote the time needed for data saturation. Therefore, the total number of hours for interviewing was not identified during this discussion. However, we agreed that all interviews would be one hour in length, and that we would begin and end each session on time.

All interviews were formally conducted and audiotaped in her office with the exception of an informal visit to her home. During the home visit, observations of furniture arrangement, the breaking of bread as she described having lunch together, the sharing of family photos, and informal conversation took place between the informant, her husband, and me. According to Bodgan and Biklen (1992), it is common in studies where there is long term involvement with the subject for the researcher to become acquainted with the subject prior to starting the research process. Establishing a relationship was key for putting the informant at ease so that she could tell her own truths about her life. McCracken (1988) suggests that the

interview is a powerful tool or method that "takes us into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world. The long interview gives us the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see, and experience the world as they do themselves" (p. 9).

The need for multiple data sources was taken into consideration in an attempt to establish the trustworthiness of data gathered from the key informant in this study. Trustworthiness is a major issue for researchers utilizing the naturalistic paradigm of inquiry. Described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are four criteria for establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility was established through the triangulation of data from multiple sources (Densiz, 1989). The key informant's two sons were interviewed. A one-hour phone interview was conducted with one of her sons who lived on the East Coast. The interview with her son who lived within traveling distance was audiotaped in the presence of his wife and children. The interview with her son, who lived on the East Coast, was also audiotaped and hand written notes were taken during the interview. Notes were taken to ensure no loss of data resulting from equipment failure.

The informant's husband refused to participate in the study after informing her that he had nothing to contribute. Informed consent was obtained prior to the interviews. Triangulation was also achieved through the review of the literature and interviews with her children. After the interviews were transcribed and data analysis

completed, the informant reviewed them to ensure that her story was an accurate interpretation.

The Researcher

This case study emerged out of my interest and experience as an African American woman educator and leader who has worked in a community college setting for the past 17 years.

During my internship with two chief executive officers, an African American male and the informant, I became fascinated with the questions addressed in this study. Furthermore, after reviewing the literature, I became even more convinced of the need to explore the perceptions of African American women chief executive officers in community colleges. It was evident that African American women have ascended to positions of importance by possessing the requisite knowledge, skills, leadership characteristics and educational backgrounds. However, little is known about them. Notably absent from the literature was the analysis of the constructs of slavery, racism, and sexism and their constraining influences on the lives of African American women and their career choice and mobility.

It is my hope that this case study will contribute to our understanding of the constructs that impact the success of African American women who aspire to become a chief executive officer in a community college.

Data Collection

Interviewing was the primary tool for data gathering in this study. Qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what informants think and feel about their experiences in life. It is an adventure through which the researcher encourages the informant to explore and reflect upon his or her experiences in depth so that events may be reconstructed (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The qualitative interview is a principal research tool used by sociologists, educators, anthropologists and other disciplines to study problems. As pointed out by McCracken (1988), without a qualitative understanding of how culture mediates human actions, one can only know what numerical data tell us. Such interviews are used to explore specific topics and events, as well as life histories. Researchers may also use information from in-depth interviewing to develop theory that is grounded in details, evidence and samples (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Grounded theory explains what is happening in the words of those involved in a situation. Grounded theory is based on the exchanges in which the informant talks, clarifies, and explains various points. Theory derived from this process has both academic and practical implications (Glasser & Strauss, 1967).

Prior to beginning the first agreed upon interview, the researcher had shadowed the informant in a participant-observation experience; therefore, trust and rapport had already been established. Trust and respect were critical to this study which used the in-depth interview as the major tool for data collection. Because of the preliminary shadowing experience with the informant, to minimize bias, the

researcher was extremely conscious of letting her tell her own story without any

signs of agreement or disagreement, and that communication in this relationship was

ethically and professionally conducted. While cognizant of this issue, it was

nonetheless inappropriate to let her do all of the talking as she shared her

experiences. Rubin and Rubin (1995) posit that:

> In qualitative interviewing, the researcher is not neutral, distant, or
> emotionally uninvolved. He or she forms a relationship with the
> interviewee, and that relationship is likely to be involving. The
> researcher's empathy, sensitivity, humor, and sincerity are important
> tools for the research. The researcher is asking for a lot of openness
> from the interviewees; he or she is unlikely to get that openness by
> being closed and impersonal. (p. 12)

This researcher recognized that her personality, mood, interests, experiences, and

biases affected the informant. Basically, with the depth of understanding required in

qualitative interviewing, it is difficult for the researcher to remain value free or

neutral toward the issues raised (Bowman, Bowman, & Resch cited in Rubin &

Rubin, 1995, p. 12). However, while empathy, sensitiveness, and involvement are

desirable, there is a possibility of biasing the data and their interpretation is

inevitable. The researcher's initial experiences with the informant and the fact that

both are African American women with similar professional backgrounds could also

influence and bias the data gathered and interpretation process. The researcher's

background could also enhance our understanding of the informant's story. Rubin

and Rubin (1995) purport that feminist researchers believe that successful

interviewing requires the existence of a considerable amount of shared culture

between the informant and the researcher and that, "not only should women

interview women, but women in the same position . . . should interview . . .

otherwise, important information will not be reported or nuances will be ignored"

(p. 37). Further, the researcher is seen as a partner or collaborator with the

informant. Collaboration should produce better interviews that help those being

interviewed rather than merely using them for the purposes of the researcher. This

is an axiom of postmodern feminists. Over identification with the informant can

obscure the data, and too little identification could possibly lead to distortion. While

the researcher shared common experiences with the informant, interpretation of

these experiences may differ because meaning is socially constructed, and is based

upon the realities of the individual. Ladner (1972) contends that her own

experiences as an African American woman contributed to her research, in that her

experiences enhanced her ability to contextualize and analyze data gathered from her

subjects.

Data for the study were collected from January 1998 through March 1999.

During this period, adjustments were made in the scheduling of interviews with the

informant and her children. Accommodating her busy schedule lead to several

appointment changes. Interviews were concluded when the researcher could clearly

see an emerging repetition. Data saturation was achieved.

The researcher employed the art of listening and interviewing as the

fundamental tools that allowed the informant to tell her story in her own voice.

Events are not adequately understood unless they are viewed within the context of

their natural setting (Sherman & Webb, 1988). Interviews conducted in this study

were open-ended and flexible. An open-ended approach allows the informant to answer questions from their own perspective rather than from a structure of prearranged questions. Because of the nature of this study and the details sought, a combination of unstructured and loosely or flexibly structured questions were used in the interviews (Whyte, 1979). This selected approach allowed the emergence of unanticipated data including facts, feelings, attitudes, and values as perceived by the informant.

Communication techniques including listening, rephrasing and restating were used by the researcher to ensure an understanding of the emerging data, to ensure the accuracy of meaning of the informant's story. The informant was indeed the voice in this study. Allowing people to "talk back" gives a voice through interviews to those who have been silenced; and talking back becomes a political act, one that empowers women who have been silent far too long (hooks, 1989).

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is dependent upon the nature of the study and data collected. This study used constant comparative analysis to facilitate discovering the meaning of phenomena, and the development of theory that may be applied in practice. This method is a design for handling multidata sources as well as any kind of qualitative research (Glasser & Strauss, 1967).

Data analysis began with the first audiotape and transcription. All audiotapes were professionally transcribed. Each transcription was read and reread

in preparation for the next interview, as well as checked for completeness and accuracy. The researcher opened each interview with a brief summary of major content covered during the previous interview. The researcher also made an attempt to clarify meaning of content that she had not understood, or that she believed additional exploration was needed to fully understand a portion of the story that was being told by the informant. Once this was accomplished, the informant was asked to continue to talk about her experiences with little need for the researcher to focus the interview, which remained fairly open-ended.

As stated previously, data were sorted, organized, coded and categorized using the steps in constant comparative analysis designed by Glasser (1978). The following steps were implemented:

1. Began collecting data.

2. Looked for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that became categories of focus.

3. Collected data that provided many incidents of the categories of focus with an eye for seeing the diversity of the dimensions under the categories.

4. Wrote about the categories explored, attempted to describe and account for all incidents in the data while continuing to search for new incidents.

5. Worked with the data and emerging model to discover basic social processes and relationships.

6. Engaged in sampling, coding, and writing the analysis focused on the core categories.

This dynamic process was complex in the sense that categories and their properties were often difficult to grasp. Ultimately the application of concepts, categories and understanding the relationship of their properties provided the means for describing and interpreting the perceptions of an African American woman chief executive officer in a community college setting.

The informant was provided a copy of the dissertation prior to its printing. This was implemented to provide her with an opportunity to review information for its accuracy and to ensure the integrity of the data. The audiotapes and transcriptions will be destroyed after the acceptance of this dissertation.

Summary

The literature review provides supporting evidence that an emergent research design is appropriate for this exploratory study. The researcher utilized the art of listening and the in-depth interview as major tools for data collection. Five major themes emerged through the use of constant comparative analysis process as described by Glasser and Strauss (1967).

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION: THE INFORMANT SPEAKS
(VOICE, STORY)

Who would ever have believed that a little "shiny-kneed girl" from a small

parish in Louisiana could ascend to her current position (Informant, 1997)?

The primary purpose of the study was to ascertain major motivating and

constraining factors such as critical events, actions, and decisions that have

influenced the personal and professional development of a phenomenal Black

woman, and their relationship to career choice and mobility. This study explored

the perceptions and experiences of an African American chief executive officer in a

community college. Ultimately, data analysis and synthesis emerged through my

intense interactions with the narratives of this African American woman and the

research that has been conducted on Black women in leadership positions in a

variety of work settings including community colleges and four-year universities.

In the earlier stages of reading, sorting and coding the data, it became

evident that there were many possibilities of presenting and analyzing the data.

After considerable thought, I decided that it would be most effective to let the

informant speak for herself, to use her voice to tell her unique story. Her narrative

demonstrates the multidimensional aspects of the human existence and the

complexities in the life experiences of an African American woman as she ascended

to the position of chief executive officer. Therefore, her behavior and experiences

are examined within the context of her relationship to the environment and social

interactions with other people throughout her life. The overarching desire was to gain an understanding of key factors that may have influenced the informant's personal and professional development. While many vexing questions remain unanswered, this study sheds light on factors that may influence and guide women who are aspiring to become chief executive officers.

Data were extracted from the interviews conducted by the researcher. The interview is an intimate process of communication that takes place between the informant and the researcher; therefore, data interpretation has been known to have a subjective component. In other words, the researcher's selection of the narratives influences the direction the story takes (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1994; WoodBrooks, 1991). The informant's story also has a subjective component that could easily encourage narcissism and the illusion that one's interpretations of various life events are the events themselves. Recognizing this possibility, the researcher decided to let the data speak for itself.

These contextual data show that this African American woman emerged as a leader within the community college setting by possessing certain leadership characteristics, abilities, education and experiences. Personal and professional growth are illuminated as well as experiences that she effectively confronted. Data analysis also shows that she possesses a worldview that promotes resilience in confronting and overcoming significant incidents of sex and race discrimination. This resiliency stems from assertive moral leadership in the struggle to overcome historical exclusion to positions of power and leadership. Socialization processes

that are framed in constructs of the self, family, community, church, education and the ability to overcome obstacles to advancement are a central feature of the informant's story.

The Setting

During my first meeting with the key informant, I had the opportunity to visit with her and her husband in their modest home that was filled with African artifacts, a piano, and large dining table with six chairs. She prepared a meal for us and we talked about her family as we sat around the table. As I sat there with the aroma of food stimulating my olfactory center, I could only think about how the food that she was preparing would look and taste. It was not until months later that I became aware of her dislike for cooking. During one of our interviews, the informant admitted that she does not like to cook, even though there had been many occasions in which I had heard her speak of "breaking bread" together. She believes that coming together at the dining room table plays a vital role in developing relationships and building a sense of connectedness with others. After what appeared to be a long wait, we finally sat down at the big table and "broke bread" together, and enjoyed a casual conversation about events of the day. She sat quietly while her husband spoke of political, economical and social issues such as health care, gangs, and education. In my interview with her son, he describes his mother as a "good talker"; however, she:

> doesn't necessarily talk a lot, but says it succinctly. She can be really
> quiet (at home) and then the next thing you know she says, "Excuse
> me," and then she will get into a conversation. It is interesting

because my dad likes to lead the conversation, and they'll, you can tell when the gamesmenship is going on between those two because she will say, "Well," then she'll say something off the cuff. Anyway, it's funny when they are going at it. I think my father likes to get into politics; he loves to talk about the future.

After our meal I explained my research project, and she signed the consent form to serve as the key informant. That was my first and last time in her home. Since her husband felt that he had nothing to contribute to this research we decided to conduct subsequent interviews in her campus office. Before I left her home that day, she proudly showed me photos of her children, daughters-in-law and grandchildren.

While her home portrays her African roots, her office contained multicultural artifacts that confirm her commitment to multiculturalism. The walls were covered with pictures of her family, and awards of recognition and achievement. Her desk is located in front of the only window in the office and faces the door; however, the researcher has never observed her sitting behind the desk. She is usually sitting in front of her computer or around the big oval table where she interacts with individuals. When one walks into the office, there is a feeling of warmth that invites open communication that takes place around an oval conference table.

She is an ardent proponent of diversity issues and has a profound understanding of education and the historic and present role of the community college in preparing a diverse citizenship with knowledge and skills that are requisites for creating a productive society. During subsequent interviews she

described herself as a transformational leader, and analyses of the data and literature review show that her style can also be characterized or framed as moral leadership.

According to Avolio and Bass (cited in Bass, 1990), transformational leaders do not necessarily react to environmental circumstances--they create them. The key informant can be described as extraordinary because she is capable of inspiring individuals within the organization to be creative, think outside of the box, and perform far beyond normal expectations. Burns (1978) purports that transformational leadership is developmentally oriented for the primary purpose of change. The focus is on individual development that results in greater performance and organizational growth. The transformational leader is able to transcend ordinary tasks by articulating and promoting a mission and vision. Positive images are maintained in the minds of followers through trust and respect. When this occurs there is no need for the bureaucratic leader that necessitates constant reinforcement through reward and punishment. Burns' model, operationalized by Bass (1985), suggests that individual consideration; intellectual stimulation, charisma and inspiration are the measurable constructs found in transformational leadership. Charisma is defined as the person's ability to create a sense of devotion and involvement in the follower through personal dynamics such as self-confidence, ideological thinking, and dramatic and emotional appeal. There is little difference between charisma and inspiration; the two constructs are closely related. In other words, the charismatic leader is able to make both a cognitive and emotional appeal to the follower who becomes inspired to fulfill an articulated vision or goal. The

common thread between these two constructs is emotionality, the emotional interplay that reflects the embodiment of the relationship between the leader and follower.

Transformational leaders enhance the followers by increasing their awareness of individual needs and provide opportunities for personal growth and development. Through individual consideration, the followers are encouraged to achieve various goals and skills. The leader uses intellectual stimulation for encouraging risk-taking by thinking out of the box and thereby challenges the status quo leading to organizational change. This style of leadership requires less structure because the follower is self-motivated and becomes a leader too.

Influenced by her strong religious background, the key informant believes that she has a mission to create sustained change that will fundamentally improve the quality of the lives of individuals within the community and her organization. She recognizes that sustained change can only come about when members of the community share common values, ideas, and ideals, and commitments. In such a community, what is considered right and good is as important as what works and what is effective; people are not motivated by self interest alone, but emotions, beliefs, moral responsibility, collegiality and the recognition of interdependence are commonplace.

In such an environment, individuals respond to community values for moral reasons; their practice becomes collective and their performance is expansive and sustained (Sergiovanni, 1992). Moral leadership encapsulates Greenleaf's (1977)

concept of servant leadership. The servant leader provides a sense of purpose and direction for the community but requires the trust of others if success is to be achieved. According to Sergiovanni (1992),

> For trust to be forthcoming, the led must have confidence in the leader's competence and values. Furthermore, people's confidence is strengthened by their belief that the leader makes judgments on the basis of competence and values, rather than self-interest. (p. 125)

Background of the Key Informant

In an attempt to ensure anonymity, the key informant will not be referred to by name. She was the firstborn child to parents of working class origin, and raised in a small rural, segregated parish in the state of Louisiana. Upon the death of her mother at the young age of four, she and her sister grew up in an extended family that included one of her aunts and her maternal grandmother until her father remarried several years later. When the girls lived with their aunt, their father was always present and relentless in playing a leading role in the child-rearing process. He walked them to school every day. He was also involved in grooming his children, including the challenging task of combing their hair. The informant cites her father's critical role in her development. His influence is forever present in her life as exemplified in her seeking counsel from him until his recent death.

Her father remarried when she was nine and his new wife provided the two girls with new experiences that demanded both excellence and hard work. She was a strict disciplinarian and had high expectations of the children. From her new mother, the informant learned perseverance and discipline, as well as the meaning of

spirituality. The informant's paternal grandmother stands out as another significant person in her life. From experiences with her grandmother, she learned to respect the views of others in the process of voicing her own opinions. Her dedication to serving the community is also connected to family history. During the informant's young years she had an opportunity to observe her father, grandmother and members of the community work to achieve the right to vote. This special experience left an indelible impression in her mind. Years later, she realized the significance of the role that her family played in the Civil Rights Movement. They worked hard to change the social, political and economical conditions of Black people. Because of the deep-seated racism and Jim Crow segregation that was rampant in the South, Black people lived in segregated conditions with unequal treatment in all facets of life including being denied their democratic right to vote. She also attended segregated schools from kindergarten through undergraduate studies. This was the way of life in the Deep South.

The death of her mother had a significant impact on her development. When asked about her thoughts and feelings regarding her death she responded by saying that she had never read any books that speak to the impact that death has on children. The following statement reflects ambivalent feelings. "I haven't because I think they (the books) are probably talking about White women and that may be the reason. It didn't have a lot to do with me anyway." Her younger son, D, shares his beliefs about the impact of her mother's death. He reports:

> I think the death of her mother hit her pretty hard. She looked up to
> her mother from a standpoint of being the moral center . . . I know

when her stepmother came in she was a totally different person and I don't think my mother really trusted her a whole lot. So, she had to rely on her father a lot more.

It is clear that her mother's death influenced her relationship with her sister. She expressed a sense of responsibility to her younger sister who was less than a year old at the time of their mother's death. She recalls:

I think that I felt a great deal of responsibility for my younger sister especially since there were only two of us. We were fortunate in a sense because we went to live with our aunt who believed in education. She provided us with an opportunity to participate in lots of activities and we were exposed to cultural things. We were working people and my great-aunt owned property and had a lot of material things. And of course after my father remarried, my stepmother continued to provide us with opportunities for refinement and had even higher expectations regarding how we spoke the King's English. She paid close attention to what I did at school, my homework, and so forth. Perhaps this was due to the fact that my new mother had more education than my great-aunt did. I think it was those things that had an impact on my development . . . specific expectations about education, school and behavior. My father was very, very strict about his girls and school. He made sure that we were proud of our heritage and ourselves.

The informant's younger son's comments echoed those of his mother. He reports:

Her stepmother was a strong Black woman; she was tough and caring at the same time. Since women were looked down upon during those days, they had to be strong and they had to acquire an education. She always looked up to her as that person who went to college and did the right things, but it never went past that. She (his mother) was saddened by that and wished that she had known her better.

My mom talked about her father a lot. She described him as a hard working young man and as she would say, "He always took care of his girls." He was never really worried about what they were going to become, but worried about how they were to get there. They (the girls) always knew they would go to college and be successful, but it was like which road were they going to take to get there was the question. I can remember the story that she used to tell about her

sister Gertie who did not want to go to college at some point in time
and how she got a tongue lashing and was grounded because she
brought up that question. Whereas my mother really knew that she
was going to college and go beyond that.

