

HEAD BLACK WOMAN IN CHARGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF BLACK FEMALE
ATHLETIC DIRECTORS' NEGOTIATION OF THEIR GENDER, RACE, AND
CLASS IDENTITIES

A Dissertation

by

JACQUELINE MCDOWELL

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2008

Major Subject: Kinesiology

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ABSTRACT

Head Black Woman in Charge: An Investigation of Black Female Athletic Directors' Negotiation of Their Gender, Race, and Class Identities. (May 2008)

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Framed as an instrumental case study, the purpose of this investigation was to understand how a select group of women, Black female athletic directors, define and negotiate their race, gender, and class identities. Data was collected via a qualitative in-depth semi-structured interview methodology. The women who were chosen for this research are Black female athletic directors of NCAA Division I, II, and III intercollegiate athletic departments. The data analysis consisted of coding the data at two levels: first-level coding and pattern coding, and following the coding process, the emergent findings were compared with the identity negotiation theory (i.e. self-verification and behavioral confirmation processes) in order to understand how the Black female athletic directors negotiated their race, gender, and class identities.

This investigation found that Black women athletic directors used two different denotations (i.e. African American and Black) to reference their racial identity, and race was the most salient identity because of their upbringings, childhood experiences, and dealings with racism. All of the women are heterosexual, but insufficient data did not

allow a full understanding how they define their gender identity. In describing their class status, the majority of the women came from a traditionally defined lower socioeconomic class background, but as a result of their athletic director appointment they now reside in the middle or upper middle economic class status. In understanding how Black female athletic directors negotiate their identities within and outside the athletic department, and what factors are associated with the negotiation of their identities, this investigation found that the Black women athletic directors had to establish, maintain, and change their race, gender, and class identities with the utilization of various self-verification and behavioral confirmation strategies. These negotiations were conducted in response to the expectations that ensued as a result of their role in a leadership position, lesbian, intra- and inter-racial interactions, and exposure to lesbian, Mammy, and Sapphire stereotypes.

DEDICATION

“We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. We provide the shoulders for those who follow us.”

To my family. My shoulders are ready for someone to stand on.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the support from many caring individuals the completion of this dissertation would not have been possible. First and foremost I would like to thank Jehovah for providing me with the strength to get through this dissertation. Secondly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their patience and encouragement. Throughout this process there were many times when I was not able to pick up the phone, hold a long conversation, or spend quality time with them, but they were very supportive and understanding and allowed me to focus on my dissertation without the fear of losing these relationships. There are far too many people to name, but you know who you are, and I definitely know who you are.

Next, I would like to thank my dissertation committee for their guidance and support. Dr. Kimberly N. Brown was an excellent choice for an outside committee member, as she demonstrated that she has profuse and expert knowledge of my topic. Her feedback and advice played a very instrumental role in the expansion of my knowledge and interest in my dissertation topic. Dr. Mike Sagas' scrutiny of the difference between racial and ethnic identity helped further my understanding of these constructs and allowed me to more fully understand why I identify more with a Black racial identity as compared to an African ethnic identity. Dr. John N. Singer was very helpful when disseminating his knowledge of qualitative research. My interactions with him have definitely increased my level of race consciousness and he has unknowingly encouraged me to expand my vocabulary and intellect.

Finally, I would like to thank my advisor, mentor, and dissertation chair, Dr. George B. Cunningham. Sometimes you don't know what you can aspire to become, until someone provides you with aspirations. That is what Dr. Cunningham did for me. Upon returning to college, my intent was never to get a Ph.D., but I guess he saw something in me and asked me to consider pursuing a Ph.D. My initial uncertainty changed to certainty, and pursuing this degree was one of the best decisions that I have made. As such, I offer my gratitude and sincere appreciation for his mentorship, encouragement, and mental and monetary support. The challenges that he provided me throughout my academic program have allowed me to grow mentally and professionally.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Individuals come to the workplace from different origins and designations, having “followed their own distinct paths—created out of an individual juncture of family background, educational experience, and community values” (Bell & Nkomo, 2001, p. 2). This quotation signifies the findings of Bell and Nkomo’s investigation of successful Black and White women in corporate America. Their study challenged the prevalent notion of a universal female experience by exemplifying how gender and racial differences amplified these distinct paths. As an increased number of racial minority and majority women enter the workforce, organizational realities will change: more women from separate directions and paths will enter the workforce—creating a new range of experiences and dynamics that need to be explored.

One dynamic that should be explored is the recent emphasis on and push for diversity in athletic leadership positions (Brooks, Althouse, & Tucker, 2007). The diversity efforts on behalf of sport organizations have resulted in the inclusion and employment of more Black¹ women. Although the numbers are still dismal and far below the number of Black women in U.S. society and as student athletes, compared to ten years ago, Black women now hold more leadership positions in intercollegiate

This dissertation follows the style of *Journal of Sport Management*.

¹Many individuals argue that the term “African American” should be used to reference U.S. individuals with a Black racial identity (Swarns, 2004); however, others feel that the term “Black” is more encompassing and accurate because Black individuals in the U.S. have a heritage in the U.S. not Africa (McWhorter, 2004). In accordance with the latter reasoning, I have chosen to use the term “Black” in this dissertation to refer to individuals with a U.S. Black racial identity.

athletic departments (DeHass, 2007) (see Figure 1). For instance, within the 1995-1996 school year, the NCAA's Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee's study revealed that Black women held approximately 0.6% of athletic directors and 2.4% of associate athletic directors positions in Division I, II, and III athletic departments (DeHass, 2007). When excluding Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) from the data, Black women represented only 0.2 % of the athletic directors and 1.2% of the associate athletic directors. In comparison with the 2005-2006 school year, the number of Black women athletic directors doubled to approximately 1.2% and the number of Black women associate athletic directors increased by 0.4% (DeHass). When excluding Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) from the data, Black women comprised 0.3 % of the athletic director and 1.9% of the associate athletic director positions.