Even though the family had a modest middle-class income, her father was a

proud man. He worked hard to make sure the children were educated. She and her

sister attended a segregated Catholic school for which he paid tuition though they

were not Catholic. Her parents sent the girls to Catholic schools because they

believed that the children would get a better education than if they had attended

public schools. Therefore, she attended Catholic schools throughout the formative

years and earned both a bachelor's degree and doctorate in education from Catholic

universities. Her eldest son, C, remembers his grandfather. He recalls:

Well, he was a carpenter, tradesman, liked to do things with his
hands. When I first met him, we could walk out and he would look
at a house like this one to see how the beams and walls were put
together . . . For the most part, my mom was very proud of him
because he was the one who kept the family together.

Her father grew up in the same community in which she lived as a child.

Therefore, he was well known by everyone including the small White population

living in the parish. Although he was afraid for his family, he demanded respect

from Caucasians in the town. He refused to be treated like a "Negro." The

informant remembers hearing him say, "Can't you see I am different and that I am

not acting that way." While racism was rampant, when an individual is raised in a

community that is almost all Black there seem to be fewer problems with self-

identity. Her father is a good example of this alluring phenomenon. Being a Black

man is one thing but a "Negro" is another. In other words, in his community he expected to be respected as a man and fought for equality all of his life.

Prior to completing her undergraduate education she became the first member in the immediate family to become Catholic. This was a great surprise to her parents who practiced religious tolerance. Experiences with a variety of religions have provided her with a sense of spirituality, moral commitment, values and beliefs about leadership. Sergiovanni (1992) refers to this aspect of leadership as "the heart of leadership." He states:

> The heart of leadership has to do with what a person believes, values, dreams about, and is committed to--the person's personal vision. But it is more than vision. It is the person's interior world, which becomes the foundation of her or his reality. (p. 7)

She reports:

> We went to church on Sunday mornings. My mother was a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and my dad was a Baptist. He sang in the choir and was busy. My grandmother was also a Baptist and my aunt was Seventh Day Adventist. I think all of that really has given me a tolerance for different religions but I think it has also made me a very spiritual person. In my earlier years when we went to my aunt's or my great-aunt's house, they would pray and have a little prayer meeting with the bible and so forth. And instead of going out to play, we had to participate.

When she was a child growing up in Catholic school with other Black children and an all White teaching staff she displayed a high level of energy that was troublesome to the nuns at times. Because she had learned to read, her parents placed her in school at the age of four. But that attempt failed because the nuns said that she was too young. The informant remembers being disappointed because school "looked like an interesting environment and I thought I was ready to learn

more." Later, when she was finally accepted into school, she continued to cause the

nuns concern. They constantly called her parents for one reason or another.

> They were always calling my mother because of my deportment,
> because I was always up in the room. I would go to the pencil
> sharpener to see what everybody else was doing, go to the trash can
> to see what everybody else was doing and then on the way back to
> my seat I would help my classmates out with their work whether they
> needed it or not. They (the nuns) would tell me to sit down and stop
> talking so much . . . and then the teacher would tell me that I had 10
> demerits in all of just five minutes. We were not to talk or get out of
> our seats. The nun would say, "You haven't even finished your
> work." Well, I had finished my work. Yes, I finished it. And then
> she would tell me to bring it to her so that she could check. Most of
> the time it was correct; you know, I might have screwed up
> something or wrote something too fast, and they would tell me to
> redo it. And now I just realized that they should have given me more
> problems that were a little more difficult. I don't know if that would
> have helped . . . Anyway, I probably worried the teachers to death,
> you know because I had so much energy that I couldn't sit down.

Perhaps she was bored because she was not challenged academically during

the grade school years. This is common behavior for children who are bored and

curious about things in their surroundings. Her sister, on the other hand, was calmer

and was never in trouble with the nuns at school or at home. She did not talk as

much and would tell the informant "to stop talking so much." Even today, the

informant remains curious and has a high level of energy. During my field

experience with her, I observed this. She has the capacity to go from meeting to

meeting or event to event without stopping, and sometimes without taking a

bathroom break.

As she grew older, the informant became less troublesome to the nuns.

However, she continued to help others with their work, but not as much because of

her growing interest in other things. She was involved in extracurricular activities such as drama and music as well as community and church activities.

The informant believes that her overall experience in a segregated school was a good one even though one of the sisters called the children "niggers." She also reported that her high school education prepared the students for college. She said:

> I think that we had 18 to 20 students in a class and when I was in high school maybe there were 15. We had some very young and energetic priests in the parish. So they tried all kinds of things with us. . . . We were sent to the school and we believed that we got a better education than we would have gotten in the public schools. We believed that we had more high school graduates who went directly to college and of course that would be true for private school. Now did I get the same quality of education that the White kids were getting at the private school? I would doubt it. But I feel as though I got a competitive education. And I think that because our teachers were White and the principal was White that our books were newer. I can remember opening up fresh textbooks. If I can remember right, you know smelling a fresh primer and all that. Probably we didn't always get new books, but I think that somehow we did. There were some things that we did not get. I never learned typing or home economics nor did we have a real chemistry lab. We basically learned from the books. So, I could spout stuff out. They stressed English, reading and mathematics. We were really bright kids . . . so when we went to college, we did quite well because of the background and preparation that we had received in school.

Even though she and 50% of her class were well prepared to enter a university, attending college with Black youngsters from other schools was an interesting experience. For the first time, she had to compete with the brightest students from Louisiana and other parts of the United States who were Black and ranked first to fourth in their graduating classes.

And you know when you go to college; you've been a smart kid in high school and all that. You think it will be the same, and you don't realize that the smart ones have come to college so you are competing with individuals who graduate first and second in their graduating classes. Boy, that is quite a thing to deal with.

Self-reflection can be a painful experience for the subjects of qualitative research. Respondents in Gostnell's (1996) and Talley-Ross (1991) studies were reported as tearful during aspects of the interview process especially when sharing painful experiences. The key informant in this study was never sad as she discussed critical incidents and significant experiences such as the deaths of her mother and sister. She and I laughed a lot during interview sessions. Her laugh is infectious and her overall demeanor was positive as she told her story. Her son's comments may shed light on reasons why she responds in the matter in which she does. He shares:

She is proud of growing up in Louisiana. She's never said whether she would have gotten to where she has gotten . . . faster or not; I do not think that she is a person who dwells on that type of thing. She goes for what is there. This is what it is and I draw my course. There's no, if I hadn't been . . . or something like that I would have clearly made it, but she bore success; this is what I had and I went for it. I think she is pretty humble. She underestimates herself sometimes because any person from the South as she says, "A little southern girl with two shiny knees, you know getting to where I am, I never . . ." She never really envisioned that; it was a dream. But most dreams, you hope will happen but don't really think it will happen, coming from where she came. I said you need to give yourself a lot of credit, and she says, "Yea." So it's not very serious, I mean you have done more in your lifetime than most people will ever do.

During the early childhood years her parents instilled in the girls a sense of self-pride and respect for themselves and others. She was taught self-reliance within

the parameters of a sheltered environment. They were taught to save their money

and other simple tasks such as house cleaning and paying bills.

> My sister and I were given money. I don't know when this started,
> but we were given an allowance, and we were also taught to save.
> So, we saved . . . we were expected to take this money to the bank,
> to put it in a savings account. I even remember how much it was,
> about $1,000. But at first my dad and mom would take us to the
> bank, and they would show us what they were doing because saving
> was the thing you were supposed to do. If you didn't save you were
> going to be poor all of your life. And so as we got older they would
> send us to the bank and observe from the outside to see what we
> were doing, and later they would ask us, "How much did you put
> in?," "Were you treated with respect?," "What did the people tell
> you?" and so, we learned a lot of lessons from this.

As a child and teenager she was never allowed to work outside of the home

because of her father's fear that someone might rape or bring harm to her. His fear

was valid because lynching and rape were common in the South during the 1940s

and 1950s.

> . . . because of the whole Black-White situation, we were never
> allowed to babysit in a White home or do any other work because
> that meant you would have to go into a White person's home and
> babysit if you were going to make any real money. And so, my
> father always said, "I don't want to have to go to prison behind
> killing anyone." We were accompanied by my father or mother
> because my dad said that to go alone might put us in contact with a
> White environment that would not have been the most positive.

> He felt that if something had happened, he would not have been able
> to protect us. So, we stayed at home. We were not allowed to just
> be out there as a teenager, hanging out, we were too busy.

She basically spent her younger years in an all Black community that had a profound

impact on her psychological development. Her mother remained at home until she

was about 11 or 12 years old, then went to work for a Black doctor. With the

exception of the priest and nuns, everyone was Black including the family doctor.

Following in the footsteps of her mother and aunts, the informant aspired to be more than a wife and mother. She recalls:

> You know I was supposed to be a nurse like my aunt, and so I had taken chemistry and all of my math and other courses, but in my senior year we were exposed to the Future Teachers Association. I was absolutely fascinated. So then I was going to become a teacher. I think I always was a teacher. And I think that I saw myself as being married and having children . . . I think that I always saw myself too as working in the community because I saw my father do that with some of my other relatives.

> Working in the community and belonging to a group that contributed to improving the community are important to me because I had seen that happen in my life and in my community, in my family. We were supposed to do something. In the Catholic school you are told, "You are not on earth to take up space and die, so what is it that you are going to do?" You are asked the big question of why are you on the earth, what purpose are you to serve here and what contribution are you going to make? So for me that was a serious question. My aunts, great-aunt and my father and uncle were involved in getting people ready to vote. And so, as little girls we were taken to every one of those meetings because there was no babysitter so we had to go where parents went. We both were very curious so we would listen to all of the things and to what was happening.

> The meetings were on how you were going to organize and on who was going to do what. I knew that my dad was going to lead a lesson on parts of the Constitution. This was done to prepare people to pass the voters registration test; so they were drilled. And of course, my sister and I being little girls, we would go home and role-play everything. We also went to lodge meetings. Whatever we were introduced to, we acted out everybody's part and mimicked folks.

> The educated people were expected to be a part of this and that is what I remember. And my father was totally involved. There were lawyers, undertakers, and people that he had gone to school with that he really knew. And then there were people like my great-aunt who were self-educated, good people with common sense. There were those who could read and write and there were people who couldn't

> read and write but they would contribute . . . and it seemed like
> people had different roles because I remember the school teachers
> advised within the meeting but they were not participants in public
> events. Others would speak for them because they could lose their
> jobs. People played various roles in the community.

Clearly, her family's commitment and service to the community, and work in various

organizations have contributed to the development of her mindscape. Sergiovanni

purports that:

> Mindscapes--the mental pictures in our heads about how the world
> works--are often tacitly held. They program what we believe counts,
> help create our realities, and provide a basis for decisions. What we
> do makes sense if it matches our mindscapes. And different
> mindscapes present different realities: what makes sense with one
> mindscape may not make sense with another. Different realities can
> lead people to behave quite differently. (p. 8)

Growing up in a segregated community in the South in the 1940s and 1950s,

professionals, merchants and store-owners, laborers, and the unemployed lived side

by side and attended the same churches, schools and other social events of the day

(Gostnell, 1996). The same holds true for the informant. However, there was one

family in particular that she remembers. The children were not allowed to go into

this house or yard. She recalls:

> A doctor lived about six blocks from us and the other family owned a
> grocery store. A lawyer lived across the street and a teacher on the
> other side. There was a house that we were never ever as long as I
> could remember, we were never allowed to go into the house, not
> even in the yard. But the people were very nice to us, very
> respectful. I think that maybe they might have been running numbers
> or even a little prostitution may have been going on. My mother
> would go out early in the morning and look around to see what was
> happening before we were allowed to go out and play. It's
> interesting how these things come back to you. As I said they were
> very respectful and no one ever disrespected us. They dared not
> because my father would have probably killed them. I think that he

> (neighbor) was a tradesman. Their daughter was divorced and she
> came back home with three children that were about our age so we
> played together. Their grandparents sort of helped raise them.

Although she grew up in a segregated community and her father was college

educated, she did not experience the identity crisis that some Black women have, as

reported in Gostnell's study (1996). This outcome can possibly be attributed to the

fact that all of the people lived in the same neighborhood regardless of their

education or social status. Identity crisis occurs when the individual receives double

messages about him or herself when comparing others in the community and society

at large. Conflicting messages such as "be proud of being Black, but you are better

than other Blacks because you are more educated" and live outside of the Black

community could have a negative impact on the development of the child's psyche

leading to an identity crisis.

These early experiences of observing her father, family members and other

members of community made an indelible impression on the informant. She knew in

her heart that she was going to play a leading role in the lives of others. She knew

that she would contribute to the community in which she lives just as her parents

and grandparents had done before her.

The informant's childhood experiences played a vital role in her attainment of

the position of chief executive officer. From her immediate family she gained a

positive self-image and sense of pride in being Black. She learned to value herself

and other members of the community. Participation in church activities provided

many opportunities for leadership development. She learned that a community that

works together can overcome barriers, such as racial discrimination, and can be transformed. She also learned self-reliance and the value of education. This is summarized in the following statement.

> I think that my Catholic education plus the strict religious environment that I was brought up in and the fact that my mother was very active in the African American church had a profound impact on me. There were many experiences in church that trained you for leadership such as standing up before people and performing. We were expected to perform well . . . That along with a sense of what is right and what is wrong and the discipline that you have in the Catholic school helps you to internalize your own discipline, to stay on task. To expect quality though you don't know how to name it at the time, I think they gave us a feeling that more was expected of you than kids in today's public schools. My parents would say, "It is a privilege to be in this school"; and they provided us with an orientation to service. I can't separate what is the orientation to serve the community, which certainly came out of my college years. Whether that helped supplement what I already saw in my own family, in my background I don't know, but I think there's a connection. I'm not allowed to be in the world and take from the world and to enjoy what it has to offer without my in turn giving something back. That has had a profound impact on my personal and professional development.

> More important, I remember stories about how my family was able to overcome many barriers. I especially remember my aunt who lost her arm as a child. She worked and put herself through college. She became a teacher. If they could do it, you just have to get on out there, struggle with it, and do it. Just go do it, just do it. I think that my husband was the same way. We had the spirit to struggle, to be self-reliant and we never asked our families for anything since we were married. I don't care what it was; we had to work it out together. They were not financially able to assist anyway, but we never took emotional problems to them either. You take care of yourself and your home; they have enough to deal with.

> He (husband) has been supportive of what I was doing although I'd say that he really would have wanted a wife who stays at home.

While attending undergraduate school, at age 21 the informant married her husband who was a Catholic. He was in the military at the time of their marriage. After completing her second year of teaching she joined him and they moved to Colorado where they lived until he completed his military tour. Following this, they returned to his hometown in Louisiana where he opened a drugstore and she pursued a Junior High School teaching career. She and her husband remained for two years in the little town where the people spoke French Creole. He gradually became unhappy with his job and applied for a pharmacist position with the Federal Government that brought them to the Northwest. Moving to the Northwest with their firstborn proved to be a good decision. She reports: "It was a wonderful little Mecca of culture and everything. We learned a lot there." She continues:

> We had one young child. And most White people had never seen an educated Black family. They had not seen or touched an African American child. There were other Black families there but most of them had come there to work as harvest workers or the railroad. We were the first educated Black people there, so there was a lot of pioneering. I taught Catholic grade school for one year. My husband and I felt that we had received a quality education in the Catholic school and we could give something back. I worked for one year but the cost for me to work was not worth it.

> While living there I had another child. We were this novel couple that walked around, and we were shocked at their naivete. They wanted to know if we were educated and of course my husband was their first Black pharmacist; they had never had one before. The way to get into things there in (the name of the town) was to join groups and clubs. So I ventured out and I was nervous and shaky but you know it wasn't stressing me out.

> I wasn't accustomed to being around large numbers of White people without a Black community or Black professionals to associate with, but I thought . . . they were people, you know teachers and priests. In fact, we formed some genuine friends and our children played

together and learned about each other, and talked quite frankly about
our cultures. It was exciting to me. And that is why I volunteered to
work with the Red Cross and other things. I became a member of
the Junior League. We belonged to a gourmet club with the
professors. I wasn't a good cook, but I made a good salad from the
cookbook. We met about once a month and had discussions about
the Catholics, civil rights, and other issues. We attended symposiums
that brought in renowned speakers.

It was during that time that we learned as a couple to be relaxed,
self-reliant and to depend upon each other. The other major thing
that happened during this time is that I found my passion for the
community college.

The informant decided to return to college to pursue an advanced degree

with the influence, and financial and psychological support of her husband, attending

classes in the evening. After completing her master's degree she worked for the

Welfare Department. Shortly after accepting this job she realized that this kind of

work had no real appeal to her. While she believes that she experienced tremendous

professional growth from this kind of work, she saw a hopeless outcome for

families. However, she expressed belief in the power of education, that it provided a

way out for poor working people.

The informant's early childhood, teen, and young adult life experiences and

development laid the foundation for a worldview that embodied the belief that she

was not put into this world to take and not give something back to the community.

She has the head, the heart, and the hand described by Sergiovanni (1992). Her

passion for education and willingness to give back to the community are reflected in

the decisions, actions, and behaviors that she's demonstrated during the past 25

years as an educator, student, follower and leader of the learning community.

Current Position

The informant accepted a chief executive officer (CEO) position at West Coast Community College (WCCC) in June 1995. The college is located in an urban setting with a diverse population and serves more than 80,000 residents each year. The campus has approximately 4,000 full-time student equivalents and offers lower division transfer course work as well as a number of professional technical programs in health, business, legal, computer science, and workforce skills upgrade, and adult basic education. Upon her arrival she was faced with the difficult challenges of an urban college surrounded with high school dropouts, gang-related shootings and the selling of drugs and other types of inner-city crimes.

The decision to accept a chief executive officer position was made with trepidation and considerable thought about her marriage and family relationships. Unlike males in chief executive officer positions, females ascending to the presidency are more likely to pay a heavy price of divorce. The informant was determined that this would not be her outcome. She was prepared to assume a chief executive officer position long before she finally made the decision to accept this career advancement. Having a family has been a barrier for many women. Carroll (1987) speculates that the greatest barrier married women leaders face is coping with the conflict between family and career.

While self-imposed, the informant recognized that having a family was a barrier during the years her children were growing-up. Even now, she continued to express concern about her relationship with her husband. Hence, the decision to

apply for her current position was made with the complete involvement of family

and many discussions with her mentor. As stated previously this was a difficult

decision because she liked her position and colleagues.

> I have been in the community college system for 25 years. And so I
> felt, I knew that because of my children, my sons, and my husband's
> career that I was place-bound. I guess I didn't feel that I was not
> ready, but I was not going to get up and disturb his career to go
> some place to assume a chief executive officer position. It was only
> when he began to travel in his newly found career that I became
> excited about taking on a leadership position. I had to go through a
> very difficult process to make the decision. My sons helped; they
> walked through the process with me . . . Nobody would give an
> answer about what they were thinking I should do. But my husband
> and sons were supportive. So I thought I really do not have a lot to
> lose, I don't think, but on the other hand, maybe I did have a lot to
> lose. Anyway, I thought that I would give it a try. So I am glad that
> I did. I am not sorry. Actually, physically getting up and moving
> was the most difficult.

Ambivalence toward career advancement and family commitment is clearly evident

in the thinking and decision making of this woman. Ten years earlier she could not

overcome this insurmountable barrier, and did not make the decision to move into a

CEO's position. Her son, D, recalls:

> I'd say about 10 years ago, she had an opportunity to be the president
> of CCC. It required a little bit of travel from where we lived and so
> on and so forth. I told my mother, "You know, you should really go
> for this since my brother and I are out of the house and on our own,
> dad's already established in his job, you know you've got to go for
> yourself now." And she decided not to really pursue it as vehemently
> as I thought she would. And I asked her, I said, "I don't understand
> mom, you've always gone after anything you done, number one doing
> it the right way and secondly always putting your 110% effort into
> it." This was the first time I had not seen her put 110% into
> something. I asked her why and she said well, "I'm not going to
> displace our family circle or family unit," and I said, "I don't
> understand." She goes, "Well, if I take this position, we would have
> to move. Our house has a lot of sentimental value and I don't want

to erase that, and your father is happy where he is, being here; and he likes his life right now, and I don't want to change that."

I just asked her one question, "What about what you want?" I found that to be incredibly fascinating for a person who is definitely a leader and definitely someone everybody looks up to that would selflessly give up everything to make someone else happy. So, when this position came up, the same identical thing happened in a sense, but not with the same outcome.

I actually got mad at her. I told her this is about the fourth or fifth time when you are up for a position to be the president and it's something you have wanted all of your life and you need to do this. So finally I talked to her about 20 times and my dad 10 times and said "Dad you've got a new position and you're flying all over the place and all you need is an airport." He kind of got upset and then realized . . . I said, "You've gotten everything you want, you live two miles from your work when we're in (a place) and now you don't have an office and you are just wherever." And I said, "I think it's mom's time to get what she wants and what she has always dreamed of."

Anyway, after that he got mad for about a week, then settled down and said, "Yea, you are right." So we all convinced her that this was the right thing to do, and when she got the position she was so happy that she was like, "I'm ready to sign right away," and I said, "No, no, no, deal now."

If her husband had continued to pursue his original thinking, this story would have had a different ending. According to her sons, she thinks highly of his opinion. As her younger child said, "I think my mom always takes my father's opinions very close to the heart; very, very, close to heart. So if he goes negative on something such as becoming the dean of students or whatever it might be, she won't do it."

Of the African American women community college chief executive officers (31%), the majority is unmarried or divorced. Chatman (1991) findings provide evidence that African American women in top to middle level management positions

within colleges and universities are more likely to be unmarried. Only four of the participants in her study were married, two were divorced and eight had never married. Gostnell's (1996) study on seven African American women in leadership positions had similar results; only two of the respondents were married, three were divorced and two had never married. Having a supportive spouse and family are key ingredients for the successful woman of color. Married informants in Talley-Ross' (1991) study unanimously described their spouses as being supportive of their careers. Informants reported that their spouses shared household responsibilities, which is a concrete example of their support. Although her husband was supportive, the informant in this study reported that she believes that her husband would have enjoyed having her stay at home with the children; that he "really wanted me to stay home. Now he knows how important work is to me."

Perceived Characteristics and Attributes

The informant's "passion for education" is the primary factor that influenced her career choice and mobility.

> I can get excited about things. There are some things that I learned that I do not have a passion for and have no interest and that is okay. But I am excited about education. I really am excited about community college education. And I believe that the need to respond to the changing demographics of the student population and the need to address community college students has always been the challenge that has led me to new projects, implementing new strategies and exploring the latest thing that could be done wherever I am. This, of course, has led me to accepting more responsibility.

Her sons agree with their mother. She is perceived as having a passion for teaching. The eldest child reports that his mother would frequently have a group of neighborhood children sitting on crates and boxes in the back yard teaching them the alphabet. He also believes that his mother is a curious person and has always wanted to learn.

Not only did she have a passion for education within the community college system, she engaged in experiences that facilitated professional development and career mobility such as providing leadership in the areas of admissions, financial aid, counseling, and authoring and administering a number of grants.

Furthermore, ascending to the position of chief executive officer requires career planning. The aspiring woman has to acquire a variety of experiences that women may not have had opportunities as compared to their male counterparts. Stokes (1984) and Harvard (1986) purport that women administrators believe that they must work twice as hard as their male counterparts, have less influence in the decision-making process, and have more difficulty with achievement recognition. These feelings among African American women may be even more intense because of race and gender issues. According to Mosley (1980), African American women feel overworked, underpaid, alienated, uncertain and powerless.

The African American women interviewed by WoodBrooks (1991) reported concerns that they may not have attained jobs even though they had acquired knowledge and skills that were needed to assume new roles that they were seeking. Oftentimes, interviewing committees consist of White men who question the validity

of the Black woman's experience. For example, one of the respondents in WoodBrooks' (1991) study had worked in a historically Black university prior to applying to a predominantly White institution. She felt her work at the historically Black institution that was scrutinized by a search committee made up of all White men was not perceived as transferable. Another respondent in this study reported that her research on Black teenagers was suspect and prevented career advancement. While the informant in this study had a number of negative experiences as she advanced within the community college system, she remained focused and continued to gain requisite knowledge, skills and experiences that are needed to gain the title and responsibility of CEO. She recognized her professional contributions; however, Strauss (1982) points out the quest for legitimization for some is a continuing process of establishing the authenticity of work, realness, propriety, morality and legality of one's existence. The informant speaks:

> First of all, I knew that I had a number of experiences that prepared me to operate at a CEO level, to run my own ship, if you want to use that expression. My mentor, who was my boss, asked me that question . . . I felt that I had those experiences and an understanding of the overall operation of a community college. I felt that I was well grounded in that. If there was any area that I had not had direct experiences in was probably being responsible for managing facilities. While I had no direct experience in managing facilities, I had been involved in the planning and discussions related to this area. I also had fairly strong course work in that particular area. I tried to expose myself to that area of learning whenever it was discussed because it tends to be an area that women are weak in, in the budget and in facilities. Either women do not have the hands on or we tend to shy away from it. I understood this point and wanted to make sure that this was not true for me.

Although the informant reluctantly uses the term survivor, she describes herself as such a person. As a survivor she has persevered in an organization that was in a state of contradiction, where the organization was in flux and there were inconsistencies between the old and the new. However, she looks at survival through a different lens than most others. To her it does not have the connotation of "having someone heap abuse upon an individual nor does it mean that a person has taken a circuitous path to reach their current position with an organization." She explains:

> I see the ability to survive in organizations that we find ourselves in and particularly as African American women the ability to survive all of the forces; that is something I'm proud of . . . my ability to survive.

> There were times when there have been rifts, the cutting of the budget and so forth; and as a newcomer I was right on the precipice of being laid off or being sent to another campus, but that did not happen. It did not happen because I worked my first two years to develop a new career-planning course, or to do something other than the counseling job that was my primary assignment. This was seen as an added value. The administration wanted me there because of the work that I was willing to do, the extra, and I liked having an extra project. I was able to talk with the president or deans without too much of a problem. I don't try to go against the chain of command. When I've had to talk with them, it was usually issue oriented. I have talked about the needs of the students and the need to develop programs to address various concerns. I must say that some presidents did not appreciate it but most of them have. I have principles and sometimes have had to accept consequences for articulating what I think is right. And I was looked at as being a hard worker. They are always looking for somebody who will do more for the same amount of money.

> So I think that's part of the reason that I have survived. Another reason is that I have become politically astute. I believe that is part of survivorship. I do not think I have ever done anything immoral, unethical or illegal to move ahead. I would never do any of those

things to simply survive, but I am politically astute. In fact I have
learned to be astute . . . the hard way.

When asked to provide examples of how she had grown in this area, she recalls:

Well, I used to speak out on issues related to students and I did not
care what it was about, I just said what had to be said without regard
for what the ramifications may be because I thought it was the right
thing to do. That was a part of my Catholic upbringing, although
you were not allowed to do that with the sisters. But I felt that
students deserved to have some voice somewhere and I never
thought I would be in administration anyhow . . . So, I said what I
believed was the right thing. And I fought for students and their
needs. Of course when you do this, you get beat on the head many
times so I learned from observing those who got what they wanted.
I saw models and I did not care whether the model was African
American or whatever, I learned from that person.

I also attended workshops. It was the time when the women's
movement was just exploding and they were teaching women how to
perform in leadership roles. So I learned new tools and techniques.
Therefore, I was not so gruff about asking for things. Though I
remained outspoken. I do not ever want to compromise so much
that I don't stand for something.

C agrees that his mother is outspoken and is unafraid of going to the next level to

get what she needs for students. He shares:

She never makes it personal; that's the way she works. She tells you
what is in the best interest of the school. Now you are not going to
go against the best interests of the school, or the best interest of the
staff or student body. Clearly we are here for the students, wouldn't
you agree? Slowly, the person will agree. One thing I know about
my mom is that she is not afraid to go to the next step and politically
she knows when to do it. She knows who holds the power and I
don't ever remember her ever saying that she was afraid to talk to
somebody.

The informant's desire for autonomy appears to be another major characteristic that

influenced career choice and mobility. She believes that she is more productive and

works best without close supervision. She also feels that constructive criticism

promotes growth and enhances the quality of one's performance. She reports an

incident with one of her supervisors:

> . . . I decided I had enough of it, so I went to his office to find out
> what was going on and what I was supposed to do. I have never
> been an individual who could tolerate close supervision; I don't need
> it, I don't want it, and I don't work well under it. I didn't need a
> coach. Now, if someone could help me do something better, I would
> accept criticism, but I think that I felt that he had nothing to tell me.
> Anyway, I really got tired of the memos. As soon as I would get
> something done, he would tell me to present a paper on what my
> duties were. He wanted details about my program. I talked to my
> husband about this and I decided that I might get fired. I went to his
> office and told him that I thought he had been abusive to me and that
> I wasn't going to tolerate it, that he was in no position to criticize me
> because he did not know what he was doing. I told him that we
> needed to come to an understanding, that he had to get off my back.
> I said that, "I can't and will not work under that kind of constraint. I
> think to the best of my ability I do good work and I know that I can
> improve if somebody can tell me how to improve, but to simply give
> me busy work to do because you think I am out of control is
> unacceptable."

Concomitantly, while pursuing a degree, she worked hard to achieve credentials that

would ensure a career path that she had chosen. Hence, when she was "place-

bound," she engaged in new learning opportunities by creating new initiatives that

held her interest. New initiatives within student services such as grant writing,

planning and developing new areas, and participating in state and national education

organizations, provided her with a well-rounded background and preparation for a

chief executive officer position.

The informant's knowledge of organizational theory and what it takes to

bring about change can also be described as a positive influence on her professional

development.

I'm excited about having the responsibility for change. I am not a
good maintenance manager . . . I believe you need to continue to
review systems and processes to determine whether change should
occur . . . One must ask the right questions such as has the student
population changed and if so what is needed to deal with that change.
It took years to bring in new players and to make the college that I
came from a first rate institution. We were able to get federal funds
to support the changes. State funds were not sufficient to allow us
to support required changes. The President went to Washington to
secure the first grant.

She also has an understanding of curriculum, faculty, contracts, and student

issues. It took 20 years to bring about the changes needed to gain a national

reputation for being an institution of quality. Thinking outside of the box was the

modus operandi that lead to significant changes within the institution (previous place

of employment).

. . . had to reframe the way you taught students of color and
provided compensatory education . . . give students a real chance at
the subject matter at a college level. You have to have new money
to sometimes show the stable faculty and staff by bringing in new
blood to show what can happen when you juxtapose the new with
the existing. There is a need to provide opportunities so that staff is
not punished when trying new things. And even the students are free
to try new things to change . . . After the campus began to change
and build, the surrounding businesses began to refurbish and
remodel. This was an exciting time.

The leaders in her former institution built a foundation that encouraged new people

to explore innovative ideas without totally dismantling the old culture. In a sense

there were two coexisting cultures.

People saw that the leadership supported innovation and expected
innovation and demanded innovation. This became part of the
culture of the organization. With new money you could try new
things and study results, and if not desirable you could adjust . . .
there was an influx of change. A new person was brought in to
restructure the organization, i.e., get rid of staff, usually when you

bring in a hatchet person, that person has to go. I did not realize it at
the time. I think that person knew he couldn't remain at the college
after his tasks were completed. Of course he had no understanding
of the climate and his style was one that was relatively autocratic. I
don't think this style lends itself well to community colleges and
education. After you get to a certain stage it doesn't work and the
harshness of the autocracy was another thing . . . we were constantly
getting new presidents, so there were lots of changes.

She worked with nine presidents before assuming her current position. During the

25 years, the informant assumed many roles within the college. She was a faculty

member and counselor. As a grant coordinator, she learned how to negotiate with

the Federal Government. "They told you when you apply to ask for more than you

are going to get. So I learned that too. I learned how to negotiate the budget

allocations when called; you're not going to get it all."

Furthermore, the informant developed a strong sense of ethics as a child

growing up in the Deep South. Because of earlier experiences with family, church

and community, she wants to serve, to give something back to the community. She

characterizes herself as having a strong "service ethic" and she recognizes her

individual responsibility and has the self-confidence to dare to become a leader. She

recalls:

Well, I have a strong service ethic. For me it was and is about
getting in there seeing and doing something about a problem. I did
not always know what I was doing or know whether it was the best.
I think I had enough self-confidence to keep going in there and trying
to make a difference. I think that I was successful based upon my
script which expects responsiveness. Knowing that you have a lot of
people who believe in you, you are thinking I have this responsibility
to handle this situation. We were told that being responsive is an
opportunity for you, and others may not have this opportunity.

Her son shares:

> She has always been involved in the community . . . It is a piece of
> her and she is very proud of the Black community. She says, "As
> tough as it is and as trying as Black folks can be sometimes, we have
> to support one another because who else is going to do it. If I don't
> do it maybe there will be someone else, but I don't know that."

Black women have been characterized as being matriarchs, aunt jemimas, sapphires,

and even referred to as harlots. These perpetuated images have posed a barrier for

many as they have attempted to climb the career ladder. Some women have not

been able to deconstruct and transcend these stereotypes and have in fact

internalized these caricatures. When I asked her if she thought that others perceived

her through stereotypical lenses, she replied, "Well, I surely wouldn't think that they

don't view me through those same lenses." She explains:

> They think that we are inarticulate, that we got there through
> Affirmative Action and if you show any skill then it is a natural trait.
> It is not attributed to the fact that you are well read, that you have
> studied and fine-tuned your skills and abilities in a particular area.
> So, I think all of that is resting on you. It is almost like being an
> onion, if I can use that metaphor. I like metaphors. So, if you think
> of yourself as an onion and the perception is that you are a purple
> onion when really you are a yellow onion. Well, you don't know that
> you're supposed to be a purple one and you proceed to develop as a
> yellow one.

She continues:

> When those perceptions are revealed to you, you deal with it if it is
> negatively contributing to your getting what you need to have done.
> Then I think you need to teach people and get them straight at times.
> Sometimes you just want to have a little fun and let things persist
> because it's their problem. You don't have to work with the
> individual; therefore, you ignore it. Through long-term association
> people come to know what you are about. I think it's important to
> know who you are and what you are about. Some people never get

it and it's okay as long as you have a critical mass that does not fall into this category.

Let the record stand for itself, but I think it is more difficult if you are a woman, an African American woman. Perhaps other women of color have those negative attributes heaped upon them too. I know when I met with my fellow ethnic minority sisters, they talked about the stereotypes and how burdensome it is. I don't think the feeling is the same. The burden of the aunt jemima, and the mammy is different. With these stereotypes, everybody wants to lay their head on your shoulder and have you take care of them. The Asian/Pacific Islander woman is a Susie Wong woman.

When asked if there were other characteristics she possesses, she reports:

In addition to perseverance, I think that being resourceful is important. I think that ever since I was a child I have been one of those people who thinks about what, where you can get things, how do you put things together, how can you bring people together to address a problem, work the problem and never give up. I think that kind of thing is what organizations, presidents and boards are looking for in a leader. They are looking for a problem-solver, a person who exercises prudence. They are looking for someone who can bring people together to address various issues.

I also think that I am ethical. Lord knows there are times when you are pressed with an issue but I think I always try to act on principles, ethics, and honesty. I don't mean honesty where you have to tell people everything, which I have learned not to do. But I think one needs to be straight with people so that they can develop trust in you. I care about people, I really, really do care about them. And I think people sense when you are lying to them. They can tell. I may avoid saying something, but I will try never to lie to them.

Respect is another important characteristic. I respect everybody, and I want respect in return. I respect a drunk on the street although I want him to stay out of my way because I am scared of him. Regardless of race, creed, sexual orientation, class, I will respect the individual. That does not mean that I want to be your friend or that we are going to have a close connection, and so forth. I am not talking about that at all. What I mean is basic human respect that you give to people.

Furthermore, to be a successful leader one must expect quality at every level within the organization. Once a student contacts us by phone, letter, or walk-in he or she should have a quality experience, a caring experience irrespective of their background. It should not matter whether they are from a poor background or a rich background. The leader must work to create an aesthetically pleasing environment. I don't care if it's old it ought to be clean. We must provide students with quality learning experiences, that means that we should provide the most competent faculty who care and who assists the student in stretching so that he or she is getting the best learning experience possible. Leadership in today's educational institutions must be student centered and must have an understanding of student demographics. We should be able to provide a quality learning experience irrespective of the student's prior learning experiences because they come with different levels of preparation.

Emerging themes appear to be clear. The informant is not motivated by self-interest. Instead, she is driven by: what she thinks is right and wrong, how she feels about people, the recognition of stereotypes, a caring ethic, the recognition of student demographics and the need to be student centered, and by the norms that emerge from our connections with other people.

The informant's older son believes that his mother's success was influenced by the encouragement of others and is a direct result of hard work and being the best at activities related to school and work. She has always been willing to work hours extending beyond a 9 to 5 day. He remembers:

As a child I did not understand why my mother was studying all the time, but she knew. She had people in place telling her okay in order to get to this or that position, you will need to be not at the same level as others, but you will need to be above them because the bottom line is, "You are Black and you are female." They may not have come right out and said that, but the bottom line is in the sixties that's the way it was. Anyway, I think in the past she has, I guess she has always tried to position herself. I don't know if it was just by accident or the way she worked it, but she always positioned herself to go to the next job.

He continues:

> Mom was always one to keep busy, a multitask person. She could
> clean and talk to someone on the phone about a project at the same
> time. Of course I cannot do this, I can barely manage with two
> things at the same time, but her, she could sweep, wash clothes and
> talk to one person after another about various projects they were
> working on. Mom has a knack for getting people involved and
> energized with activities that someone else would have to get a stick
> out and beat them over their heads to get them involved.
> Furthermore, she is going to do a good job no matter where she's at
> she'll give you her best. She will engage you and will expect nothing
> less than your best. She is above board and has integrity. She's
> honest with you. In fact, she is brutally honest.

He remembers his mother's comments about people whom she has worked with

during the years. When someone has not been performing satisfactorily, she did not

hesitate to ask if she could help him or her. He reports:

> My mom would say, "You know you are a wonderful person and you
> have great qualities. I like you, but your typing skills are troubling
> and I don't think this is working out so can I help you get some place
> where you can do what you want? What do you really want to do?
> How can I help you to be where you need to be?" She's much
> gentler unless you've messed up to the point where you have got to
> go and then she'll say this person has to go she cannot stay here any
> longer. However, before that happens she would have given that
> person every opportunity. And after trying she admits, "I don't have
> any place to put her, she's got to go." She's fair. Once you really
> mess up there is no going back. There is no second chance.
> My mother has influenced me. She used to take us to work and now
> when I have to go in on Saturday or when I have to go to the library,
> I bring all the kids in and I keep them busy.

The informant possesses many of the attributes of what is characterized as a moral

leader. She values colleagues and co-workers. Not only does she work for the

benefit of the group she expects the very best from others. She provides the mental

stimulation and resources for the personal growth and development of others,

allowing them to become leaders within the organization.

Leadership

As the administrator of the counseling department, she demonstrated the

capacity to provide leadership in an area that she characterizes as a dysfunctional

unit, a group that was unmotivated and uncooperative. She recalls:

> Everyone in the organization knew they were dysfunctional. They
> would argue with each other in public. There were meetings where
> you tried to start on a subject and they would divert it onto
> something else. The meeting would end with a big fight about
> something that had nothing to do with the issue that you were
> discussing. So, I had to resort to paper and pencil to frame what I
> thought would be a real counseling program for the college. And so,
> divisional counseling was established. This restructuring gradually
> applied pressure on those who didn't want to work. We were able to
> get funding to hire two new people who had a sense of what
> counseling ought to be. The existing group had been dismissed from
> the public school system or administrators who had gone awry were
> placed in counseling. Anyway, I tried to work with those people
> who really wanted to set up strategies and a plan for what should be
> done to make a difference for the students.