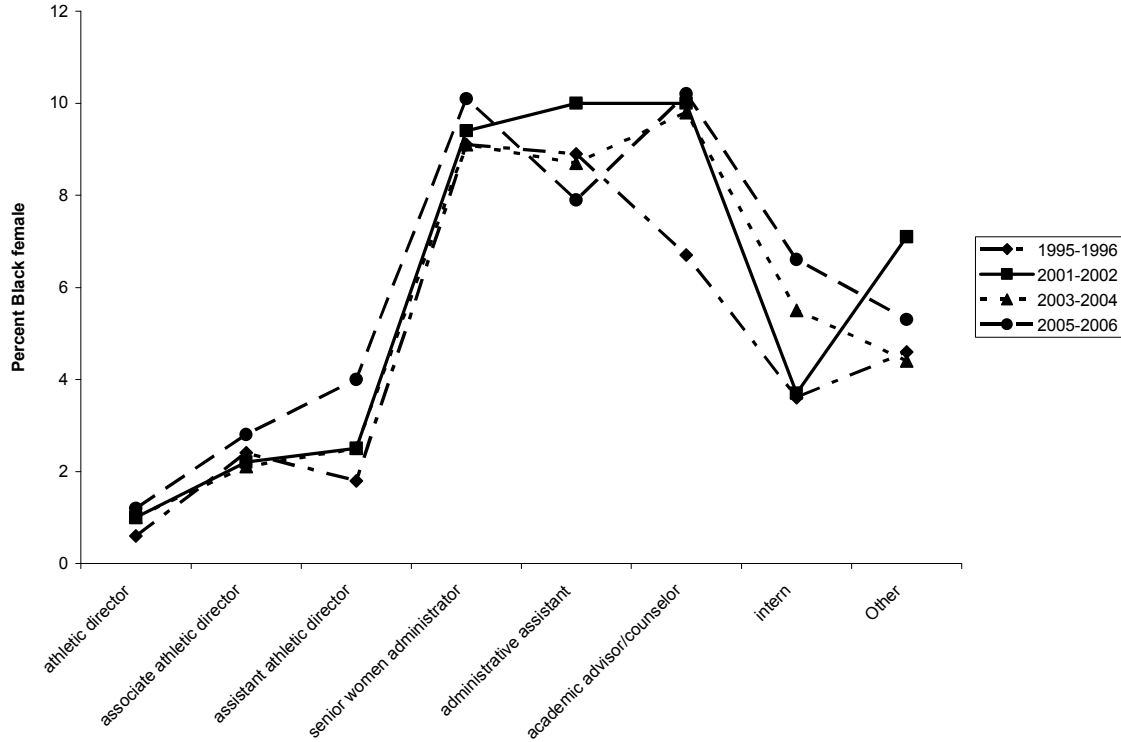


Figure 1. Representation of Black females in administrative positions

Note. Data obtained from DeHass, 2004, 2007

Despite many demographic changes in society and the labor force, such as the increased number of racial minorities and women entering the workforce and holding leadership positions (Whigham-Desir & Clarke, 2000), many scholars have not responded to these changes by refashioning academic scholarship to be more inclusive of all demographic groups (Bell & Nkomo, 1988; Nkomo, 1992; Parker, 2005). For example, very few studies examine the intersection of race, gender, and class, a unique situation that affects many Black women in the workforce (Collins, 2000). As a case in point, Hennig and Jardim's (1976) book was one of the first books about women

managers, but it did not include one Black woman manager in its sample. Moreover, Kanter's (1977) seminal study of gender in organizations excludes substantive mention of African American women. Morrison and White's (1994) work provides a more recent example, as only three Black women were contained in its sample without any meaningful study of the intersection of race, class, and gender. As a result of Black women's experiences not being fully examined, "colleagues know little about who they are, where they come from, or how their life and career experiences set them apart" (Bell & Nkomo, 2001, p. 10). Being that they share the same sex, some individuals assume Black and White women share similar personal and professional histories; whereas, others view race as more salient and assume the experiences of Black women executives emulate those of their Black male colleagues (Bell & Nkomo, 2001).

Recently scholars such as Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003), Bell and Nkomo (2001), Davidson (1997), and Talley-Ross (1995), have begun to explore the plight and experiences of Black women in the workplace, but the sports literature has continued to lack the "coming to voice" and the visibility of women of color that has recently occurred outside of sports in such areas as education, psychology, sociology, and economics" (Bruening, 2005, p. 332). A review of sports literature revealed that Black women's voices and experiences have indeed been silenced. Extant research on Black women has focused on student athletes (e.g. Bruening, 2004; Bruening, Armstrong, & Pastore, 2005; Lewis, 1997; Stratta, 1995), and Black female head basketball coaches (Sloan, 1996); however, in terms of Black female administrators, Abney's (1988) dissertation remains the prominent assessment of the experiences of Black female

athletic administrators at historically White and Black institutions. Further, Benton's (1999) dissertation provided insights into Black female athletic directors' experiences. More recent literature centering around Black female administrators' experiences has been conceptual in nature (e.g. Abney, 1999; Bruening, 2005) or reviews (e.g. Abney, 2007; Corbett, & Johnson, 1993). Thus, an empirical study of Black female administrators is not only timely and needed, but warranted.

Statement of Purpose

The current literature on Black female athletic administrators provides important insight into their experiences within intercollegiate athletic departments. However, it does not present a clear understanding of how these women make sense of their lives within a White male dominated sport domain, nor does it take into account the collective aspects of their lives and identities. Black women hired into collegiate athletic departments face pressures and expectations that necessitate them negotiating their identities. Thus, in order to expand the literature and the way researchers explore the lives of Black female athletic directors, an acknowledgement of the differing experiences that Black female athletic directors are afforded due to the intersection of their multiple identities is needed. Accordingly, this study drew from previous sport and mainstream literature on Black women managers/executives by further investigating the experiences of Black females in leadership positions; however, central to the research agenda is an exploration of Black women's interpretation of their identities and their subsequent negotiation of these identities in the workplace. This study explores the

unique challenges that Black female athletic directors face when negotiating multiple identities within a White male hegemonic domain.