In the midst of budget cuts during the 1980s, she worked with colleagues to

improve student services while at the same time she learned to fire people.

Subsequently, she began to appreciate the idea that being in a leadership role can

lead to feelings of isolation.

> I learned about trying to have friendships with people you supervise,
> that is, personal friendships with them do not work. You know
> where you eat, drink, talk, and do other things together. I do not
> know how to do it, you see. I learned that it doesn't work for me. I
> also learned that you do not hire friends. It just does not work
> either.

> I also learned that leadership is the initiation of structure. Over and over again as a leader we initiate structure . . . When organizations are dysfunctional and needed change appears impossible, change the entire structure or process. Everybody starts out fresh. It works. For the culture to change it takes a little bit longer once the structure changes.
>
> You put structures in place and then work on the cultural change to achieve overall change. Culture is more difficult to change according to organizational development theory.

Her present leadership style reflects lessons learned from experiences of working with male colleagues. Hampel (1988) suggests that men and women have different goals when it comes to psychological fulfillment. Men have a tendency to emphasize individual relationships and achievement, power as a source for controlling people and events. They believe in independence, authority, and set procedures while women tend to emphasize relationships, affiliation, power as the means to achieve shared goals, authenticity, connectedness and personal creativity. But women, for the most part, focus on connections between and among people that lead toward goal achievement. In other words, goal achievement is a byproduct of relationships among individuals within the institution (Hampel, 1988). She reports:

> I think my experience has made me more conscious of giving people public credit for the work they do. People in the organization know you cannot do all the work, and that it was under your leadership. Therefore, we are effective together. You have the skill to hire competent people. And you just cannot do everything yourself.
>
> I don't really desire or require being the one who is in the limelight, and I can share that. I really enjoy seeing people blossom and bloom and grow. I have made many mistakes and errors in my journey to my present position, but I have learned from them.

The informant is a student of learning with a strong commitment to self-growth and development. Her belief in lifelong learning is ostensibly illuminated in her willingness to share lessons learned with colleagues. She has served as a role model and mentor to other women and has a special interest and commitment to people of color. Servant leadership is practiced by serving others, but its ultimate purpose is to place oneself, and others for whom one has responsibility, in the service of ideals (Sergiovanni, 1992). In addition, the servant leader engages in self-reflection and searches for strategies that will lead to continuous improvement.

She explains:

> I think I am never quite satisfied with the "product." So, I always evaluate it (an event or situation). I ask myself what did I learn and sometimes if I do not see what I am to learn, it does not come until later. I feel that with women and people of color I should try to share as much as I can about what I have learned if folks want to know. I am highly committed to this because I didn't have that.

Her son agrees. He reports:

> . . . There's always a plan; she is very much a planner and she acts on the plan. I do not think that she is afraid to step away from something if it's not going to work . . . I was always amazed she would just take on a lot, whatever was broken she would take on.

The informant speaks. She summarizes her leadership style in the following way:

> I'd call myself a transformational leader in one word. This means that I believe in the worth and dignity of every individual, that everyone has something to contribute. As a leader I will sometimes become the follower. In this developmental process, I am sometimes responsible for stepping back and letting people move on and let them take control because they have ideas. They are leaders in that case and I provide support as the authority figure, but I'm not the leader in that case. So you support and even push that individual into an area where they can further their growth and development. If

there is someone within their sphere of influence that person should also help and I support that. This is empowerment.

It allows you to transform systems and organizations to accommodate the needs of the people. These systems were not put together for the benefit of people of color, and they certainly were not put together for poor disempowered European Americans either. And so I think that change and transformation in this era is needed in almost every organization including the church. I believe there should be transformation going on in all organizations. It's akin to building little fires and being pushed, pulled and squeezed to bring out the best in you and others in the organization. A part of my belief comes from the servant leadership theory although I hate the term servant.

So transformation to me integrates all of that together and talks about values and ethics. It allows you to admit mistakes. For example, the other day I simply had to admit the mistake I made to a staff member. I made a mistake based on the information that I had. That information was incorrect, but the results of the decision could not be revised before next year. I apologized and agreed with the union to correct this next year.

This example shows that she is a servant leader and that she values honesty and fairness in her relationships with others with whom she works. Although she realizes that if one admits to a mistake, one might be sued in certain organizations and certain situations. When I asked how it feels admitting to an error, she states:

I was a little bit nervous because the admission leaves you vulnerable. However, when it's clear, I find it easier to apologize for the error if it is not a litigious situation. I just had to explain how the incident happened.

The man in this situation was so shocked he could hardly talk and he called me back and said, "I thank you for doing whatever you could do." He said, "At least I know that it wasn't my performance and that it had nothing to do with me. I just thought we couldn't afford it." There are times when people change the rules and so forth, but I appreciate it when people tell me they didn't know that they have made a mistake. Again, I try not to (tell others) because the impact

of my making a mistake is very critical and so I really check before I move. In the end I said, so okay, do I try to make up for this error?

I have such disdain for people who try to show me where I am at fault when we both know better. It may not mean anything to other people but it is an insult to me, and I have hated this since I was a child. I'm not better at it now. Therefore, in this case I felt that I owed him the truth and there was no harm to the college. I guess it was a matter of ethics.

I don't like implications that I am a "poor little thing." I find that insulting. If this occurs in a situation where I have frequent interactions with the person I feel that I have to get them straight so that it does not continue. Now, if the person persists, I give them the full treatment, I mean a lesson.

Occasionally when an African American woman gets tired of what is perceived as insults, what Jill Nelson refers as the n----bitch comes out. When I asked if this has ever happened to her she says:

Absolutely, I can feel the temperature rise and the only thing I try to do is keep my voice calm. I tend to go softer than normal so that I contain her. Some days you are just not as well put together as others. Some days you are flippant and you say I don't know what the hell you mean, that kind of a thing. Sometimes I have to say no that is not what I asked you to do; we are not going to do this today, and we are not going to do it ever. Do you understand? Usually they understand that means to leave her alone.

Education

The Black family has historically placed a high value on education that dates back to slavery. Individuals risked their lives to learn to read and write. It was viewed as one way to gain their freedom. During the Reconstruction period, Blacks in the South actively participated in the building of schools and fought for the universal right to attend public school; however, in many instances children were

exposed to a limited formal education because they had to assist their parents in the fields. This was necessary under the old sharecropping system, the semi-slavery that existed at the time. Nevertheless, the Black family continued to dream about the need to educate their children. The informant remembers:

> Even the laborers in the community who were ordinary workers wanted their children to go to school; they worked hard to pay tuition just as my father. They would sometimes come and ask my father to help put things together so that their children could go to college. There were people in the neighborhood who had been to college so they would get us together and tell us what it was like, and what you were supposed to take with you to college. They also talked about what was expected of you once you got there.

Data from other studies show that African American women in leadership positions value education (Gostnell, 1996; Granier, 1991; Reid-Merritt, 1996; Talley-Ross, 1991). This woman recognized the value and need to pursue an advanced degree. With a full-time position and two teenagers, the informant continued her formal education that she had been told was a requirement for career advancement within higher education.

> My education was a significant part of my life at one time. I put a lot of things on hold to accomplish that. I had a goal in mind, whether it would have meant another position or higher position, but I have a thirst for learning and I knew that I wanted to learn. I was in a program that I wanted to be in, that I chose to be in. So that was a great part of it. I saw no direct paths to a new position when I started.

Her son remembers his mother's discussions with him about the value of acquiring a college education. From his mother he learned that education provides the individual with more options, choices in life and job opportunities. He reports:

> I think for everybody, for Black people it is invaluable; you have to go to school; you have to get an education because right now there aren't that many jobs that will provide the income you need in this world that is changing too fast. I think my mom knew that . . . She would say, "No one can take your education a way from you. They can take your house, can take your clothes; they can take everything else, but they cannot take your education away; no one can take your knowledge once you have it, you have it for life." It took me awhile, it took me a few lumps to get it, to really understand but I began to understand when I took on a summer job. It was terrible, so my mom says to me, "You can stay at this job, don't get me wrong, you can do whatever you want, but remember you cannot lose an education once you have it. You will be in greater demand and you will have skills that you can sell to someone. Right now you can drive a truck and you can't drive a stick. In other words what you are selling is real narrow. When you go to school you can choose."

Not only was she prepared as a child in Catholic school, but her graduate school

preparation served her well for a leadership role.

> I think that the education that I got in my doctorate was excellent at both the theory and application of educational leadership needed for both leadership and management in higher education. So I felt really steeped in that whole issue of leadership, from the research point of view. Most organizations need significant change if they are going to survive and thrive in the 21st century. I am thrilled with the excitement of being able to lead and facilitate transformation in an urban college which has a healthy ethnic minority, particularly African American population. That was significant and exciting.

Prior to enrolling in a doctorate program, she talked about several occasions

in which she applied for positions for which she believed that she had the requisite

experience and background. Although she had worked hard to develop new

programs in the area of student services she was not promoted. Her behavior and

beliefs are similar to those of other professional women aspiring to top-level

administrative positions. Radin (1980) data analyses show that women overrate

education and hard work as prerequisites for advancement and underestimate

political awareness. Women have a tendency to overlook the political games played within the organization. Naivete can certainly be seen as a barrier since political savvy is required to compete with men in a system that the men understand better and are more comfortable.

She recalls her very first experience of applying for a position that she did not get. She reports:

> I applied for a dean of student position at another college within our district and I didn't get the job. The job went to a male candidate. It was my first time actually applying outside the college, that is, outside of my own college campus. I had been encouraged to apply and I thought I should try my wings. I had not applied for anything or been in an interview for a long time. I think I had been told some time ago that you should keep your resume updated, that you should always feel like there is another position that you can go to. You should never become so comfortable in the one you have you couldn't move if something were to happen. You need to know that you are wanted someplace else. So, I did that. I got through the paper work process and the interview successfully, but when we got to the choice of the final three I did not make it. I understand from one or two of the committee members that I did not interview well. I was willing to accept that. I thought that I had answered the questions well but sometimes we are unaware of the facts. Anyway, I had a job.

When I asked her if she were upset about not getting the job, she reports:

> Not entirely but I was upset with people from my campus for the support that was given to the person who was selected for the position. This was a situation of male support of males. I felt that they were supporting a male, one who did not have a lot of experience in the field and had not been successful in his current position . . . That was the world at the time.

> After not getting the job, I did not worry about it anymore; I went on and did what I was supposed to do in my present job. However, I did think about what I would do differently in future interviews. I would answer the questions in a crisp and direct manner.

Later I went on to a Next Step Leadership Conference where I had the opportunity to practice my interview skills. They videotaped us, which is really a shock to your system. From the tapes you could see how you answered sample questions. I think it was such a shock to me I don't think that I was ready to apply for anything at least for a year. But in the meantime I had been asked to apply for the dean of student position at (name) College but I really preferred the community college sector and turned it down. I liked my present position and was already driving 30 miles one way so I did not want to drive 50 miles one way.

Two or three years later she decided to once again apply for a position within her current place of employment.

She explains:

Well, I knew it was my turn to become a vice-president or dean. I had been told that I would be the dean that I would move into that position. However, someone else who was in a lesser position than I who was known to be lazy, and not going to work hard was put into that position over me. He was appointed into the position over me after I had been told that the job was mine; instead I was told that I was to be his assistant and do his work, or they would have to move me if I didn't do it. When another president came on board and I applied for another administrative promotion, I knew that the president was going to bring in James even though he said it was an open and fair process, that everybody's application was going to be given full consideration. The word was already out there. I applied for the position to make a statement and did well in the interview. I felt good. James was selected and I found him fair to work with. He had worked with that President before he came to the college.

Prior to James becoming the Dean of Students she had applied for this position and while being told that she would get the position, she was not selected. She talks about feelings regarding this experience:

. . . I really felt bad about that one because I felt that I had been led to believe that I would get the job. I did not dream it up. I did not seek to apply on my own; I had been told to apply and the job is yours, you've done a good job. I did not set out to be a dean of students. So, I felt badly because I had been lied to.

There was a process that we both went through, and the person that applied had been very supportive of me when I was hired, and so we had agreed that both of us would apply and not lose friendship with each other. . . I was extremely naive at the time, extremely naive to think that the person who asked me to apply said, "We will choose you, you've done a good job," and all that. To forget the fact that the person that I was in competition with, though there were many applicants, they were best friends; they had lunch every day. I should have known better, I really should have, but I was truly a naive fool.

. . . I should have known that even though he asked me to apply that I wasn't going to be selected even if he said (the president) you know he doesn't work hard and so forth. Well, I did not know that it had been settled between them when they were at lunch that I was to continue in my role as assistant and that I may have gotten a title change to associate or something of that sort. They expected me to pick up the slack because he was going to continue his same behavior of being tired and I was supposed to run it. Later when I became angry with him (the president), I told him what I thought of him. He called me in and said, "I am sorry to have to tell you this, but you have to get over this; and if you are not going to help this person, we are going to send you to another campus because he can't run this area all by himself." When he said that, my grandmother rose up in me.

I remember he confessed that they were friends and he wanted (his friend) to have the job. And he said that both of us were equally qualified and were competing with each other. He further told me that I did not really need to work or have a job, but that I could work real hard . . . help him out and do the work that I knew how to do because he (the friend) could not do all those things.

This scenario shows how men are privileged to have an opportunity to make deals behind closed doors, in places that women may not be allowed the privilege of frequenting. It also highlights gender issues; that is, it shows how men make assumptions about the need for a woman to work when married to a person with job security. She recalls:

People are always speculating about why you are continuing to work. And of course I had already invited them out of my business years

ago when my husband completed his program of study. So for him to mention that meant that he was on touchy ground. I told him that I was going to do my job, that (this person) was going to do his job and that he could do whatever he wanted to do with me; it was left up to him and that yes, one day I would get over it. But right now I was mad. He was moved over to the district office and I don't remember how it happened, but another president came in. I was on the search committee. The new president picked on this guy.

For various reasons student services was not given equal attention and respect. They tried to do the same thing to me, but it did not work. Anyway, the president found every weakness in this poor guy as I went on and continued to do my work. I attempted to work with him (the person chosen for the job) in some regards. But the fact, the very fact that I had been told that I was supposed to do his work meant that I wasn't going to do it because I had already been through that with the person who preceded him. I refused to position myself to agree to that arrangement. Again I had been through a situation where you are expected to write a report and the person removes your name without changing a word . . . the person has his secretary put his name on top of my work.

At first I was not sure how things were supposed to work because I was really naïve but I knew I didn't like it. When I think back, I think that I made so many errors. Anyway, when I went to workshops for women I found out this was happening to women all over. In these workshops we were taught techniques for getting around such incidents.

Her son remembers his mother's experience of applying for positions that she was prepared to assume but a male who was not as qualified was selected. He recalls:

> . . . I have literally seen her, especially at (previous place of employment) go through different steps to get to where she is, through side steps because there was a man there, not qualified. I mean I was there at work listening to this guy, listening to what he does, listening to his conversations and I don't think that he was qualified. Of course, I have a biased opinion, naturally. Anyway, it was clear he was not qualified to do this job. You could tell that there was somebody who wanted him to be in that position. It's just simple. He's got a bachelor's degree. My mom's got her masters. She's got 12 years of experience in community college field and he has six. I think he and my mom understood the political part of it.

> You've got to have your network and you've got to have your people together to put in a good word for you. The good old boys' network is alive and well. That's what got her into this position now. She immediately knew that if she tried to get there, she would. She applied for the position that her former boss has. She was qualified. However, someone told her that you don't have your doctorate, so she needed that and she said you know, "I've got more experience, more years, have done more than anyone here so what you are telling me is that a piece of paper is getting in the way." So, she said, "I will get that piece of paper and that will be the last thing that anyone can tell me that I don't have because I am qualified. I know my skills are up to par. As far as recommendations, I can get those." So she got that needless to say and that is how she got to where she is today.

These events occurred during the late 1970s, a period when there were very few women in top leadership positions within the community college setting. Even though there were few women, and even fewer women of color working in community colleges she chose this environment for making contributions. She continued to prepare herself for the next step.

> I always tried to improve myself. I always thought that if I were in student services, then I should be a student too. So, I read the literature and tried to crystallize what I had learned and thought about program development, and exposed myself to people who had new ideas.

These two examples demonstrate that it's not what you know, but it's who you know that could be the primary factor for career advancement. Nevertheless, women must be prepared to meet opportunity when it presents itself.

While the pursuit and achievement of a formal education is an underpinning of success for African Americans, Black women must work hard to overcome the double burden of being Black and a woman. They must have high regards for themselves as Black women and believe that their efforts will benefit themselves and

the community. They must learn to overcome what appear to be formidable barriers that are confronting them within the institutions of higher education.

Working with Male Colleagues

While working as a counselor, she was given more responsibility without authority. Her male supervisor was not supportive during this period. Nevertheless, she survived and continued to grow personally and professionally. She learned to work effectively in an environment that had double standards, and that had men in leadership positions who were unable to communicate clear expectations and standards of practice. In spite of this situation, she learned to clarify and articulate organizational goals, roles, and processes in an environment that was filled with ambiguity.

> I was supposed to supervise a faculty like myself who had been with the college since it started and had come from the public school system as a matter of fact. He was older than I was and of course he did not want to be supervised by a woman . . . he never wanted to attend meetings or be involved in the planning and so forth. And when I would take this to the all male leadership group for discussion, they said you have to figure it out.

> I was not in a position of authority. I was given the responsibility but in many ways I was given no authority over the positions of the people that I supervised outside of that grant because they were faculty and I was faculty, and they knew they did not have to listen to me. Plus this man was disrespectful of women, period. He tended to exercise that same behavior with students, with faculty peers, or whomever it was. He really was both racist and sexist, and tried to sexually harass women as well. At that time, we did not have leadership that spoke out boldly on these issues; that would have said this person is responsible for these programs and evaluations. So I had to create and make my own way. I think many times males have to do that. They avoid conflict and confrontation, and do whatever

as long as they can keep peace. Maybe they were saying that I was not tough enough.

Many women have experienced sexism that may be perceived differently by various individuals. Perceptions are inherently based upon individual past learning experiences and worldviews. She worked with several men who had never been supervised by a woman. Because men sometimes stereotypically perceive women as helpless, unable to make decisions, or be assertive or take disciplinary action, they are unwilling to work for a woman supervisor.

> . . . Some men try to control your behavior to the degree of actually telling you what to do. They tried to supervise you and help you out in such a pejorative way that they were really in charge and you were not. I have to say that at first I owned that problem; I really tried to prove myself and tried to show them that I was equitable, fair, and evenhanded. I think I tend to be. I do not see myself as ever having been a moody person. I am fairly stable in how I feel throughout the day, month and so forth. But I think I even tried to be calmer and all of that.

> After I think about a year or so I decided that I was not the owner of the problem. I wasn't going to let that be my problem. So when the issue of gender arose I simply said I don't have a problem. When I come to work, I don't have an agenda and I don't think about whether I am a woman, and so I operate out of whatever tradition that is. We all have a job to do and that is it. Now you have to decide whether you can work with me or be supervised by me, that's all left to you.

This woman in the chief executive office has been known to candidly explain her expectations and leadership style to those with whom she works. Then she allows the individual to make the decision about whether he or she can effectively work to achieve a common goal, work for what is best for the students. This woman absolutely refuses to wear any of the common stereotypes that have the potential of

impeding her success as a community college leader. As she moved up and out, she

has experienced a decrease in men perceiving her as a helpless female, incapable of

decision-making. The informant believes that more conflict existed at the mid-

management level. She also believes that women should work together instead of

petty back fighting that has the potential of impeding career advancement. She

reports:

> When you are in mid-management there is so much conflict that can
> be created around male-female issues. I've seen men start confusion
> among the women and we do not recognize the tactic. We fall prey
> to the tactic and our history of competition among us leads us to be
> non-supportive in the work place. Women need to be supportive of
> one another is my position.

Mentoring: Working with Other Women

The informant was not always the only woman working in her assigned area.