Significance of the Research

This study investigates Black female athletic directors' experiences and voices. Such a study is important because, historically Black men's struggles with obtaining leadership positions in intercollegiate athletic departments have been central in debates on racial inequalities (e.g. Brown, 2002; Hughes & Wright, 2003; Hill & Murray, 1998; Walker, 2005). The plight of Black females has received less focus. A similar contention was likewise made by hooks (1981) who stated:

No other group in America has had their identity socialized out of existence as have Black women. We are rarely recognized as a group of separate and distinct from Black men, or a part of the larger group 'women' in this culture... When Black people are talked about the focus tends to be on Black men' and when women are talked about the focus tends to be on White women (p. 7).

bell hooks' (1981) statements not only reflect the marginal status of Black women in society, but her statements can also be used to characterize sport research. Similar to her contentions, Hull, Scott, and Smith's (1982) book, entitled *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men...* is also reflective of the current research and debate on racial and gender inequalities in the sports context. In race studies and debates, Black men stand as the universal racial subject; whereas, in gender studies, White women are the universal female subject. Black women are excluded from both narratives, and as such are silenced

and rendered invisible both as racial subjects and gendered subjects (Bruening, 2005; Hull, Scott, & Smith, 1982).

Moreover, a review of literature reveals the existence of few studies concerning intercollegiate athletic administration, and no studies exploring men and women's negotiation of identities in the workplace exists in current sports literature. This area of research is important, as sport organizations represent some of the most prominent and hegemonic social institutions in society today (Sage, 1998). Sport organizations contend with gender, race, and class issues to the extent that power relations are established and maintained through taken-for-granted, often hidden, assumptions and expectations about gender, race, and class (Coakley, 2001; Hall, Cullen, & Slack, 1989; Sage, 1998; Whisenant, Pedersen, & Obenour, 2002). The experiences and interests of the dominant demographic group, typically White Anglo-Saxon, Protestant men (Fink & Pastore, 1999) are privileged, while non-dominant racial and gender perspectives are suppressed, devalued, and muted (Parker, 2002). Organizational members come to expect leaders to look, act, and think in ways consistent with the socially constructed representations of leadership that are often in conflict with stereotypical assumptions about racial minorities and women (Parker, 2001; Sage, 1998). Thus, sport organizations can be understood as a site where identities are negotiated within the confines of sometimes contradictory and paradoxical ideologies and cultural expectations (Parker, 2003; 2005). As such the raced, gendered, and classed context of the sports industry provides a particular angle of vision from which to form new understandings about identity negotiation; in particular, how Black women negotiate their identities.

Theoretical Framework

Swann (1987) introduced the concept of “identity negotiation” to reference the processes through which people establish, maintain, and change their identities. The identity negotiation framework offers a comprehensive treatment of the interaction between self-concepts and the social world (Goffman, 1959; Swann, 1987). In conceptualizing identity negotiation, many people try to equate identity negotiation with asset negotiation (i.e. the exchange of materials, expectation, or services; Swann & Bosson, in press). However, these processes should not be considered synonymous. Swann and Bosson detailed significant similarities and difference between these two negotiation processes.

First these two processes have different functions (Swann & Bosson, in press). Asset negotiation regulates the exchange of commodities, while identity negotiation establishes the persona that each person will assume in an interaction. Secondly, asset negotiations are typically driven by explicit and easily to recognize motives. Identity negotiation in contrast involves making agreements on abstract psychological qualities or personas (Swann & Bosson). Moreover, the ultimate goal of an asset negotiation is an agreement at the end; whereas, “negotiating a public persona is merely a means to the larger ends of maintaining and nourishing one’s self-views as well as meeting other important identity-related needs” (p. 6).

Third, identity and asset negotiation differ in their channels of communication (Swann & Bosson, in press). In general, communication during an asset negotiation is verbal, explicit, purposeful, and has clearly demarcated beginnings, endpoints and

agendas. However, during the process of identity negotiation verbal and nonverbal communication channels are used (Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & McNulty, 1992) and communication is often implicit, informal, and open-ended. Moreover, asset negotiators are aware of the beginning and end of negotiation process; whereas identity negotiation can occur subconsciously (Swann, 1987; Swann & Bosson, in press). The process of establishing identity “tend[s] to become routine and recedes from consciousness once identities have been successfully negotiated, only to return to consciousness during times of change, disruption, and/or challenges” (p. 8). Finally asset negotiation will persist for the agreed upon duration of the agreement, while identity negotiation persists as long as the relationship between the relevant parties persists (Swann & Bosson).

Within the identity negotiation literature, two hypotheses have been posited as to how self-concepts or identities are constructed in relation to social environments. Some researchers contend that during the identity negotiation process, the individuals doing the appraising (i.e. the perceivers) may influence the self-concept of others (i.e. the targets). Others assert that the target’s self-concept may influence the perceivers’ assessment of him or her (McNulty & Swann, 1994). These two processes: behavioral confirmation and self-verification are expounded in the following sections.

Behavioral confirmation

Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934) argued that people devise their self-concepts by internalizing the appraisals of others. The behavioral process starts with a perceiver behaving toward the target in a way that reflects his or her expectations, perceptions, or stereotypes (Chen & Baugh, 1997; Snyder, 1992). The perceiver in return then behaves

in a way that is consistent with the beliefs. Additionally, the perceiver's response can be a result of his or her identities corresponding with the expectations, or the target can actively conform to the expectations in order to reduce conflict (Chen & Baugh). Regardless of the driving mechanism, the end result is that the perceiver interprets the target's behavior to be consistent with the expectation, perceptions, or stereotypes. In terms of stereotypes, the behavioral confirmation process "provides a powerful mechanism by which stereotypes and prejudicial behaviors are maintained, propagated, and justified" (Chen & Baugh, p 542).

Expectations can be delivered via actual appraisals from perceivers or reflected appraisals (Felson, 1985; McNulty & Swann, 1994). Perceiver appraisals influence the target's self-concept when the target modifies his or her behavior in confirmation of the perceivers' appraisals; whereas reflected appraisals are the target's perceptions of how they are viewed by others in general and they are usually a result of societal stereotypes. Reflected appraisals can be more critical to the development of one's self-concept than actual appraisals (Felson). For example, in dual studies conducted by McNulty and Swann, they found that reflected appraisals altered the target's self views. Specifically they found that reflected appraisals influenced an individual's perceptions of his or her social skills, athletic ability, and physical attractiveness. Regardless of the type of appraisal, these two processes of behavioral confirmation occur when the target behaves in ways that confirm the perceiver's or societies expectations (Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977).