She worked with another woman who served as her mentor, who coached,

supported, and shared information and tactics for dealing with various individuals

and situations. She recalls:

> There was a woman administrator who was very good to me. She
> helped me in some ways, though her position was not directly related
> to my area of responsibility. The president said, "I want you to help
> her." And so she did in her own way. I think that she tried to help
> me as much as she could . . . I knew nothing so I think I was a very
> avid student. I would say besides her help, the school of hard
> knocks, and going to as many workshops and seminars I could
> possibly attend, I managed to advance my sense of accomplishment
> and career as an educational leader. When the American
> Management Association sent out brochures, I tried to attend
> everything. I would read and ask questions. And sometimes I even
> learned by saying I do not want to be like that person or I don't want
> to manage like that. There was also an African American counselor

who mentored me. She was the first African American woman employed by the college; being the first exposed her to severe racial discrimination; however, she was politically savvy. I learned much from her.

She told me that people in the institution persecuted her because she was the first. She was the only African American working in the school . . . she was quite elegant and classy, but she worked in an environment where people would go to lunch and not invite her, or would ask people who were standing near her to go to lunch and not invite her. She had gone through all these things in the institution. She was one who could tell me about all the people in the institution and what their approach would be and how it was. I think I was very lucky in many ways to have her wisdom. I think in many ways she was protective of my position when there were planned coups. She addressed them right away, and of course made me aware of them and would talk to me about strategies for handling the situation. I knew that I could strategize and talk with her confidentially. That was my first, my beginning.

There were other women division deans and department administrators on campus but the informant had little opportunity to work directly with them because she worked in student services and they were in the academic side of the college.

Under her leadership, more activities and services including a women's program were added to student services. She remembers interviewing women who did not want to be supervised by a woman even in the women's program.

I started a woman's program that was preempted by student protest . . . I remember getting $5,000 from the state to do this project I was just the happiest soul in the world. We hired someone to come in and start the program. But the most amazing thing happened when I was interviewing. I had several women tell me that they did not think they wanted to work for a woman. And so dealing with gender issues, with a female and being a woman yourself was another side of the issue. I learned that is part of the point as well, where a woman may say I am not going to take this job because I don't want to work for a woman and that's the only reason. I tried to own that problem for them and help them work through it, and prove that I could meet their needs. The number one excuse I remember was that women

tend to be up and down in their emotional space. We tend to be jealous of each other and have vendettas, and compete in the arena with each other for men which continues in the work place. There is that kind of confusion existing among women. Some women said that they simply did not like being with women, that they have always enjoyed men, and they feel like it is easier to work for men. Some of the excuses they used, no woman would buy them.

In American society, women have been socialized to believe that they can only achieve a certain level of employment and career mobility. Therefore, it is not a surprise that many women have the belief that men are more effective in leadership roles, roles with great responsibility. Furthermore, because of the history of slavery and racial discrimination, African Americans oftentimes are perceived as being even more incapable in leadership roles, or if appointed to a leadership role, they are seen as the token one by others in the organization. It is no accident that African American women have internalized such stereotyping of themselves to the point that many are not successful in achieving a career status beyond the mid-management level. The veracity of such perceptions and disbelief in oneself can be overcome with support, constructive feedback, and role modeling. Mentors have the potential of playing a powerful role in assisting other women with overcoming their fears of becoming a successful top executive, as they work to advance their careers. Research shows that women acknowledge the need for assistance from mentors as they advance their careers (Bass, 1990). The informant states:

This woman who had been my mentor started having the women on campus meet together including classified, and anyone who wanted to come. I think we met just to talk about issues and sisterhood, supporting each other and discussing the things you needed to hear. I think that was positive because we could always remind each other when we returned to the work place what we were working on as

issues. And then as I became a senior level administrator I was asked by the women if I would continue this tradition and so I did. I think I tried to be a good example in their minds and continue to operate in the sisterhood.

Sometimes women are put into positions and situations where they just can't hold up or persist with what is the "right thing to do." They don't have the authority with their current position or rank, and things are just going to be done to them. I think if there is an opportunity for you to assist, advocate and try to save them from themselves you should.

The informant has served as an advocate and role model for other women at work, women in the community and others in the sisterhood. Sometimes it is necessary to speak out on issues that are perceived as barriers for other women within the institution. This arduous task is vital if women are to succeed professionally within the community college system. She explains, "At times I felt that at that level (top administrative level) I needed to speak up for the right things and for women. Having a woman supervisor has its advantages when working with other women because women have a special way of knowing and understanding."

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Resilience: Ability to Work in a
Negative Environment

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As the informant continued her journey of working in a difficult environment with difficult people, she demonstrated the ability to adapt; she survived as a manager in one position for two years. Later she became the associate dean for counseling. In Talley-Ross' (1991) study, the informants attribute success in career advancement to their ability to appropriately respond to conflict. The informant speaks:

To handle it, or to do, I just don't know, but we managed. I
managed anyway I could try and control what he did from the point
of view of getting the goals outlined in the grant. Eventually, I
moved from the assistant dean to the associate dean. I became
responsible for counseling which I had hoped and prayed that I
would not have to do in my lifetime because of the quality of work of
people in that division; their level of competency and their will to
work were certainly questionable. They were part of the problem
when it came to change for students. When the student population
was changing, they were not changing with them. And they did not
intend to work too hard at their jobs, and made that quite clear.
They had three peer supervisors prior to me. And all three of those
people ended up taking psychotropic drugs. I knew that I wasn't
taking any psychotropic drugs. I had young children so I had to be
sane when I got home after work.

This woman in the chief executive office survived egregious actions of others

including a grievance filed by one of her colleagues. This occurred during a period

in which the administrators (who happen to be males) were neither openly

supportive nor unsupportive of women in leadership roles. Eventually positive

changes were implemented to provide services for students.

> The students began going to the new staff and avoided the "old
> ones." We had a chance to buy some of their contracts out which
> was really tough on the budget, but we did. We went through a time
> period when I had to cut staff and live with budget cuts for three
> consecutive years.

She also learned how to articulate her views in a situation with male colleagues who

did not want to listen to a woman's voice.

> In these special workshops for women leaders/managers, we were
> taught many techniques to deal with male colleagues. For example,
> you express an idea and in the middle of the sentence one of the men
> says, "What she is really trying to say is . . ." and would try and
> clarify your thoughts. In other words, he would basically repeat the
> same thing that you said and take credit for your ideas. You would
> wait for dead silence or wait for the next speaker who would present
> your idea or you would see your idea being placed on the board . . .

it was your idea, stolen. So, I found out that I was not the only one experiencing these things. They told us how to combat by saying, "Excuse me, that idea that was placed on the board is what I said earlier. I just said it a few minutes ago if you recall." Or you would wait until everyone finished going back and forth and then try to be one of the last speakers. In cases where your written work is stolen you put an identifier at the bottom of the page that would indicate your name in some way or you could send your boss a copy of your work.

Men treat women differently in the workplace. In the beginning of my career I had expected to be treated more fairly by my Black supervisor because he was Black and I thought was more understanding, but that didn't happen. In one case my White supervisor said he wasn't going to talk with me because he didn't like to have formal conversations in his office on campus, that he preferred to have lunch or to go to some other place to discuss your work. I was rather naive about how to handle the situation as I would now. He told me that I did not have to bring all my paperwork with me, that I just needed to know how much money I was spending. I told him that I did not have a budget so what was there to discuss. I did not know what he wanted. I couldn't imagine what, because he had a beautiful wife, and everything else. And here I was this "little colored person." I couldn't understand why I should have to go to lunch with this man. I was a mother with children and had a husband. I stopped going and avoided him most of the time since he did not want to meet on campus. . . . I talked with my mentor, a Black woman who had gone through so much trouble and pain, to gain a perspective. She told me that I did not have to do this. So, I basically avoided him until he was removed from his position. I communicated with him through written memos.

She continues:

I remember one of the Black presidents telling me that he did not talk with staff without their supervisors being present. I said, "Oh well, Dr. (name of person) I don't want to have to talk with you because you are the president and my position is way down the organizational ladder." I also told him that no prior president had ever said that to me and I've never been disloyal. Finally one day he sent for my boss and me. During this meeting he told me that he wanted me to communicate through my boss. I thought this man is crazy; his request didn't make any sense to me, but I followed his instructions.

I did not know a lot about administration at that time. Conversely, when he got into trouble and they had voted to get rid of him he did not have any trouble coming to my office or sending for me to aid his survival in the college.

Her resilience is reflected in how she handled the recent deaths of her only sister and her father who died within two years of each other. Enduring these painful experiences, she continued to perform with excellence in her CEO role.

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Perceived Motivators and
Constraining Factors

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Role of Self

The informant has successfully achieved a chief executive officer's status, while effectively confronting many positive and negative factors. When I asked her to talk about major obstacles that have influenced her professional development she reports:

> . . . I think that my lack of knowledge of what administration is or should be is a factor. I am not first generation college educated but to say that I knew as a woman what was expected in an administrative role, I did not know. And so I felt that I had to scramble to learn. I learned it the hard way, which is okay. I think that was certainly an obstacle. The other of course is my race. I will not sit here and pretend that race is not an obstacle because it was and is.

> Women, in earlier years, were supposed to work hard, have all of the technical skills, and assist men in positioning themselves so that they can do well and make them look good. But certainly to aspire to and to gain a higher level position is very difficult because usually the promise is that my friend, my male friend, will be the one who will moves up.

She continues:

> I think that race and gender were certainly operative when I was put
> into a supervisory role without the authority that goes with it. That
> put me in a difficult position. I was told on one occasion I would be
> tested and therefore did not need a title, just go on out there. You
> need not be an administrator. You can do it. I refused assistant roles
> of any kind. I remembered a workshop in which the speaker said
> that a title is important. The title means you are in charge and I
> knew that I had to negotiate that piece. Little did I know until years
> later what was said: "You couldn't expect those counselors and
> other people to promote this Black woman to any kind of
> administrative role." But again as a survivor, I survived. I not only
> became the administrator but I supervised those same individuals and
> systematically rid the institution of those who did not serve students.
>
> Another obstacle . . . this was not an obstacle that anyone or one that
> my family imposed on me but I think when you have a family with
> young children that is a barrier and an obstacle . . . I thought there
> were some things that I absolutely could not attain administratively in
> this role. I think there were roles that I did not want to assume when
> my children were young. They did not ask to come into this world.
> Some of the events that required being a way from home I just could
> not do. I wanted to make sure that I had the time to instill certain
> values into my children and expose them to certain activities.

Her younger son is in agreement with the notion that family has had a positive and

negative impact on her career advancement. He shares:

> I think one is a sense of family. When her sister and father died, she
> gave up just about everything. She had chances to get promotions,
> to start some new programs, this and that, and stopped things for her
> family. Her sister and father are just two examples but it could be a
> cousin or an aunt, or a brother-in-law or whatever. She was always
> there and it was always family before work.
>
> I felt sometimes that she went a little too far, especially like with
> husbands and aunts and things like that where they are old enough to
> do for themselves. She always told me that she still would get
> involved in all types of things to help them out, be it money, be it
> time, or be it whatever.

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When I asked if the death of her mother had impacted her decision to remain in a

lower level administrative position until her children were older so that she could

perform her parental responsibilities, she said: "But I did have a stepmother." As

she talked about her children, I could detect worry in her voice and ambivalence in

her words. She continues:

> My children had seen me work, even if it was part-time. They
> expected me to work but I tried to be there. And still there were
> things that I missed. I think they came out alright. I told them as
> they grew up if I missed something they would have to forgive me
> since they did not come with a manual. I did the best I knew how to
> do and if I missed something along the way it was because I did not
> know what to do. I don't know if I would refer to my children as a
> barrier, they were not. This was something that I was conscious
> about. For example, I did not want to attend 7:30 AM meetings,
> leaving them to get to school by themselves. I named myself, race,
> gender, and the kids.

> You know I think that sometimes other women can be a barrier, but I
> regret having to make this statement. You try to work around
> various incidences where women engage in petty activities such as
> gossiping.

She recalls two such incidents with Caucasian women:

> I remember an incident where one woman wanted to groom me, but
> she tried to control my movement and my behavior in the
> organization. She tried to do this through a grant. I had a grant that
> I was learning to manage and she wanted to incorporate activities
> from my grant into one that she was writing. She thought that I
> should accept her ideas without question. We were two strong
> women and of course we tended to clash in meetings. Of course the
> men would play off of that, and the other women would too. It did
> not matter how much I tried to talk with her about the need to be
> creative and not do anything to compromise the grant I did not get
> any place, and so I just stopped talking to her at all. I know this was
> not right but what choice did I have? She began to drop information
> around campus about my not being capable. This of course was
> detrimental. We finally came together and are friends today.

Now let me talk about the other situation. This one is where you have people who want to gossip. They have no information so they just make it up. They gossiped about what they thought were my aspirations. I never mentioned that I wanted to be a president, because at the time I did not think I would ever get here although I think that I have always been ambitious. I am ambitious and that was seen as an ugly word. Of course I thought that I was really somebody truly special. And I still think I am, but not in negation of the specialness of others. You have to "scuffle" so hard to move and you get passed over. Often males wondered how I could be so presumptuous in thinking that I could lead a committee, take part in a statewide organization, or take over a project. When I choose to speak out on issues that sometimes presented another barrier. I am an educator capable of focusing on many issues; however, I had to refuse to be restricted to minority and poor people's issues.

When they are talking about welfare to work, I'm the specialist. When they talk about minority students and about ABE/GED I am the specialist. However, when they talk about academic scholarship, educational services and delivery or about evaluation they presume that I know nothing about these topics. And when I speak out about these issues with a passion, mouths open. One can tell when they are shocked because the topic is dropped and nothing else is said; you go onto another subject. Later when the topic is brought up again someone will incorporate what I had said. I tell people that I am multidimensional. I tell them that I will be more than happy to speak on diversity issues, but I can speak on other subjects. So that is a yoke and a barrier.

Role as Wife and Mother

A review of the literature indicates that the family plays a significant role in the lives of African American women as they ascend to positions with greater responsibility and authority.

My family, of course, has always been very important to me. We are a family who supports each other and who plays a vital role in each other's lives. We still have that connection and we get together to celebrate everything that we can; we are there for each other.

When I asked her son if he considered his family as close, he says: "Yea, typically there is not a week that goes by that we don't talk to one another."

As the wife of a pharmacist, the informant effectively dealt with that role. There were times when she had to assume a secondary role in their relationship and experienced disappointment. She describes this experience:

> The career is moving fine but then, how do you adjust to knowing that you must be second in that person's life, how do you . . . and there is no two ways about it. In the end, once he's called, it is the difference between you going to the event that you are dressed and ready to attend; and as you are just getting ready to step out after having spent considerable energy both in getting dressed and planning what you are going to do and thinking about a great time you're going to have, the call comes. How do you work through such issues? How do you accept the outcome? Most of the time, you think that he will not be very long or maybe you will get to go anyway. You are quite disappointed when this happens. You may say to yourself that we'll be able to get there. And there are times when you really wanted to go to the event but it did not happen. You know it really is disappointing. That is why as a spouse you need a project, or something in your life besides your husband and children that fulfills you.

During the earlier years she indeed had something in her life in addition to her husband and children. The informant worked in a number of positions outside of the home that include teaching in a migrant labor camp located nearby prior to joining a community college staff. When their children were young, she remained at home most of the time, but found herself unfulfilled and bored; therefore, she continued her education and earned a master's degree in Counseling. She also served as a volunteer for several organizations during the earlier years of her marriage. While her husband was very supportive of her continuing her education, she indicated he would have been happy to have her in the home without an outside

job. Perhaps this sentiment is indicative of the value that Black men and women place on education. In other words, there is a clear distinction between education and work. Granier (1991), Talley-Ross (1991), Chatman (1991), and Gostnell (1996) provide data that support the notion that Black families value education. Having an education has more than symbolic meaning; it means that somehow an African American could compete with their White counterparts in the job market and could be self-reliant, and productive in the community.

When the two boys were in grade school, she joined various organizations and volunteered her services to a few nonprofit agencies. As a volunteer, she found jobs that were stimulating and basically refused to complete "mindless tasks" as she described this period in her life. She searched for experiences that were stimulating and personally fulfilling, experiences that would make a difference in someone's life. A good example of this is seen in her volunteer role for the Red Cross; she was responsible for connecting service men with their families when there was a family emergency. She explains:

> I will get bored with a task, but if it gets me excited I will stay with
> it. When working in a group, I will carry out the responsibility if
> excited about what I'm doing.

At no time during the interviews did the informant complain about the challenges of being a mother, wife, and full-time employee. Her children report that they have never heard comments such as, "This is a terrible job," or "I don't like what I'm doing" from their mother. According to them "she was always planning something, always trying to find new and better ways of teaching and doing things." Morrison,

White, and Van Velsor (1987), found that women executives expressed feeling less equal than did their male counterparts to demands placed on their energy and time in their daily lives.

Family Influences

Male role models: Her father. Her father was one of nine children and the only child to become college educated. Research shows that daughters with positive fathers are highly successful in careers of their choice. Positive self-esteem is a major contributing factor to success in the job market. The childhood experiences of this chief executive officer support the research that has been conducted on successful women.

She remembers:

My dad always made us feel that we were absolutely wonderful little girls, the best in the world. I'm sure he wanted to have boys, but he had his little girls and would say to us, "I'm so happy I have girls," that kind of stuff, crazy? And he always said to us that you could do and be whatever you want to be. I was always told that I could do anything and be anything I wanted to if I worked hard. And I needed to because my dad let us know that he was making the supreme sacrifice so we could take care of our selves as women. "You were not just learning for the sake of learning, but learning so that you could do better than White people because if you were not as good you wouldn't be hired," he said. That message was always there . . . you had to do more; you had to be able to do more than one thing. Jobs are often hard to find and he felt that you needed a double major to have an edge. Anyway, I always wanted to know how things were made. I wanted to learn about everything.

I never saw my father walk around the house disrobed. You may think that's strange, but that was his way of teaching us that we were to get respect from men.

With further reflection about her father's intention, she believes that she has an intuitive sense about men. This second sense has allowed her to make appropriate decisions in relationships with men. As a result her success has not been compromised. As stated previously when things were not going well, she would seek counsel from her husband and father. And she remembers:

> I talked with my father and everybody else and whined. My father told me something that I have never forgotten. He said that oftentimes people are not going to change, either you have to leave or they die or leave. You have to find someone else, but it always has to be something in it for the individual person. That was a lesson learned. I have tried to find something that would be in it for people beyond outward praise.

> My father taught me to be proud of our history. We did not have African American history in school, but since he was an avid reader we had books everywhere. We had African American literature including histories and anthologies that no one else I knew had in their homes. So when we came home from school, we read biographies; we read about people such as Mary McCloud-Bethune after we completed our work. You know we had chores that took part of the afternoon. You know a child doesn't want to do a thing, but we had to do those chores. After that mother would have us read something because when my father came home he wanted to know which book we had read. He would ask, "Why is this person important and what are their contributions?" That's what I remember. He may have asked more.

> And it seems like there was always something about a struggle. I think that had substantial significance for me because there were always people in my family who talked about their struggles, who overcame certain things to reach certain goals when there were insurmountable odds. A good example of this can be seen in an aunt of mine. She had lost her arm from her elbow down when she was a child. She learned to type, cook and iron. Later on she married. Anyway, she had a terrible southern accent and had pronunciation problems. But she would get people to help her pronounce words. She took in ironing, and sewing, and she saved enough money to go to school. She drove something like 50 to 80 miles on Saturdays to become a teacher because that had always been her dream. She told

her story over and over again about how she overcame all obstacles to attend school. My other relatives talked about this too.

I talked to my father as he got older. He said, "I think you ought to do better." He loved poetry and would read it to us as children. I think that he came from that era in the Black community when they recited these poems written by Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes. Invictus was his favorite.

During my interview with her son reports that, "My mom was very proud of him because he was the one who kept the family going."