Self-verification

In contrast to behavioral confirmation, another important determinant of the outcome of the identity negotiation process is the efforts of individuals to bring others to see themselves as they perceive their identity (Swann, 1987; Swann, Stein-Seroussi & Giesler, 1992). An individual's self-concept represents the "lens" through which they perceive their worlds and organize their behavior (Swann, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004); hence, it is crucial that these "lenses" maintain some degree of integrity and stability; otherwise the visions of reality they offer will be shifting and unreliable" (Swann et al., 2004, p. 12). Once an identity is negotiated, the natural tendency exists for individuals to think and behave in ways that honor the identities that they have negotiated with others. In order to preserve their negotiated identity, the theory of self-verification claims that individuals will seek validation and confirmation of their negative or positive self-concept by striving to acquire self-confirmatory feedback (Swann, 1983; 1987).

In trying to confirm their identity, individuals will create social environments that foster the survival of their self-views such as strategically choosing interaction partners and social settings (Swann, 1987; Swann & Pelham, 1989; Swann et al., 2004) by gravitating towards "relationships and settings that provide them with evaluations that confirm both their personal and social views" (Swann et al., 2004, p. 14). Additionally, they may display identity cues (i.e. overt signs and symbols of who they are; Goffman, 1959; Swann & Bosson, in press). Individuals' physical appearances, such as the clothes they wear and how they wear their hair, their body posture and demeanor communicate their identity to others (Swann et al., 2004). For many Black women these identity cues

may include wearing natural afro hairstyles or Afrocentric clothing. Further, individuals may selectively pay more attention to or recall feedback that confirms their identity, as compared to information that is inconsistent with their self-views (Swann & Bosson; Swann & Read, 1981), they may discount the validity of the feedback and the person providing the feedback (Swann, Griffin, Predmore, & Gaines, 1987), or they may distort feedback in a way that makes the perceiver's responses more supportive of their self-view (Swann, 1987; Swann & Bosson).

Extrapolating from the identity negotiation framework to the current study, behavioral confirmation suggests that Black women may internalize the views or expectations that other individuals or groups have communicated to them, and alter their self-concepts accordingly. Or in accordance to the self-verification theory, Black female athletic directors may employ self-verifying mechanisms that help them sustain their identities. However, deciding whether to conform or sustain their identities is usually not a conscious or rational decision. When their personal factors are contrary to and collide with contextual factors, identity conflict ensues. For example, Dixon (1976) contended that,

Black culture is radically different from White culture...Black Americans have a sense of 'twoness,' a sense of dual membership, a double consciousness...How do Black people resolve this conflict? Do they deny both these identities, assert affinity with both, or assert affinity with one and deny the other?" (p. 32).

Similarly, W.E. B. DuBois (1989) talks about how "Negroes" don't have true self-consciousness. In other words, instead of personally evaluating themselves based on

their own values and beliefs, they evaluate and assess themselves through the eyes of others—primarily White Americans. He refers to this as double-consciousness, which he defines as a “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, or measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looked on in amused contempt and pity” (p. 5). Further, double-consciousness, as used by DuBois, is used to describe a phenomenon in which a Black individual’s identity is divided into two separate, contradictory identities. In line with these conceptualizations, DuBois (1989) describes Blacks as having a sense of twoness in that they are both American and a “Negro.” As a result they have an unreconciled striving to obtain self-consciousness by merging these two identities at the expense of the other. DuBois (1989) recognizes the advantages of being both an American and a “Negro,” He boast that American has a lot to teach the world and that Blacks likewise have a message for the world; therefore, he wishes for acceptance of both his identities.

These assertions highlight the confusion that many Black women face when placed in certain cultural contexts. As bicultural boundary spanners, many Black women are confronted with expectations, values and norms in their workplace that are very dissimilar to other Black and racial minority experiences or cultures (Bell, 1990; Davidson, 1997; Swann et al., 2004). As a result, they adopt dual identities—one to appease the White community and one to appease the Black community. This process, called “identity shifting” by Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003), allows Black women to successfully navigate the intricacies of competing contexts. The majority of individuals, regardless of race, will shift identities from one context to another, but of all groups of

Americans, Jones and Shorter-Gooden comment on the prevalence of Black women shifting as “Black women, are relentlessly pushed to serve and satisfy others and made to hide their true selves to placate White colleagues, Black men, and other segments of the community” (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003, p. 120).

Identity shifting refers to “putting on” one identity in one context and then switching to a more appropriate identity in another context, and refers to all the ways that Black women respond to and cope with racial and gender stereotypes, biases, and mistreatment (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). To shift is not only proving one’s capabilities but also exerting more effort in reaffirming one’s worth and intelligence (Jones & Shorter-Gooden). Shifting is altering one’s behavior in order to battle societal gender and race myths and stereotypes. Shifting is also downplaying, ignoring, or denying the role that sexism and racism have played in one’s life. For some Black women, shifting has become such an integral part of their behavior that some adopt an alternative identity as easily as they “blink their eyes or draw a breath—without thinking, and without realizing that the emptiness they feel and the roles they must play may be directly related” (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003, p.21). In their attempt to satisfy others, in both the Black and White communities, Black women create tremendous emotional stress (i.e. bicultural stress) in themselves (Jones & Shorter-Gooden).

Bicultural stress exists when a Black woman suppresses one or more of her identities, usually her racial identity, in order to “adopt a ‘corporate identity’ that could be characterized as masculine and White” (Bell, p. 465). Within the work environment,

interactions among coworkers and bosses, combined with the organization's culture can try, test, and shape one's identity, resulting in bicultural stress, the tension that arises when faced with multiple competing cultures (Bell & Nkomo, 2001). As a result, they began to doubt their own worth and question their capabilities. They began to display psychological symptoms, such as a low self-esteem, eating disorder, anxiety, depression, and self hatred. The result is that they've satisfied the expectation of others, but find themselves emotionally and physically drained with a feeling of conflict and loneliness.