Her mother. She learned discipline, perseverance, self-responsibility and spirituality from her mother. Although the informant was not interested in cooking, cleaning and other homemaking activities, her mother was a role model who balanced activities of home, work, church, and community. She did not allow the children to visit with their friends after school. They were expected to come home and do their chores, homework, and practice piano. She would not let friends come to their house until the chores were done, and the girls were not allowed to stay over night with friends. The informant says:

> Even when we attended church and school functions, my mother wanted to know what, when and where . . . all the details. She made you explain what your responsibility was for your conduct so that there would be no misunderstandings. There were no excuses because you could not say that you did not know because things were laid out. Anyway, I think it was sickening at the time, absolutely sickening. However, reflecting back, it kept me on the straight and narrow path.

When I asked her how did her mother influence her personal development, she remembers:

> I think that I learned order, perseverance and discipline because she was a strict disciplinarian. She expected you to do what you were

told and she expected you to listen. I can remember, at the time, I was trying to read too fast, she made me slow down so that I could read for meaning. She thought that church and spirituality were important in your life.

She was a woman who knew how to be an excellent homemaker; she had good taste. She had very good taste in clothes, much better than I did or do and I think that she taught me how to put things together, to make things last. When I think about nutrition, she was ahead of her time. She believed that proper nutrition influenced health. And she was very careful about the company that we kept when growing up. She definitely believed that birds of a feather flock together . . . so did the whole community including the priests and nuns.

I can remember walking home with a boy that my parents did not know . . . In those days the neighbors called before you could get home so your parents knew everything. They were waiting by the door when I arrived and wanted to know who he was. They said, "We don't know him or anything about his family." I tried to explain, but they said you will not be doing that again.

Her husband. As a primary mentor, her husband provided emotional support and the male perspective on various issues related to her professional responsibilities. When she was hesitant about accepting a role with greater leadership responsibility, he assisted her with decision making. Even though he expressed ambivalence about her desire to advance professionally and excel in a leadership role, he encouraged her to explore ways of fulfilling the roles of wife, mother and professional. She reports:

You know in many ways, (husband) has been a mentor. Since I don't think I had a mentor, a real one, a sustained one until I had James. But I could go to (husband). I did not go to him to complain about work or to whine because he was going to listen to just so much. I would say that I could go to (her husband) with situations or I could ask why did so and so happen, and so from a male's point of view, or outsider's point of view, he would reflect back and tell me what he understood or saw. Sometimes he would give suggestions about

how to problem-solve things based on something that he had read in the literature or his training.

He has always been very honest and I think he keeps me on an even keel. Even now he reminds me that people are not doing this because "You are (her name). They are doing this because you are head of the campus." Some things come with the territory and the position. I would respond by saying, "You are right and I'll try not to forget it." I think it is important for a leader to do what I call a power check every now and then. Sometimes our egos get out of shape and get us off into areas that we should not be dealing with. And so every now and then he will point something out to me that will keep me humble. He causes me to think about leadership issues. He always asks the why, how, and did you think questions. I find that is quite helpful for me.

. . . my husband taught me how to control schedules of troublesome staff. He always said, "If you can control their schedules, then you can control their abuse of time to a large extent." The division secretaries were asked to maintain the schedules. Staff could not cross out any time in their schedule without permission unless scheduled for a committee meeting. The schedule was posted for all to see.

There are functions related to leadership and performance improvement that he knows and I value. I value the technical information that he has. You know, he never actually gets into my world. I think he stands just far back enough from it to be helpful when the time comes or when I ask for help or he sees that I need it. But yet, he never imposes himself, if that makes sense. In fact he has his own life and career. And he is a very comfortable person with himself, thank goodness. So I've never felt that any position that I had or what I was doing threatened him.

During the years she learned many things from her husband and while he would have preferred her to remain at home, he was always supportive of her desire to acquire more formal education. This is common; Black families have historically encouraged their daughters to get an education because education is a foundation of freedom. Educated individuals are capable of taking care of themselves. Data show

that he supported her as she pursued a degree in counseling and a doctorate in

education. She reports:

> He wanted me to have an education, yes, but he likes to eat. I
> promised him that when I went out to work the first time after
> marriage that I would do certain things if he would just let me go out
> there and get a job teaching. First, it was absolutely necessary. I had
> to get a job teaching to help us get ahead.
>
> Whatever he wanted to eat, it would be there cooked and ready to
> eat. But I did not mind it so I found a part-time job. Later, I had an
> opportunity to work full-time. I made breakfast for my children
> every morning. I did not try to take on too much when my kids were
> young. I didn't try to take on leadership roles; however, I would take
> on projects.
>
> You know how it is when you get home from school, and have
> things you want them (the children) to be involved with. I felt that I
> needed to be active in their lives.
>
> When it came to my going to school to get my master's he
> encouraged me to start and paid for my education. He babysat in the
> evenings. I remember I think that I was moving into my first sub-
> supervisory job, I had real misgivings because our sons were 12 and
> 13. That is the age when you really have to keep them busy. At that
> time, I was asked to take on more responsibility. I had a problem
> with that because I thought that I should wait until the boys were
> older. But he (husband) said, "You have to figure out how you can
> do them both because by the time they get older you may no longer
> be considered. You cannot pass an opportunity." Based upon that
> discussion I reassessed my options and accepted the job.
>
> My husband was really active with the boys. Our older son was a
> competitive swimmer and diver that required travel. He was still
> busy to some extent in his career, but he was active with the children
> too. He kept the children when I wanted to attend a conference or
> when they were sick if he was available.

Her older son believes that his father had a positive influence on this mother's career

advancement. He reports:

He has definitely given her encouragement every step of the way. My dad is a big believer in education too. And there are some things where they are both in sync. When they say like minds think alike, they are high on education. My dad says, "If you want to do something I will wholeheartedly support you and will not get in the way, you tell me what you need and I will make my best effort to get it for you."

In his gruff way he'll say, "You are doing it the hard way (her name), you're doing it the hard way. You are talking to so and so and you've got this problem and that problem, handle it, handle it and that's it." His favorite phrase is "fish or cut bait." In other words, you do one or the other, you have to make a decision. This person either wants you to be there or they don't. They either want this program or they don't, if they don't so be it. When she was going through her challenges of wanting to become the president of (name of college), and did not get it, my dad raised the question of why do you think you didn't get the job, besides not being male. He knew . . . we don't want it to become a political issue nor do we want to become discriminatory issue. And that is when the doctorate came in. She was talking about trying law, and he said, "Now, what are you going to do with a law degree." His comments have helped my mom stay on course. Mom actually got the books and started reading, but once again, I really think her passion for education caused her to refocus. Once she started getting into assessments and those types of things, it was over, there was no going back.

I always heard my father say, "Your mom is a good person; she is a special person; she's a good student and I am proud of her." He is very shy in the way he says it but I know he is very proud of her because he has said it a number of times. During our graduation day we were all there. My wife graduated at the same time. We took pictures and it was a big celebration. I know that she was very excited. This was quite an accomplishment especially since she was working full-time while she worked on her doctorate. I still for the life of me can't figure out where she found the time and energy to do all these things. She knew nothing about computers, but she learned and now she's teaching me stuff.

He has been there. My dad gives my brother and me encouragement also. Right now, my brother is working on his master's.

When asked if she had to make other compromises as she began to assume more responsibility at work she said that she wished she had. As with most professional women with families, she tried to be super mom. Even though she did not enjoy cooking, the informant prepared meals for the week and froze them, but the boys and her husband would eat two meals in one night. So, she found herself cooking daily.

She recalls:

I ended up cooking every day. It may not have been what they wanted to eat but I cooked. I always cooked them breakfast because I thought that if they had cereal they would be hungry by 10 o'clock. And so they may not have liked oatmeal sometimes but they ate it.

When I asked her about fears of divorce and made a comparison with another well-known African American community college CEO's relationship with her husband always at her side, she responded with the following statement:

I've had many women to say that they are surprised that I'm married. Yes (other female president's name) husband is there. (Husband's name) isn't. I don't think he would be there all the time with me because he has his own thing. He simply tells me to, "Go over there and do your own thing." I think both of us have been able to somehow allow each other space to grow and you know I have been very supportive of his career as well. But I have always felt in some way that it was important for me to have my little pieces, whatever it was. I remember when he received a job offer in a small town I said that I would move out there, but he said, "I cannot do that because my wife is a career woman." Okay, I thought but I guess that I never have quite described myself that way. He knew that I would not be happy living in the woods and not working. I thought that was a very interesting description by him. I see myself as a career woman, wife, and a mother. I just try to balance and carry out all of my roles.

Her relationship with her husband is indeed a complex one, one that is filled with contradictions between the old ways of the Deep South and current day

thinking about sex roles and gender issues. On the one hand, he would have

preferred a woman to remain in the home, and on the other hand conditions

demanded she assume the breadwinner's role in the family. During the period when

her husband was in college, she assumed the latter role. Once in practice role

changes are often difficult to reverse and sometimes can lead to divorce. While her

marriage remains intact, she has experienced the ambivalence inherent in this

phenomenon or role change. The informant's younger son suggests that her

relationship with his father had a tremendous impact on his mother's aspirations to

excel and achieve a leadership position within the community college setting. He

shares his views:

> My father is from the very old, old school of having to have a woman
> who can cook and clean, and be quiet when he is around. That's the
> best way to put it because when he's not there, my mom comes alive
> and she is the leader. When he's around, she is very quiet and doesn't
> argue a lot . . . just kind of passive in a way . . . you've got to pick
> your spots or you'll end up in a big argument. And that's one thing
> that I always felt that was kind of sad because I think my mother had
> a lot of good things, a lot of comments that could have been shared
> at family dinners and that kind of thing. I know, from being around
> her outside of the home and at work and different social
> organizations that she belongs to, I saw a totally different side of her.
> I know that she's incredibly brilliant and can argue with anybody
> except my father. I think this had impacted her in making some
> decisions early in her career.

> However, he has helped her in dealing with the political issues,
> specifically with her school. I think he helped with that. I think,
> secondly, he has given her a lot of support with big meetings or
> dealing with difficult people. I think that was a support mechanism
> that he provided. I think also that he served as a sounding board.
> My father's attention span for everybody else's problems is kind of
> short, but he would listen to her regarding bills or problems, or
> whatever it might be. I thought that was fairly important for my
> mother. In some respects he has served as a mentor, a mentor in the

sense of dealing with situations and helped her problem-solve.
Mentor in the sense of commensuration, no, he's just not that kind of
person; he will listen to you for about a minute and he's ready to
solve your problem which is a typical male thing to do; I do it to this
day.

Her children. As stated previously, the informant led a full life. She worked

full-time, and performed her responsibilities as mother at the same time. She learned

to set limits on household tasks and did not participate in social activities at work.

No matter how busy she was with work and other community activities she always

found time for her children; she played games with them and taught them about

religion, the value of education and other things that are required of a "good

person." Her younger son says, "I thought it was incredible, I don't know when she

slept." The informant is pleased with the outcomes of her two sons. Her eldest son

attended the same university as his parents. This shows a strong family value for

Catholic education. When I asked her to talk about how her children influenced her

personal and professional development she smiled and said, "When you said children

I said to myself they are always your children but they are grown and have their own

careers." Her first born son is a bank manager now. Throughout his childhood

years, he was active in extracurricular activities including playing in an honor band

where he played all of the woodwind instruments. She shares:

He is perhaps the more patient of the two. He and his brother have a
very good relationship; they help each other with their careers and
share their areas of expertise with each other. I would say that he
has a great sensitivity to people and I can see him blossoming
because he has always been able to learn lots of things. Although
banking is in a state of flux, I can see him doing well. He'll be fine.

Her younger son works in computer software. He is referred to as the "techie" by the family. After graduating from college this young man could have worked for a large company but turned down the opportunity; however, he is currently employed by a large company. He is described by his mother as being "aggressive and does very well." She reports:

> He keeps his eye on the ball and he knows that he wants to make money. That statement became part of the interview. When I talk about the two of them with their father, I talk about them in terms of their being in a world and climate that is quite different than ours. I think there's more security in our fields and you are not working towards bottom line goals all of the time. They are in corporate America and have experiences that are very different. They call us and call each other when the world out there really gets tough and they are beat upon frequently in their respective areas. They grew up in the suburbs on the west coast. As African American males they are not expected to cope in their work environments. I believe that they are able to move and survive because of their exposure and upbringing. Anyway, it's tough out there and I'm glad that we are able to be there to listen, guide, and to mentor them. At times they have been told that their goals are too lofty, either directly or through intimations (by White people). When they exceed performance standards and receive various awards it is a shock (for White colleagues). They do quite well in these kinds of conversations because their father has taught them to take breaks because both have tempers. I guess we are a passionate family.

> When they were growing up, we never had unusual problems with them where they got in trouble with the law or were uncontrollable at anytime. They were good kids and we describe them as good citizens. We feel really proud of them because they have done well, both of them attended college and earned degrees, and now my younger son has returned to graduate school to work on an MBA. I know that my older son is interested in the law but he has three children and thinks that would hold him back. I told him that he should become a lawyer because he knows how to argue a case. Both of them liked learning and I think that both are good husbands to their wives.

While growing up, the children played a supportive role by never committing their

mother for cookie duty at school. She elaborates:

> I was a mother who never made cookies. I brought the punch, cups
> and paper towels. I taught (the children) early on that their mother
> doesn't make cookies. So, when the teacher asked how many
> children's mothers can make cookies, they did not raise their hands. I
> told them to say their mother doesn't make cookies but she makes
> good punch and she knows how to buy paper products. I really did
> not know how to make cookies and I did not want to learn.

> Interesting, one wanted to participate in five things at once and the
> other was satisfied with one activity. This sounds like my sister and
> me. My older son wanted to try everything. We actually went
> through the adolescent years with the normal amount of pouting and
> smart mouthing but they had respect for the family values.

> When the children were ill, I came home to take care of them.
> (Husband's name) would do that if he could. If he was studying at
> home he took care of them and I would take care of them when I got
> home. My sick record showed that I was absent several days during
> spring break. I was honest with my supervisor. Sometimes I
> brought them to work with me. Staff knew them. With all of these
> responsibilities I was able to attend conferences. He (husband)
> would come in and take care of them at that time.

She reports:

> I rarely attended those crazy 7:30PM meetings. I tried never to
> make my children an issue but I did with some things. I would have
> to bring them to work with me sometimes or drop them off to
> school, but I did what I had to do. There were parties at work to get
> to know everybody, often I did not attend when they were young.

> They have always known that I was employed, whether it was part-
> time or community work. I was employed when they were young
> children and when they were older. They have seen me juggle
> career, family, attend activities that were important to them, and
> drive them back and forth. They were accustomed to a working
> mother. I have always felt that they were proud of whatever
> accomplishments I have made. We have always been a family that
> has been supportive of whatever was going on with the various
> family members. For example, if they were writing a paper and the

paper had to be done, we pulled out whatever resources we had to get it done. For example, as children they were filled with excuses. They told me they were sleepy and we would fuss and fight about it and maybe I would tell them to take a nap, but the bottom line was the papers were going to get done.

They have been to my work site with me and they have seen people that we work within our home. They have always been encouraging and proud. When I was in quite a dilemma about whether to move to take this position, they both were very professional and did not try to make a decision for me.

They both helped me to lay out the advantages and disadvantages for making the move into my current position; my younger son helped me because he is very good at charting. He basically talked me through all of this over the phone. He asked all the right questions to make me think through the situation. When I asked what he thought about salary he told me to talk with my older son who is good at negotiating. After talking through all of the issues related to salary, I called them back and told them that I going to take the position, take this opportunity. They were really, really pleased and cheered. The boys also told me that they believed that their dad would be supportive as well because I had supported him as we've moved to wherever he wanted to, and "You were right there and he would do nothing less." As for my grandchildren, it was very hard leaving them, not being there to influence their development and not being able to see them or their parents.

Right now, they are concerned about me taking care of my health, getting enough rest and working too hard. My younger son goes on and on asking me about exercise and vacations. I feel really good about this. They told us that we raised them and now it's their turn to help us. We are real proud of their values and ethics.

The informant is extremely proud of her grandchildren. She shared a story of bringing one of the girls over for a visit. The granddaughter could not understand why people at work were referring to her as doctor because she had never heard anyone call her grandmother "doctor." Her granddaughter reminds her of herself when she was a child. She is an incessant talker. She explains:

. . . that's a part of me because I am always seeking to know more, to get more information as well as to get to know people. I learn a lot from the kids, more about how their little minds work. They talk to me and tell me what's on their minds and they can tell me what their worries are and what they are doing. They basically want to carry on a conversation and want you to know that they have some knowledge. Another thing, I think that with your grandchildren you tend to take the time to listen to them more than with your own children. I was always worried about having everything properly done and wanted to make sure everything was just right. But with the grandchildren you step away from it a little and you know that they are going home. When you get tired, you can tell mommy and daddy to come and get them.

Having grandchildren gives you a second chance to do all the stuff that you didn't quite do. I think that's pretty good.

Her maternal grandmother. The informant's grandmother is a key player in her psychological development and socialization process. As stated previously her father refused to allow the girls to babysit or to be babysat by anyone outside of the family. During times when they were unable to accompany their parents, they stayed with their grandmother. She remembers her grandmother as hardworking, caring, and compassionate for others who needed help. The informant remembers her grandmother as a person who embodied the ethics of caring and personal responsibility. Collins (1990) posits that the ethics of caring and personal accountability are key concepts of Black feminist epistemology. Visits with her grandmother were exciting because she would always tell the children some of her stories. She recalls:

Grandmother was Aesop; she was Martha Herbert fable. Those little scripts are in my head all the time. She had a little story about honesty and telling the truth and what happens to people when they are not. She told us about stealing and going to jail or prison. Grandmother believed that stealing is the worst thing that a person

can do in this society. She once told us about the man who stole something. He was sent to prison. In prison he cut his throat; he tried to commit suicide but anyway he cut his throat and they fed him grits which got caught in his throat and he choked to death. The strongest connection for me was if you steal, you will go to prison and die.

As a child she learned to accept and believe in herself. Developing a strong sense of self as a child is critical and ensures positive self-esteem. Her grandmother played an influential role in this process.

> My grandmother always had a little story for self-esteem. She told us how to conduct ourselves, and how to think about ourselves. I remember her saying, "Never think that you cannot do what somebody else can do. If they can do it, just imagine yourself riding on their shoulders and your head will be higher so you can do better than they if you really tried." You have scripts in your head. And later on when we were older and thought about dating, my grandmother said, "You don't want to be going out too much because you will become too familiar and boys will get tired of you."

> She also talked about my father with great, great admiration because he had gone to college and worked his way through school. It took him six or seven years to do that. Anyway, he worked on the railroad as he struggled to go to school. She talked about how he took care of his family. My grandmother always reminded us of how my father kept us together. She kept it before us. After my mother died when I was four and my sister was nine months, we went to live with an aunt who kept both of us together because my father wanted to keep us together. There were other family members who would have taken us, but we would have been separated. My father kept us together.

> My grandmother did a wonderful thing because she talked about how wonderful my dad was; she would talk about my mother and my two aunts, one was a nurse and the other a teacher. And I thought the nurse, the one who had the cape and cap, was wonderful. These were role models she focused upon.

> Grandmother also talked about the struggles that people had and how they overcame them to accomplish what they wanted. She talked about her own life as well. I think that was valuable.

Her grandmother always told the girls that they were smart and that they could achieve whatever they set their minds to achieve. She advised them not to throw their opportunities away and she wished that she had such opportunities. She recalls:

> . . . "You are smart and bright so don't throw it away. If you do, you will only have yourself to blame." Those words, "I will only have myself to blame," made an indelible mark in my mind.

Her sister. The informant and her sister were close until her recent death. Although they traveled a different path with her sister remaining in the South, they communicated with each often.