Bicultural stress is most pronounced when one tries to negotiate cultures that are very different from one another, and in order to assuage bicultural stress, minority professionals must endeavor to develop an integrated sense of self to avoid negating any personal and relevant identities (Thomas & Gabarro, 1999). The integrated self may provide one with an opportunity to use experiences gathered across cultures to one's professional benefit. For instance, in Bell and Nkomo's (2001) study a few of the women referenced bicultural stress, but they discussed it as a career-enhancing strategy. Further, Chamber's (2003) work relays how professional Black women successfully negotiated their workplace network composed of predominately White peers and other workplace networks composed of predominately Black subordinates, such as assistants, receptionists, and maintenance workers.

The prevalence of identity shifting by Black women was observed in Jones and Shorter-Gooden's (2003) study, in that 58 percent of the Black women indicated they changed their behavior in order to fit in or be accepted by White people. Of these women, 79 percent changed the way they spoke, toned down their mannerism, talked

about topics they felt White people were interested in, and avoided some conversation topics in order to gain acceptance into the White community. Similarly, Bell (1990) found that Black women professionals face significant pressure to conform to professional standards in the dominant culture of the organization as well as to live up to expectations, values, and identities based in the Black community. They must also overcome stereotypes by passing extra tests of competence and loyalty at work. Further, in accordance with Bell's findings, Catalyst (1999), a nonprofit research organization, found that Black professional and managerial women were aware of stereotypes that existed in their companies about Black women and as a result believed that they needed to adjust their style in order to fit their work environment by not perpetuating a stereotype. Even within Black communities, Black women have to "shift." For example, 40 percent of the women in the study have downplayed their abilities or strengths and succumbed to traditional gender roles by being passive and submissive to support Black men. Additionally, many of the women changed their manner of speaking so that they would not be classified as "trying to be White" (see Appendix A for definitions of "acting white") within one Black community and then criticized for using colloquialisms, wearing unrelaxed hair, and speaking her mind within another Black community. Thus, through this process of identity shifting, a Black woman's sense of self is gradually chipped away.

To illustrate the concept of identity shifting, Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) provide a powerful metaphor of Black girls playing a game of Double Dutch. They contend that in order to master Double Dutch, one must have balance and focus on both

ropes in order to successfully straddle both ropes. Similarly, Black women must struggle to keep a balanced life while straddling two salient oppressions (e.g. racism and sexism) that come at them simultaneously. As noted by Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003), no two jumpers will play Double Dutch the same. Each jumper has her own style and abilities. Some will move so gracefully through the ropes that you almost believe that the ropes have disappeared all together. Similarly, some Black women can successfully navigate the intricacies of multiple identities and oppressions; however, many will try to focus on one oppression and get caught between “ropes,” lose their balance, stumble, and fall (Jones & Shorter-Gooden).

Research Questions

Based on the theoretical framework and stated purpose of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How do Black female athletic directors describe their race, gender, and class identities?
2. How do Black female athletic directors negotiate their identities within and outside the athletic department?
3. What factors are associated with their negotiation of their identities?

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduces the problem, purpose and significance of the investigation along with the theoretical framework that will guide the inquiry. Chapter II identifies relevant literature pertaining to Black women’s identities. Chapter III details the research paradigm, research design,

and methods of inquiry that was used to conduct the study. Chapter IV focuses on the results and a discussion of how the results relate to the literature, and Chapter V presents overall conclusions, implications, and additional research avenues.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Section Overview

The purpose of this investigation is to explore Black women's interpretations of their race, gender, and class identities, and their subsequent negotiation of these identities in the workplace. Thus, in order to understand why, how, or when Black women negotiate their identities, this chapter provides a review of literature relevant to the objective of this investigation. As such, the review of literature first offers a discussion of Black women in the labor market in order to understand the forces that help shape the self-concept of some Black women. Succeeding sections outline the main tenets of self-concept development for Black women and discusses how Black women negotiate multiple identities. Finally, a discussion of personal, organizational, and societal contextual factors that contribute to Black women negotiating their identities is provided.

Black Women in the Labor Force

A history of oppression has played a significant role in the way Black women perceive themselves and are perceived by others. This history helps one to appreciate the inherent contradiction and significance of Black females obtaining a leadership position. For instance, over 40 years ago, Stone (1966) asserted that "there are only two kinds of females in this country, colored women and white ladies. Colored women are maids, cooks, taxi-drivers, crossing guards, school teachers, welfare recipients, bar

maids and the only time they become ladies is when they are cleaning ladies” (p. 42). These images of Black women not being “ladies” and performing low-paying, dead end jobs originated during the antebellum period (Harley, Wilson, & Wilson-Logan, 2002).

Enslaved women in the South performed similar jobs as enslaved men, such as plowing, picking cotton, serving as field hands, and performing road work, but they also performed domestic work in the form of cooking, cleaning, laundering, and serving as personal assistants (Harley, Wilson, & Wilson-Logan, 2002; Jones, 1985). Free southern Black women likewise performed the same jobs, but they were able to reap the benefits of their labor by keeping their profits. In addition to domestic labor, enslaved and free Black women of the South were able to take advantage of entrepreneurship ventures by selling fruits, cakes, and other goods on the streets, and also by being seamstresses and laundresses. Harley et al. notes that some of these women were able to accumulate enough money to purchase real estate. Northern Black women, free or enslaved, performed similar jobs as Black women in the South, but they did not have the same entrepreneurial opportunities as those in the South. A few were proprietors of boarding houses (Richardson, 1987) and sold oysters and cakes, but the most common occupation for Northern women was that as laundry workers (Harley et al., 2002).