> She recalls:

> I think that I felt responsible for her. After my mother died, we were drawn together. She was younger and I tried to drag her around like she was a baby, a doll or something. I think that I always felt slightly responsible for her in a way but I think we were more like twins because we were close together since there were only two of us. I really think that she was more thoughtful about things than I. She would sit, observe and not get in there and get her head all beat up. Actually I think that she was brighter than I was; she was shy and more reserved. But as we got older and had our own families I think that she was a lot quicker than I was.

> My sister loved to cook . . . so when it was my time to cook I would sneak her in the kitchen, and she would cook for me.

> When I went to college that was hard on both of us, really, really hard. I got married before she did and later when she married and moved to Florida without me it was hard on us both. I traveled back and forth to see her. It was hard in a way but then each of us got involved with our own families and you sort of go on with your life. Nonetheless, we worried about each other but we were okay.

The informant's older son states that he remembers his mother telling stories about her childhood experiences with her sister. When I asked him what he remembers specifically about his mom and her sister, he states:

> Yea, they'd fight but she says, "I would pick on my sister and then one day we duked it out and that was it. It was as if we were on an even keel after that." Of course they still had arguments, but there were no brawls after that because they respected each other after that fight.

> Mom was proud of her. She had a tough life, had to raise her daughter and make it on her own. Her sister taught in Head Start and mom was into it so . . . That's the thing she talked about the most. She finally got all the pieces together and things started to jam. We would see them during the summers, not every summer, but three years didn't go by that we didn't. We either took the train or we drove.

> Our parents tried to make it (long car ride) comfortable and you know we couldn't wait to get there. The last 500 miles were agony. They tried to stimulate us. We played the license plate game. And my dad would throw out words; he liked to challenge us on words because he knew Latin and so he'd break it down and he'd say okay prenatal . . . we played games like that. Mom was always in the choir and she still sings to this day, and so we sang. The one thing I have to thank my parents for is they stimulated us to the point that if you were bored it was your own fault. Well, I don't want to be involved I'll just go into my own corner and . . . with my family we didn't do that too often; we were usually involved.

Overall the concept of family that includes extended family has been one of importance to most African American families from slavery to the present. This woman's (in the CEO's office) past and present experiences provide support for a reality that was mystified by the Monahan Report in the 1960s. This family challenges each other's thinking to such a degree that when a decision is made, it is well thought out as in the case of her decision to apply for her current position at

West Coast Community College. When I asked her son if they were a close family,

he states:

> Yea, sometimes I forget it takes an argument to make a decision
> sometimes in our family because we challenge each other. Our mom
> would come at it in a different way from my dad. My dad asks:
> "What are you talking about? Define it, etc." Some people might
> take offense to his method of questioning, but all he's trying to do is
> to make sure that you know your stuff. And if you don't appreciate
> the thought, my mom is there to ask more questions such as, "Oh,
> well let's discuss that, if I do this what you are telling me is that will
> happen, is that right? So how much will that cost me or how will
> that impact me or how will it benefit? So what you are telling me is
> it will cost me five dollars but it will benefit me 10 dollars in two
> weeks." Okay? She'll continue with something, "I've got to think
> about that," but what she's really saying in a nice way is, "I don't
> think so."
>
> Sometimes you have to come back at her and convince her. Kids are
> pretty creative, so we'd come at her with a different angle. Like
> when we wanted more food, popcorn, or something. I would say, "If
> I do this, you will give me some more ice cream, won't you?" She
> would say, "I already gave you one scoop." Making deals run in our
> family. I have a deal maker out there (daughter in other room),
> Cheryl wheels and deals.

The Role of Church and Community

Historically, the Black church and community have been important factors in

child-rearing and socializing the youth. This is especially true in rural and small

communities where everyone knew each other. People in the church and community

created a supportive environment where the children felt safe. She recalls some of

her experiences as a youth in the church:

> I took music lessons and the sisters in the church asked me to play
> the piano. I think that they asked me long before I should have been
> playing in public anywhere . . . I remember hitting more wrong notes
> than right ones. And every time I tried to get out of it, they would

say, "Oh no, you have to play for this"; it was not regular church
service. I think that it was BYPU, something in the evening and they
had me play for practice. Boy, I was so nervous I did not know what
to do. What this experience taught me was to persevere, to try to
improve yourself so you can do better. I learned to get over being so
intensely nervous that I could do something and not care how bad I
was because you have to be bad before you could be good (playing
the piano).

When I would play, I would make mistakes, hit the wrong keys so
many in a row, those sisters would say, "Amen, amen." So you
know you would go back to the books.

On holidays like Easter and Christmas you were given verses and
poems to memorize and recite. You were dressed up, your hair
pressed, and you were sweating from nervousness, but gained
confidence from the experience. I think all of this is good for
children. I think that is what is missing in schools today; children
don't have to remember and recite before the public to gain
confidence and positive self concept.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the entire community played a strategic role in the

child rearing process. Members of the community wanted to see the children

succeed. They wanted them to strive for achievements that were greater than their

parents. She remembers:

People in the community would say things like, "You are nice girls.
Your dad is a hard worker and your mom is doing this so that you're
able to go to college." They would simply tell you that you are
going to college. They would remind you of what other kids have
done and warn you to stay away from children whom they thought
were never going to make it. They would say things like, "You
should not be doing this, this person isn't going anywhere." I mean
they said those things to you. They told you how proud they were of
you. And if I am remembering they would say, "You have a lot to
live up to." And if you would have gotten into stuff, if you did not
go to school, I mean, dear God, they were going to tell on you
before you could even get home or do anything. Parents in those
days would believe an adult before they believed you.

Not only were children encouraged to get a formal education they were expected to participate in community service activities such as assisting the elderly. Everyone was expected to make contributions to the community including the children. She explains:

> I went into the neighborhood and read to folks who could not read. At the time, I did not know they were unable to read, I thought their eyes were tired. We were also sent out to help them, to go to the store or do whatever was needed. We were expected to help others. I may have fussed and did not want to do it because I wanted to play or do something else. I can remember my mother laying it on the line to us. "People don't need you when they can do for themselves. You show your friendship when they need you, and you go over there and help out." I remember Miss Jane. Miss Jane had been sick. Her children lived somewhere else. Anyway, they were not nearby, but we would go over and clean her house. I don't know what good we did because her house was so dirty, but we tried. I can remember my grandmother going to see people when they were ill.

Certain norms existed in the community regarding expected behavior of young girls. In those days if a girl were to date too much or get pregnant, the younger girls were advised to keep their distance. It was unacceptable for one to become pregnant outside of marriage. Interesting to note is the fact that it was acceptable for young girls to marry. The informant reports:

> As I said, we were not allowed to go into certain neighbors' yards. I can remember my grandmother talking through the window or over the fence, but we could not go into their yard. All I remember is they had lots of babies and so my grandmother used it as her parable. She would say, "They were having all those babies and didn't have a husband; they are going to be poor and ignorant all of their lives. They got too many . . ." At times they tried to get us to come next door but my grandmother would catch them and bawl them out but good. So it was sort of the pattern. You were to respect everyone, that is, speaking to everyone, but there was that line of demarcation.

> While there was respect, you did not associate with certain people
> and so it was never a problem. In all my life, I never saw anyone
> disrespect my mother, grandmother or my aunts as women.

Summary

As I interacted with the data several themes emerged as I reviewed the multidimensional life experiences, philosophical thinking, and critical factors that influenced the key informant's personal and professional growth and development. Utilizing her own voice to tell her story, it became clear that she emerged as an educational leader within the community college system by possessing the needed educational background, knowledge, skills, characteristics and attributes. It is within this context that I discovered an African American woman who worked hard to achieve a well-rounded background needed to meet the constantly changing needs of the community college and all of its stakeholders as we move into the 21st century. Data show major motivating and constraining factors that influenced her career choice and mobility were embodied in constructs of moral and transformational leadership, self, education, family, church, and community, role of career planning and mentors, dedication to working beyond a 9 to 5 job, and commitment to diversity and community college philosophy. The informant's passion for education and her worldview of obstacles as related to race and gender are crucial factors influencing her ability to ascend to her current CEO position.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides an overview of research conducted with an African American woman chief executive officer in a community college setting. Emerging themes are presented, examined and discussed within the framework of the literature. Conclusions and implications are based upon the data collection, analysis, and literature review. Specific recommendations are made that highlight the value of this qualitative study in relationship to understanding factors that may influence future research, as well as leadership development of African American and other women aspiring to become CEOs. Recommendations include questions for future research consideration.

Summary

As institutions of higher education, community colleges are in a strategic position to meet the growing demands for educating a population that is in a dynamic state of change, a population that is becoming more diverse with each passing year. Demographers predict that by the year 2010, 47% of the population will be people of color. Even today, they have already reached a majority status in Washington, DC, and New Mexico. California is comprised of 48% of people of color and Texas has 43% (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1999). Approximately 25% of the nation's 10.2 million community college students are persons of color and they

expect institutions to reflect their composition. Concomitantly, the majority of students of color and women begin their college education within a community college setting, and with the anticipated change in demographics, one can predict that community colleges will continue to serve a greater number of students of color and women in the future.

A diverse student population, lack of access, rising cost, the use of technology and other complex issues have created a new challenge for community colleges, a challenge that requires extraordinary educational leaders. This new leadership must possess a new mindset. Leaders of the 21st century must be change agents with a moral purpose and commitment to educating the citizenry (Fullan, 1993). Educational leadership must be inclusive. Individuals of color and women are needed so that students and staff will have inspiring role models and mentors needed to stimulate intellectual growth and promote student success. Their opinions and voice add value to discussions related to staff development, curriculum development, community relations, personnel issues, funding, and other issues impacting community colleges.

To be effective, a critical mass of individuals and leaders working at every level within the community college is needed to create a positive climate and supportive learning environment for all students. Unfortunately, this critical mass does not exist at this juncture; for example only 5.25% of the top administrators are African Americans. African Americans are also underrepresented within faculty ranks, comprising 10% of all faculties. George Vaughan (1998), one of our nation's

top researchers, says, "The paucity of Black presidents is unfortunate because it's important for a school's leadership to reflect today's diverse pool of students" (p. 6).

Without a critical mass of African Americans, women and other individuals of color working at every level in institutions of higher education including boards of trustees, presidential screening committees, faculties, and staff, the probability of changing the current statistics remains dismal. Current statistics will more than likely remain stagnant, which has been the reported case since the early 1970s. A study of five law schools found that the critical number for influencing law professor tenure decisions was 12%. An analysis of tenure patterns indicated that when there are higher proportions of tenured women, untenured women were more likely to achieve tenure (Angel, 1988). While there are no studies of this nature on community college CEOs, one can assume that similar outcomes could be extrapolated for African Americans and other people of color.

Because of the changing demographics, individuals in power must take responsibility in partnership with those who are underrepresented within community colleges, and begin to challenge the status quo. Conscious strategies to create inclusive leadership are needed. History shows that White men continue to occupy approximately 85% of all top administrative and faculty positions respectively. Consequently, without conscious efforts, White men will continue to hire individuals who look and think like themselves. The stereotypes that White males have about women in general are deeply ingrained, and according to Heilman, Block, Martell, and Simon (1989) they are resistant to change. Nevertheless, this researcher

believes that we can consciously change the status quo, and that significant changes will not take place without conscious efforts by those involved in the hiring process for community colleges. Incremental change is insufficient to keep up with the current demands.

Hence, this study was based on or conducted with the assumption that women of color have the mindset, knowledge, skills and experiences needed to provide a new direction for educating students, and for problem-solving the complex problems confronting education in general. Therefore, the purpose of this contextual study was to explore factors impacting the professional and personal development of an African American woman chief executive officer in a community college setting. The researcher hoped to gain an understanding of critical events, experiences, values, beliefs and decisions that affected the career choice and mobility of this phenomenal woman. Gaining an understanding of her worldview and other characteristics could increase our understanding of how she was able to overcome what may have appeared to be insurmountable barriers as she ascended to her current position.

While contextual data cannot be applied to the general population, findings may be helpful to specific individuals aspiring to become a chief executive officer in an education setting. Such a study may also provide evidence for understanding a new phenomenon, and therefore serve as a foundation for theory development. Since little is known about African American women leaders, this study may add to

the dearth of literature and be used as a basis for future research that is quantifiable in nature.

The following questions were developed to focus the research on the perceptions and experiences of the informant:

1. What factors are perceived as positive influences or facilitators for personal growth, professional development, and opportunities for career mobility and choice?

2. What factors are perceived as negative or constraints for personal growth, professional development, and opportunities for career mobility and choice?

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

As with any research study, the first thing that must be considered in exploring a phenomenon is the ontological question, that is, "What is the form and nature of reality and what is there that can be known about it?" Secondly, methodology addresses the question of how the researcher goes about finding out whatever he or she believes to be known. And thirdly, epistemology addresses the relationship between the researcher and what is to be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Having explored these basic questions, the researcher employed a naturalistic paradigm because this approach purports that reality exists within context and is the construction of those participating in the research. Furthermore, this emergent design suggests that knowledge is maximized where there is a close relationship between the phenomenon and the inquirer. Therefore, data were collected through

in-depth interviews and can be described as rich and thick in description. Even though this study is rich and thick in description, it has inherent flaws and the researcher admits that it is value driven and is considered to be an outcome of the relationship that existed between a phenomenon and the researcher. Nevertheless, strengths of this design outweigh limitations because the key informant was provided with a means to use her own voice to construct her reality and share her perceptions.

The study population selection was purposeful. This woman was selected because she is an African American who ascended to a CEO's position within a community college setting and she willingly agreed to serve as the key informant.

All interviews were conducted in the office of the key informant. Triangulation was achieved through interviews with her two sons, one in the oldest son's home, and the other over the phone, and the literature review. Distance limited the more preferable option of a face-to-face interview with her son. Conducting a phone interview was a tremendous challenge for the researcher and is not without flaws as well. This process for interviewing limits the researcher's ability to observe body language that has the potential of cuing the researcher to probe into an issue thereby gaining a deeper understanding of what is being said. After multiple phone calls and the acquisition of special equipment, a one-hour interview was conducted and taped with her son. Member checks were conducted to assure the credibility and validity of data collected.

The Summary of Study Findings and Emergent Themes

The study explored the perceptions of an African American woman CEO at WCCC. Based on questions raised in this study to ascertain factors that influenced the informant's personal and professional development and their relationship to career choice and mobility, the following results and themes emerged through data analysis:

1. Personal and professional development influenced her career choice and mobility.

2. Specific factors such as critical events, experiences with racism and sexism, values, beliefs, and relationships had an impact on her personal growth, professional development and decisions related to career opportunities and advancement. Accommodation to racism and sexism and the ability to overcome obstacles were also critical to career advancement. This accommodation is characterized as resilience or adaptation to internal and external conditions, and change. Furthermore the confluence of a positive childhood and direct experiences in later life with racism and sexism created a mindset that was determined to overcome barriers--a mindset with vision to become a leader.

In addressing the major questions raised, five major themes emerged from the data analysis:

1. relationships

2. value of education

3. construction of the self/positive self identity

4. resilience/adaptation

5. leadership

An overarching finding is the concept of leadership that embodies philosophical thinking, beliefs, values, behavior, and actions related to education, organization, and people. Relationships, specific knowledge, abilities and skills were identified. Educational leadership is multidimensional; it is operationalized through complex social interactions with individuals inside and outside of the organization and can be seen as a web of relationships and connectedness, and commitment to individual development, organization and change. This leadership is framed as moral leadership (Fullan, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1993).

Discussion of Study Findings
and Emergent Themes

The major theoretical underpinnings for this study allowed the researcher to examine questions raised through the lenses of an Afrocentric feminist epistemologic and critical theorist paradigm. bell hooks (1984) posits that African American women's experiences with marginality necessarily provide them with a way of knowing and understanding the world differently from others including Black men. Encounters with racism, sexism, and class oppression have played a role in identity construction of the Black woman; therefore, she has a different worldview, one that reflects these experiences. Racism, sexism, and oppression are the major social constructs and practices that have placed African American women in conditions of poverty, welfare, and in some of the lowest paying jobs in America. Even today the

vast majority of Black women continue to work as domestics, childcare workers, farm workers, and in clerical positions and other low paying service jobs. On the other hand, the African American woman has acquired the resilience needed to overcome barriers and many have ascended to positions of leadership in business, industry, education, and public office.

While the Civil Rights Act and Affirmative Action brought about significant change in the economic and social conditions for women, women of color remain in some of the lowest paying jobs, and there is a growing chasm between Whites and Blacks, and the rich and poor. There are a greater number of White women occupying CEO positions in comparison to women of color, and there are even fewer Blacks in the ranks of faculty and administrative positions within colleges and universities. Of the 5.25% of community college presidents that are African American, approximately 31% are women (Phelps, Taber, & Smith, 1997). These statistics indicate a need to hire more Black women presidents. Opportunities for selecting more African American women exist due to retirements and the increase in the number of awarded doctorates. Even though more African American women earned doctorates than Black men according the Department of Education 1991 statistics, they have not advanced proportionately and have not achieved parity with Black men, White men and women.

Many simplistic answers emerged from the literature review to address the complexities of this indisputable problem, some of which this researcher considers unscientific in nature. A good example of unscientific thinking was found in a book

on leadership. It was suggested that Blacks do not achieve leadership positions because they have inborn deficits (Bass & Stodgill, 1990). Other constraining factors include educational and cultural deprivation, cultural conflict and discrimination. Hoffmann and Reed (1981) suggest that women may be imposing barriers to their entrance into positions of leadership. Their reluctance may be due to fear of being perceived as aggressive or too ambitious and the fear of failure. The majority of the studies conducted on African Americans and leadership employed the positivist paradigm that fails to examine the current status of African Americans in relationship to America's history of slavery, Jim Crow Segregation and racial discrimination.

This review of the literature indicates the need for African American women to engage in research. Without the African American feminist perspective, research will continue to focus on negative aspects of African American life. Other scholars will continue to conduct research in such a manner that blames African Americans for their underachievement in all aspects of American life, and for the conditions in which the majority of them live. The vast majority of research conducted on women fail to identify or differentiate the ethnicity of the women under study; therefore, these studies fail to address specific factors related to African American, Latino and Native American women (Bernstein, 1985).

The primary purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of the key informant's perceptions about factors influencing personal and professional development, and their relationship to career choice and mobility. Gaining an

understanding of factors impacting her personal growth and professional

development, and her ability to resist or accommodate what is perceived as negative

influences provide wisdom for others aspiring to achieve a CEO position within the

community college system. These findings could have a positive impact on current

statistics.

Major Factors: Personal and Professional

The findings in this study support the assumption that a relationship exists

between personal and professional development, and career choice and mobility.

The key informant was born and raised in a segregated parish in the State of

Louisiana. She attended segregated schools until reaching the graduate level.

During her developmental years, she was sheltered from the overt racism that

existed outside of the Black community by her father and family. As a child she saw

her family and other members of the Black community work together to achieve

equal opportunities and the right to vote. Leaders of both genders emerged and

individuals from various social-economic backgrounds participated in this vital

struggle. From experiences with her family's participation in the Civil Rights

Movement and the study of African American history with her father, she gained a

sense of pride in being Black and female.

In addition, she was told repeatedly that she could attain anything in life that

she aspired and worked to achieve. These strong messages came from her father,

mother, grandmother, and other members in the community. Virtually all of the

powerful women in Reid-Merritt's (1996) study reported having mothers and

grandmother as strong role models; of the 45 respondents many of them also had fathers and grandfathers fulfilling this important role. These women learned self-reliance, independence, responsibility and assertiveness as children. They are exposed to strong dominant mothers as role models (Baumrind, 1972). Bass and Stogdill (1990) conjecture that having a strong, dominant mother has been most significant for many world leaders.

The key informant excelled academically. Active participation in school, church, community activities, and interactions with role models inside and outside of the family contributed to the development of leadership skills. An overarching lesson learned is the notion that relationships are valued and one person cannot stand alone; helping others was expected and essential for survival and growth. Overall, experiences throughout her life have contributed to the development of a positive self-esteem and identity. Parents provided experiences that facilitated the development of qualities of independence, initiative, and responsibility.

Theorists such as Gilligan (1982) and Erickson (1963) suggest that we must not only reply on ourselves but others to function effectively. Reid-Merritt (1996) purports that even if young Black women do not have such support at home, the Black community can provide a nurturing foundation for the emotional and spiritual growth that leads to a strong sense of identity and a high level of self-esteem which are critical to success.

Respondents in Gostnell's (1996) study reported that support of family, mentors, friends and others expressed a belief in their work. They also reported that

a spiritual life or beliefs, and a sense of purpose or mission as a leader concerned with the well being of others were crucial to career mobility and their success as leaders. Other studies conducted by Reid-Merritt, (1997), Chatman (1991), and Talley-Ross (1991) are consistent with findings in this study. Very few women ascend to leadership positions without family support or support of mentors inside and outside of work.

The key informant was given support at every stage of her development. This support came from family, friends and mentors, and those who believed in her ability and work. She also expressed a strong belief in God and considers herself a spiritual person with a moral obligation to "give something back" to the community. The desire to give something back to the community, her passion for education, and belief that education is a foundation for individual freedom and the betterment of the community were the primary motivators influencing career choice, planning and mobility.

The key informant learned to value education at an early age, just as the majority of women leaders in other studies. Parental attitudes toward education influenced their daughters' desire to get a formal education. Collier-Thomas (1982) reports that education is a consistent theme in the lives of Black people. Eighty-five percent of the participants in Chatman's (1991) study emphatically described expectations parents held about them attending college. Unita Blackwell (cited in Reid-Merritt, 1996), the first African American woman mayor in the state of Mississippi, makes an eloquent statement about education. She says,

> My mother had the determination to make sure that we got some
> kind of what she called education so you could be somebody! Now,
> being somebody, in her mind, was just being able to stand up and
> possibly, maybe one day, just try to take care of yourself, where you
> could read, write, and count. (p. 44)

The informant's parents were no different. They had high standards for academic

achievement and consistently expressed the need and expectation for their girls to

attend college. Having been raised in a large, traditional, Black southern family, her

husband expressed similar values related to education, and provided her with

substantial support as she continued to advance her education.

The value of attaining an education is more than a symbolic act. It means

that one can compete with Whites, become self-reliant and make a difference in the

community. The valuing of education appears to be a dominant theme among the

Black people independent of the environment in which they developed as children,

teenagers, or young adults. It does not seem to matter whether successful Black

women emerged from an urban setting or the countryside, north or south, east or

west, common laborers or professional background; evidence found in other studies

and literature support this theme (Chatman, 1991; Gostnell, 1996; Reid-Merritt,

1996; WoodBrooks, 1991).

After what Havighurst (1972) calls a "teachable moment," the informant

made the decision, with the support of her husband, to return to school to pursue a

doctorate in Education. This decision was made after a few unsuccessful attempts

to apply for positions such as the vice-presidency, and is considered to be a critical

turning point in life (Mandelbaum, 1973). This finding supports the idea that it is

essential for African American women aspiring for a presidency within the community college setting to have an earned doctorate. According to current statistics, there is only one African American woman who ascended to her present position without possessing a doctorate. Williams (1985) states that a minority woman, more than others, must have an earned doctorate and a resume that shows outstanding achievement and recognition by peers. In other words the attainment of authenticity and legitimization prior to career advancement is a requirement which is not necessarily the case for men.

The informant's father played a major role in her life after the death of her mother. In addition, her new mother, grandmother, great-aunts, and other women in the community provided her with the opportunity to develop leadership skills. Nearly 50% of the participants in Chatman's study (1991) indicated that their mother was the most influential person in their lives. This has historical significance in the sense that mothers and older Black women have always contributed to child and leadership development (Lerner, 1973; Rodgers-Rose, 1980). Other mentors include her husband and children. Daloz, (1986), Alexander and Scott (1983), and Bandura (1977) suggest that role modeling is essential for effective learning and development.

Church participation is another significant factor. It was through church activities and the relationship with her grandmother that she learned to express opinions, to speak her own voice. She learned self-confidence, risk-taking, public speaking, organizing herself and others, and a caring ethic. For example, she

participated in plays, read the bible, and recited the scripture. While learning to play the piano, she was allowed to make mistakes without experiencing negative criticism from the audience that consisted of older Black women. Remarkable experiences such as these laid the foundation for her leadership philosophy and practices, and an intractable determination to succeed in the sphere of education developed.

The key informant's relationship with her immediate family was of extreme importance to career advancement, a factor that had positive and negative impact. While she worked in several positions outside and within the community college setting, she acknowledges making conscious decisions about career advancement, avoiding taking on leadership roles that required greater responsibility when the children were young. She was not willing to forego parental responsibilities; therefore, she and her husband shared various tasks including taking care of the children in times of illness, transporting and attending school activities, and other important events. She believes that her husband would have wanted her to stay at home with the children, but he recognized the importance of her desire to work and advance her career.

She has a loving relationship with her husband and two sons, and their marriage has survived a role transition where she was the primary "breadwinner" of the family. It was only after careful consideration to the family that she willingly accepted her current position. Initially, her husband expressed doubts about this move, but after in-depth reflection, he joined her family circle of support and

encouragement. This was critical for the informant who was determined that her marriage and family were to remain intact.

Studies show that African American women in leadership positions were more likely to be divorced or never married (Chatman, 1991; Gostnell, 1994). At the same time, 11 of 17 respondents in Talley-Ross' (1991) study were married. Many of the current CEOs within the community college system are divorced or have never been married. Overall, women who are not married or had no children seek and accept career advancement in greater numbers than those who are married with children. Furthermore Carroll (1987) argues that the greatest barrier that married women face is the conflict between career and family. The women legislators in her sample reported that they had waited until their children were older before running for office.

An impressive resume that includes 25 years of community college experience played a major role in attaining her current position. The informant transitioned from faculty to administrator, acquired experience as a grant-writer, coordinator, and leader in the area of student services. She loves new challenges and therefore availed herself to leadership opportunities by creating and managing new services to respond to the needs of students. She was the recipient of several awards and was active in professional and community organizations and activities. In her role as vice-president of student services, she gained experience in hiring, firing, planning, and managing a budget. Phelps and others (1997) indicate that African Americans do not follow the normal career path to the presidency. They

come from a more varied background that includes experience in K-12, universities and states agencies, student services, special programs, academic affairs and staff positions within the community college, administrative and faculty positions in four-year institutions. Fourteen point eight percent emerged from positions in student services and 24% followed the traditional career path.

Negative or constraining factors include experiences with sexism and gender discrimination. On a number of occasions she worked with White and Black men who attempted to subjugate her or were reluctant to follow her leadership. She applied for positions several times and a man was selected, men who were considered by others in the organization to be less qualified than her. From such experiences she soon learned that men have the privilege of socializing together, and that decisions are often made outside of the organization. More often than not women are excluded from the network and have difficulty getting information (Biemiller, 1981; Moore & Wagstaff, 1974). According to Hensel (1991), the consequences of not having access to the "old boys' network" can be devastating to career progress. Success is dependent upon access to pertinent information as well as the establishment of a supportive interpersonal and social climate that allows opportunities for professional skills development (Hall & Sandler, 1984). Bass and Stodgill (1990) argue that married women have better access to the "old boys' network."

Participants in Chatman's (1991) study reported similar experiences of having been denied opportunities for career advancement because of race and

gender. Over half of the participants expressed the perception of being hindered from advancing to their current positions earlier in their careers because they were Black and female. Even though their careers were hindered at times, their positive self identity and commitment to the community allowed them to overcome these barriers. According to Reid-Merritt, phenomenal Black women are unstoppable and are known to step outside of the box, that is, they sometimes break the rules in their quest for leadership and career advancement.

Phenomenal Black women ascending to top-level administrator positions are intuitive thinkers just as their parents and ancestors were, a skill required to ensure survival through slavery, Jim Crow Segregation, and covert and overt racism. Collins (1989) speculates that:

> Living life as Black women requires wisdom since knowledge about the dynamics of race, gender, and class subordination has been essential to Black women's survival. African American women give such wisdom high credence in assessing knowledge. Knowledge without wisdom is adequate for the powerful, but wisdom is essential to the survival of the subordinate. (pp. 758-759)

These Black women are bicultural. They live in two worlds, one that is Black and the one is dominant, mainstream and White. At times, they run the risk of being isolated from both the Black and White communities.

While respondents in other cited studies reported feelings of isolation and other critical incidents, the informant in this study did not share their perception of isolation. Neither did she come from a single parent family riddled with chemical and physical abuse. The informant nevertheless shared similar experiences with

sexism. In contrast to respondents in other studies, she never cited any incidents with overt racism as an adult. However, she believes that race, as well as gender, has hindered her career advancement. This perception may be attributed to early childhood experiences of living in the segregated South where the Black people were denied their basic human rights. Analysis of the data failed to show a direct relationship between constraining factors such as racism and sexism, and career choice.

In summary, the informant identified several constraining factors that had a negative impact on her career advancement. She reported that race, gender, self, family, lack of education credentials and the lack of political savvy related to what male administrators and others expected of Black women leaders were factors.

Positive factors that influenced her career choice and mobility were: positive self identity, esteem, and pride in being an African American woman; relationships with her husband, sons, family, members of the community, professional organizations; activities in school and church; spirituality; and beliefs about education and leadership.

The key informant, like respondents in cited studies, possesses what Benard (1991) characterizes as resilience. Being resilient provides the individual with coping skills needed to accommodate and adapt to negative experiences. In his study of children with chemical and physical abuse backgrounds, he found that these children possessed "protective factors" that account for their ability to adapt and

survive horrible environmental conditions. The majority of these children go on to live successful lives as adults.

The informant enjoyed a wholesome childhood and teenage years with many positive role models of both genders from various socioeconomic backgrounds. At a very young age she learned that through working together, the Black people could achieve an education, the right to vote and that it is possible to overcome seemingly insurmountable or impossible obstacles. Ultimately, she emerged as an adult with a strong positive self identity, a positive self esteem, and pride in being an African American woman. These are the major factors that allowed a little girl with shiny knees from a small parish in Louisiana to ascend to a CEO position within a community college setting. Her success is the result of personal and professional aspirations and development. Reid-Merritt (1996) purports that phenomenal Black women's experiences as children create a mindset for achievement. She states that:

> The confluence of these two forces--a supremely positive childhood preparation swirling against a devastating negative tide of racism and sexism--create a mind-set that for some would eventually develop into a new vision of leadership strong enough to surmount almost every obstacle. In a racist, sexist society, they believed they could and should operate at the highest level. (p. 27)

This is certainly true of the key informant in this qualitative study.

Characteristics, Values, Beliefs and Attitudes

Phenomenal African American women leaders in Reid-Merritt's (1996) study possessed several characteristics including:

1. Enriched from an early age by the strong support of family, church, school, and community.

2. Intensely focused on clearly identifiable goals.

3. Imbued with humanistic values.

4. Politically sophisticated.

5. Profoundly spiritual.

6. Rooted in their own history and self-accepting as Blacks and women.

7. Socially conscious and dedicated to a social agenda that transcends personal gain.

Characteristics, values, beliefs and attitudes identified in this study are critical for career advancement within a community college setting. The key informant possessed the following characteristics:

- Positive self esteem and identity

- Spirituality

- Discipline

- Perseverance

- Respect for others

- Ability to voice opinions and beliefs

- Walks the talk (students first)

- Active in professional, community, and fraternal organizations

- Willing to work hard beyond 8-5 hours

- Politically savvy

- Inner-directed

- Established her authenticity and legitimacy

- Multitasked and high energy

- Excellent communication and listening skills

- Able to depersonalize issues

- Desire for autonomy

- Belief in continuous quality improvement

- Constructive criticism needed for self growth and personal development

- Resourceful

- Willing to learn new things, accepts being first in a new adventure

- Strong service and caring ethic

- Well read

- Ethical

- Problem-solver

- Values the work of others and surrounds self with competent people

- Strong sense of integrity

- Ability to work with difficult people

- Does not try to befriend people she supervises

- Belief in lifelong learning

- Values honesty and fairness

- Admits errors

- Balances work, home, community and other activities

- Set limits on household tasks

- Delegates appropriately

- Accepts responsibility and is accountable

- Sound knowledge and leadership skills

- Knows how to position self, prepared to meet opportunities

- Acquired appropriate educational background

- Mentors and networks with others

- Supportive husband and family

- Passion for education

- Never engaged in self-pity

- Public speaking skills

- Willing to give back to the community

Summary of Findings

Table 7 categorizes the developmental factors that influenced or hindered career choice and advancement. The interplay between the confluence of personal and environmental factors is critical to understanding this phenomenal woman's achievement. There is an open interaction between developmental factors that influenced the success of this African American CEO. These factors may also be classified as internal or external.

Table 7

Developmental Factors that Influence or Hinder Career Choice and Advancement

(Internal) Personal	(External) Environmental
Basic intelligence	Support
Education	Community
Family	Church
Spirituality	Opportunity
Positive self esteem	History of struggle and survival
Resilience	Racism
	Sexism

There are other personal factors such as making poor choices, low self-esteem, separation of family and a lack of direction and self-centeredness that have a negative influence on professional development, choice and career advancement.

Study Implications and Recommendations

Based upon data analysis six implications were identified.

1. Community colleges and other institutions of higher education should enact conscious strategies to recruit and retain African American women students. The importance of having a potential pool for leadership development cannot be overly emphasized. The greater the numbers in the pool, the greater the possibility for selection. This study shows that there is a positive relationship between the number of advanced degrees awarded and the current number of African American

chief executive officers in community colleges. Of the African American chief executive officers, 31% are women. The key informant in this study is a member of this group of successful women.

2. In addition to recruitment activities, mentoring programs or having a mentor played a crucial role in career advancement. Mentors provide internal support for women of color, and women in general. While the key informant in this study did not report feelings of isolation, this is an issue for many women of color, especially since they are usually found in small numbers in most organizations. Sometime she is the only African American woman in a position of power or leadership. Mentors are also helpful with career planning and decision making. They also serve as a sounding board and role model for the aspiring women who wish to pursue an educational leadership position within a community college. Influential role models and mentors such as teachers, parents, and members of the church and community are also key to leadership development skills and aspiration.

3. The literature review and data from this study show that African American women possess the mindset with the knowledge, skills, ethics of caring and accountability that are required for the educational leader of the 21st century. Creating a diverse leadership cadre has added value for institutions that are becoming more diverse with each passing year and are undergoing constant change. Women of color could serve as role models for women students who make-up approximately 50% of the student population. They also bring a different voice in problem-solving complex issues confronting most institutions of higher education.

4. Data further illustrates that some gains have been made during the past 10 years. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of African American women chief executive officers within community colleges. As stated previously, 31% of African American chief executive officers are women. These data indicate there are less African American men chief executive officers because the total percentage has remained relatively constant, but the mix has changed. The majority of chief executive officers are White men.

5. The key informant in this study did not perceive negative barriers that have kept other Black women from achieving leadership positions such as a lack of motivation, poor self-image or poor self-esteem, and low career aspirations that have been reported in other studies (Harvard, 1986).

6. Community college leaders and Boards of Directors should examine their current policies and practices related to hiring executive officers and other leadership positions. Measures must be in place that will facilitate opportunities for promotion and advancement as compared to White men and women.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. We have just begun the process of understanding factors that impact African American women's personal and professional development. This study shows that there is a strong relationship between these two variables and career choice and mobility. Further study is needed so that we may gain a deeper

understanding of the factors contributing to the success of Black women chief executive officers within higher education.

2. More study is needed in the area of exploring the climate and culture of the community college where there is a large number of African Americans employed in top leadership positions. Research is also needed that explores factors in predominantly White organizations with few Black women or no Black women in positions of leadership. This research would address the major question of why there are no Black women in these institutions.

3. Research with the purpose of identifying the similarities and differences between White men, women, Black men and Black women chief executive officers is needed. Are the socialization processes different for White men, women, and Black men? Gaining a more in-depth understanding of specific factors that influence decision making for seeking careers in education could be helpful to implementing new practices that would influence Black women.

4. The question of what measures have been taken to increase the applicant pool into graduate school must be explored as well. Are graduate schools playing a role in changing the perceptions and attitudes of White males toward persons of color? Historically, education has played a significant role in promoting racist ideology.

5. The question of how White women and women of color gain access to positions of power and leadership within education must be further addressed.

6. Finally, it would be interesting to discover the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the hiring of African American women presidents.

This particular study illustrates that this phenomenal Black woman belongs to the first wave of African American women leaders to break through the confluence of racism and sexism in higher education. Similar to other African American women who have excelled in business, industry and public life, she knows that leadership does not exist in a vacuum. She, along with other African American women and people of color, are fulfilling a mission that affects all historically under-served populations and "global citizens." This woman embodies moral leadership, a leadership model that includes the ethics of caring and personal accountability as described by Black feminist epistemologists.

The research that is needed to gain more knowledge about factors affecting the personal and professional development and their relationship to career choice and mobility has just begun. The informant's childhood background was an important influence in preparing her to cope or adapt to an environment with few Black women leaders. This study shows that this woman possessed the educational and professional background, love and commitment to educating a citizenry that is in a state of flux. Like other phenomenal Black women found in Reid-Merritt's (1996) study she made a conscious decision to accept the responsibility and to be accountable to the community. She is an ordinary woman who ascended to a top leadership position within a community college. Emerging themes were

relationships, construction of a positive self-concept, value for education, resilience, and leadership.

This study illuminates a model of leadership for the 21st century. This information is vital to those aspiring African American women who seek the presidency.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECTS

Supporting Evidence: Protection of Human Subjects application

Maurice McKinnon
College of Home Economics and Education
Doctorate in Education with an Emphasis
in Community College Leadership
March 18, 1997

A brief description of the significance of this project in lay terms:

This doctoral study describes the life history of an African American woman chief executive officer in a community college setting. The study documents her perceptions and experiences related to personal growth, professional development, and opportunities for career mobility and choice. Research in this area provides insight for individuals aspiring to achieve executive leadership roles in higher education. As community colleges move into the next century, empirical data of this nature are critical for meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body.

A brief description of the methods and procedures to be used during this research project:

This research is a qualitative case study that explores and describes the life history of an African American chief executive officer in a community college setting. Interactive methods for data collection include participant observation, formal and informal interviews and examination of archival information such as memoranda and other printed documents. Personal experiences in a social and work environment facilitate the discovery of participant perceptions, meanings, and interpretations. Constant comparative method as described by Glasser and Strauss will be utilized for data analysis. To establish validity of the study, member check and selected interviews with spouse (if agreed upon by participant) and sons are also utilized to triangulate data collected and analyzed.

A description of the benefits and/or risks to the subject involved in this research:

Risks to the subject are minimal. Guidelines for anonymity and confidentiality are employed to protect the participant. A collaborative model is used to further ensure minimization of risk; significant findings will be discussed with the participant.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

You have been selected to serve as the major participant for my doctoral study. This research will explore and document the life history of an African-American woman chief executive officer in a community college setting with the primary purpose of gaining an understanding of the perceptions and experiences that influenced professional growth, personal development, career mobility and choice. Of the forty-six community college African-American presidents in the United States, 10 are women. This research will document your personal journey in achieving your current position.

- Informal and formal interviews with the assistance of a tape recorder or hand written notes are utilized to obtain and document your personal story, or any information shared during the interview. The interviews will be approximately an hour in length twice per week until exploration has been exhausted, and/or as mutually agreed upon by the participant and researcher. The participant will be allowed to tell her own story in her own way. After the initial interview, questions emerging from collected data will facilitate further questioning and clarification during the following interview. Recorders and notes will be transcribed in such a manner as to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

- Participant-observation will be utilized by the researcher to gather data from social and work interactions.

- Participation is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time.

Questions related to this research may be directed to Dr. Charles Carpenter, Professor of Education, Oregon State University, (541) 737-5961 or Maurice Mckinnon, research investigator, (503) 246-0635.

Signature   . . . .   Date   ..   .   .