The plight of Black women in the North and South did not change substantially at the denouement of slavery. The vast majority were still employed as domestics (i.e. servants, laundresses, cooks) and field workers (Harley, Wilson, & Wilson-Logan, 2002; Woody, 1992). It was not until World War I and II when a few Black women were allowed to perform industrial work, but after the wars their value was truly noted as they

were among the first to be fired. Additionally, some Black women were able to take advantage of their freedom and stay at home with their children, but this was not prevalent due to the economic necessity for Black families to have dual incomes in order to survive (Harley et al; Woody, 1992). After World War II, Black women continued to perform domestic labor as they were barred from clerical jobs; thus, they worked primarily as charwomen in offices, factories, and schools. There was a brief period during World War II in which six hundred thousand Black women got industrial jobs, but many White women workers led strikes to prevent the Black women from getting higher paying factory jobs. As a result, national movements by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League, community organizations, and union workers protested and were successful in getting Black women hired in factories industries and by the late 1970s increasing their salaries to 90 percent of White female's earnings (Harley et al.).

In the post Civil Rights era, Black women made strides in the professional sector by becoming entertainers and athletes, but most Black women still worked in the lowest-paying sectors of the economy (Harley, Wilson, & Wilson-Logan, 2002). The most significant change from prior eras was that Black women were no longer solely relegated to farm or domestic labor. Between 1950 and 1980, the number of Black women school teachers and service and clerical workers increased (Harley et al.; Woody, 1992), and the number of Black women performing domestic household work fell below ten percent (Woody).

The same patterns still hold true today, as Black women are typically found in lower status and lower paying jobs than White men and women, and Black men (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007, Woody, 1992). For instance, Black women are more likely than Asian and White women to work in service occupations (27 percent compared to 19 percent for both Asian and White women; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Additionally, the majority of the Black women in the labor force work in education and health services, health care and social assistance, or in wholesale and retail trade jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Black women comprise 8 percent of professional and business service type jobs. Their marginal status is justified by the historical and contemporary images that portray Black women as “possessing certain values, belief systems and lifestyles that do not entitle them to receive societal resources (i.e. equal access to education and jobs)” (Jewel, 1993, p. x). Thus, Black women’s succession into leadership roles distorts and challenges the images and perceptions of their place in the labor hierarchy.

The profuse number of Black women performing low wage jobs is partially attributed to prevalent racism and sexism in the United States (Harley, Wilson, & Wilson-Logan, 2002; Woody, 1992). Many Black American women contend with discrimination while seeking employment and then, once past these hiring barriers, they encounter more discrimination, such as occupational ceilings, sexism, racism, feelings of tokenism, conflicts with other women, perceptions that they are incompetent, and excessive demands from Whites (St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). In many organizations, Black American women’s abilities are questioned and many are viewed as unintelligent

"two-fers" (i.e. contribute to racial and gender diversity) who acquired their positions only because of affirmative action programs (St. Jean & Feagin). Reyes and Halcon (1991) note that although "the implementation of affirmative action programs provided some access to minorities; (they) left all minority professional and academics with a legacy of tokenism-a stigma of incompetence" (p. 31). St. Jean and Feagin note that irony exists in the fact that some Whites criticize affirmative action programs but continue to blatantly use non-meritocratic systems of hiring family and friends to promote white interests. Krasnow (1988) also note the occurrence of this in athletic departments. His study found that intercollegiate athletics do not have a feeder system, and that the process of employing future leaders is contained within a somewhat closed network, which serves to maintain what DiTomaso (2003) described as affirmative inclusion.

Another problem that U.S. Black women might have to contend with in many historically White workplaces is that there are either no or few other Blacks (St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). As a result, they commonly report feeling socially isolated. Moreover, other than feeling excluded, social isolation can cause an increase in workplace stress, sometimes resulting in physical ailments. Additionally, another problem for Black Americans in many school and employment settings is that they are expected to be spokespersons or actors for their racial group (St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). Black female athletic administrators at both historically Black institutions and predominately White institutions in the U.S. have noted this occurrence (Abney, 1988).

Finally, St. Jean and Feagin (1998) contend that instead of uniting against White male oppressors, Black and White women are often rivals because of the allegedly double advantage that employers obtain for hiring African American females. In addition to barriers created by White men and women, there are some barriers created by Black women who hold positions of authority (St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). A few of these women periodically display uncaring and egotistical attitudes toward other Black women trying to move up the employment ladder and some Black women may participate actively in restricting the opportunities of other black women, thus helping to perpetuate the racial hierarchies. St. Jean and Feagin contend that one factor contributing to this is assimilation or conformity. The authors note that many racial minorities who succeed in moving into leadership positions “face the constant dilemma of conforming too much, or too little, to the dictates of white-framed organizational norms and understandings” (p. 119). Thus, it is not surprising that, “in keeping with that organizational reality, the actions of some Black women toward their fellow women parallel those of prejudiced white women” (p. 119).

Black Female Identity Development

Their oppressed history coupled with past and current realities in the workplace (e.g. discrimination, isolation, and perceptions of incompetence) act as inhibitory factors for Black women developing positive self-concepts. According to Brown-Collins and Susswell (1986) a Black woman’s self-concept is composed of (a) her knowledge of herself as a woman (i.e. psycho-physiological), (b) her acknowledgment of her Black racial heritage, and (c) her personal characteristics, such as personality, self-esteem, etc.

Black racial identity encompasses the part of Black women's self-concept which comes from a conscious acknowledgment of membership in a racial group (Al-Mateen, Webb, Christian, & Donatelli, 2000). This membership includes the language, behavior, values and knowledge of relevant history about the group. Black women's gender identity is fundamentally their sense of their "femaleness" and a "primitive, unarticulated concept of self, initially laid down at an essentially preverbal stage of development and maintained at an un verbalized level" (Spence, 1985, 79–80). More simply, their gender identity is guided by their early acquisition of gender-congruent behaviors, and is maintained by further appropriating gender congruent behaviors (Howard, 2000). In contrast to Spence's conceptualization, Ashmore (1990) defines gender identity as "the structured set of gendered personal identities that results when the individual takes the social construction of gender and the biological 'facts' of sex and incorporates them into an overall self-concept" (p. 512). Thus, according to Ashmore, a Black female's gender identity would include her personal and social attributes, social relationships, interests and abilities, and also her biological and physical attributes.

The components (i.e. gender, race, and personal identities) of Black women's self-concepts interact with each other and may differ in their importance and contribution to their overall self-concept. Through social interactions that an individual has with others such as family members, friends, group and social affiliations, and other influences in the environment, identities develop and certain components of his or her self-concept become more salient (Helms, 1990a; Howard 2000). Turner (1982) likewise acknowledges that an individual's affiliation and interaction with various social and

demographic groups influences one's self concept; however, he contends that a collective identity based on an oppressed social-group membership may have a greater impact on the self-concept than membership in other social groups; therefore, racial and gender identities may be more psychologically important to Black women's self concept (Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996). Moreover, as a result of the prevalence of racism, some scholars contend that out of all their identities, Black women are more attune to their racial identity (Shorter-Gooden & Washington). For example, a study conducted by, Shorter-Gooden and Washington of African American college females found that for these women, of seven identity domains (i.e. race, gender, sexual orientation, relationships, career, religious beliefs, and political beliefs), their racial identity was more important to them, followed by their gender identity. For many Black women, their gender identity is implicit, and as a result, they may not be as attuned to gender bias and discrimination. When confronting the overwhelming reality of racism, many Black women may subconsciously suppress their concerns about gender discrimination and as a result, many acts of discrimination that are in fact gender related are attributed to racial discrimination.

Similarly, King (1988) noted that the importance of any one factor in explaining Black women's circumstances varies depending on the particular aspect of their lives under consideration and the reference groups to whom they make comparisons. Thus, in some social environments, a Black female's race may be more salient, while in others, her gender may become more salient. In fact, in Bell and Nkomo's (2001) study, the saliency of women's gender, race, and class identities was dependent upon the situation.

The women's gender identity posed more of a barrier to their career advancement; whereas, their racial identity was more influential in shaping their experiences within the work setting. The authors found that the women's class origin had the least influence on their experiences. As race and gender identities have consistently been deemed important to Black women's self-concepts, an understanding of Black women's racial and gender identities is crucial for studying identity negotiation in Black women. Accordingly, what follows is a description of characteristics of Black women's racial and gender identity development.

Black racial identity development

Race shapes Black women's identity by influencing how they define themselves and how others define them. The extent to which one feels a sense of belonging and affiliation to other Blacks and the extent to which an individual has considered what it means to be Black provides evidence of his/her level of Black identity development (Cross, 1971; 1991; 1995). Cross's (1971) Nigresence model, which identified five stages of racial identity development: (a) pre-encounter, (b) encounter, (c) immersion-emersion, (d) internalization, and (e) internalization/commitment stage, explains a process of identity transformation that occurs as the individual moves from viewing the world from a Eurocentric perspective while devaluing his or her Black culture, to an acceptance and increase valuing of Black culture as well as involvement in civil rights movements aimed at eradicating racism for all oppressed people, nationally and internationally.

During the pre-encounter stage of Black racial identity development, three identities may manifest: assimilation, miseducation, and self-hatred (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). Pre-encounter assimilation describes a person that views the world through the eyes of a White American and he or she values things other than their Blackness, such as religion, social class status or profession (Cross, 1991). An individual in this stage may also deny or devalue their Blackness and as a result of miseducation, internalization of the negative stereotypes of African Americans. Additionally, the individual may exhibit negative feelings and resentment that he or she is Black. Cross refers to these individuals as Black anti-Blacks and notes that in leadership positions “Black anti-Blacks can be very effective in weaving an ideology that bashes Black leaders, Black institutions, Black studies, the Black family, and Black culture” (p. 190).

In regards to Black women in the pre-encounter stage, Maya Angelou’s (1969) autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, exemplifies the self hatred that many Black girls, especially dark-skinned girls, feel as a result of their racial identity. She laments:

Wouldn’t they be surprised when one day I woke out of my black ugly dream, and my real hair, which was long and blond, would take the place of the kinky mass that Momma wouldn’t let me straighten?... Then they would understand why I had never picked up a Southern accent, or spoke the common slang, and why I had to be forced to eat pigs’ tails and snouts. Because I was really White and because a cruel fairy stepmother had turned me into a too big Negro girl, with nappy black hair (p. 2).

Maya Angelou's statement reflects how the Eurocentric definition of beauty (i.e. long straight hair, thin body frame) that has been commonly thrust on Black girls and women by members of both the Black and White community (Al-Mateen et al., 2000). Further, Angelou does not want to talk Black (i.e. no slang and no Southern accent) and she does not want to eat food associated with Blacks. Moreover, a more recent example of the struggle that Black girls face with internalized racism and stigmatization was highlighted in Davis' film, *A Girl Like Me*, that revealed that 15 out of 21 Black girls preferred a White doll over a Black doll (Simpson, 2007). Her study was modeled after Kenneth and Mamie Clark's (1940) famous study of doll color preference in young Black children, which had similar findings.

These negative attitudes about one's Black racial identity are usually unconsciously internalized because of highly prevalent societal messages that position Blackness as inferior to Whiteness. However, in the second stage of racial development, the encounter stage, an individual experiences a shocking personal experience that forces the person to look at the problems pertaining to race (Cross, 1991). Thus, the encounter stage is stimulated by a sequence of occurrences or circumstances that force the individual to recognize and acknowledge the reality of living in race-conscious society. In order to be effective, a person must first experience an encounter and then it must have a personal impact on the individual (Cross, 1991). Encounter episodes push individuals outside their comfort zone and cause confusion, apprehension, or even depression.

In the immersion/emersion stage of Black racial identity, two new identities may emerge that are reflective of anti-White views or intense Black involvement (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). Many individuals during this stage are in a state of confusion of what it means to be Black, and they take on oversimplified and romanticized ideologies of Blackness; however, during the emersion stage they start to adopt more substantive impressions of “Blackness” (Cross, 1991). A person in the intense Black involvement stage is commonly typified by his/her styles of dress, hairstyles, and involvement in particular race organizations and political groups (Cross, 1991). Additionally, some Black individuals in this stage of development will question the “Blackness” of others. Labels such as “Uncle Tom,” “non-Afrocentric vs. Afrocentric,” “together,” “soulful,” “middle class,” and “intellectual snob” (Cross, 1991, p. 205) are commonly directed at Black individuals who have not confirmed their “Blackness.” In contrast to a focus on Black identity, some individuals will direct their attention to harvesting rage, resentment, and hatred towards Whites. Moreover, many youths begin to segregate themselves from other races in an attempt to be “Black,” but as a consequence of having different experiences and seeing the world through different lenses. It manifests itself through disengaging from White Americans who “don’t get it” and identifying with other Black Americans who do (Tatum, 1997).

Following the immersion/emersion stage, Black Americans enter a stage in which they feel comfortable and secure with their race. During this stage of internalization, most Blacks do not denigrate White people. Militant and extremist attitudes are converted into thoughtful examination and scrutiny of oppression and

racism (Cross, 1991). For Blacks in this stage, internalization may result in one of three identities being manifested. Namely, an individual may have a monocultural orientation of an extreme nationalist, or they incorporate the realities of their “Blackness” and “Americanness” into their self-concepts. Others may embrace a multicultural perspective by integrating three or more salient social categories into their identity (Cross; Cross & Vandiver, 2001). After individuals develop a Black identity that suits their needs, some will not sustain a long-term interest in Black affairs. Others, however, will enter a final stage of Black racial identity development, the internalization/commitment stage. During this stage of development a person is not only comfortable with his or her “Blackness,” but is also willing to work towards the eradication of racism for all oppressed people (Cross, 1971). This sincere commitment to involvement in causes that are of interest to the Black community is the only distinction between an individual in the internalization stage and the internalization/commitment stage.

In light of current societal changes, research findings (see the review by Helms, 1990a), and the term “Negro” becoming antiquated, Cross (1991; 1995) revised the original Nigrescence model to reflect Black individuals becoming more Afrocentric. Moreover, Cross (1991; 1995) placed less emphasis on the fifth stage, internalization-commitment, as it was not significantly different from stage four. Furthermore, unlike the original model, the names of each stage in the revised Nigrescence model represent overarching themes of each stage, not identities. In other words, a person does not have an encounter or pre-encounter Black identity. Instead, their identities (e.g. being a nationalist, or having anti-White or anti-Black views) fall under those categorizations. It

is important to note that these models do not adhere to stage theory (i.e. sequential stage development), and moving through the stages is not invariant, but may involve a recycling of identities and transitioning from higher identity levels to lower ones (Quintana, 2007). Also, Helms (1990a) cautions against considering individuals as being solely in a particular stage, as they may possess characteristics from multiple stages. Where an individual is at in his or her identity development is shaped by how well he or she manifests the attitudes and behaviors that are representative of several stages (Thomas, 2005).

Gender identity development

In terms of gender identity development for Black women, two primary models have been utilized: Downing and Roush's (1985) feminist model and Helms' (1990b) womanist model as operationalized by Ossana, Helms and Leonard (1992). The stages (i.e. pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization) of both models describe women's development as they move from an acceptance of societal definitions of womanhood to their own definitions and beliefs about the roles of women. Both the womanist and feminist identity development models are based on Cross' Nigrescence model (Cross, 1995); however, the Downing and Roush (1985) model utilizes feminist views to define women; whereas Helms' (1990b) model suggests that women adopt a self-defined positive view of womanhood. These differential views of womanhood highlight an important distinction between these two models, as previous researchers surmise that views of contemporary feminism are more relevant to White women than women of color (Kelly, 2001; Moradi, 2005; Myaskovsky & Wittig, 1997; Poindexter-

Cameron & Robinson, 1997). For example, Myaskovsky and Wittig (1997) found that Black women and other women of color were far less likely than White college-educated women to identify publicly as feminists. Further, Boisnier (2003) found that Black undergraduate women identified more with the stages of the womanist identity measure, whereas Whites identified more with the feminist measure. Thus, in this investigation, womanist identity development is utilized to refer to a model of gender identity espoused by Black female athletic directors.

Womanist identity development outlines a woman's progression toward "abandonment of external definitions and adaptations of internal standards of womanhood" (Ossana et al., 1992, p. 403). According to Ossana et al. (1992) and Carter and Parks (1996) in the pre-encounter stage, descriptions of the stages of womanist identity development model women will tend to deny that sexism and societal bias against women exists. Further, traditional sex roles are accepted, and men are the esteemed reference group (Ossana et al., 1992). Similar to Cross' (1971, 1991, 2001) encounter stage, many women will come across a negative or positive experience that will result in self-reflection and self-exploration. They begin to view womanhood through a different lens and start challenging prevalent worldviews regarding gender relations and the pervasiveness of sexism. Following a life changing encounter, during the immersion-emersion stage, women will first tend to reject notions of patriarchy in support of an idealization of women.

During the second phase of this stage, women seek affiliation with other women and a search for a positive and realistic model of womanhood ensues. The final stage of

womanist identity, the internalization stage, is characterized by women self-defining themselves outside of societal stereotypes and other men and women's definitions (Carter & Parks, 1996; Ossana et al., 1992). In contrast to the feminist model, women who reach the internalization stage, may or may not define themselves as a feminist. Ossana et al. (1992), suggests that if a woman incorporates some forms of feminist ideology into her identity, it likely begins in the immersion-emersion stage; however, other researchers have found that the internalization stage was positively related to pro-feminist attitudes (Ossana, 1986) and that immersion-emersion attitudes were not related to egalitarian attitudes toward women's rights and roles (Moradi et al., 2004). Moreover, the womanist identity development model does not outline the process of developing a womanist consciousness (Moradi, 2005). In noting this, Ossana et al. (1992) stated that "Helms appropriated the term *womanist* from Black feminist writers (e.g., Brown, 1989) to emphasize that the *process* (e.g. stage-wise progression) of self-definition among women is similar regardless of race, social class, political orientations, and so forth" (p. 70). Thus, the use of the term womanist refers to the similarities that women from diverse backgrounds have in the process of identity development, not to a shared womanist consciousness (Moradi, 2005).

Researchers have investigated how womanist identity attitudes influence Black women's well-being and gender related attitudes and perceptions. For instance, Constantine and Watt (2002) found that Black women's womanist identity attitudes mediated the relationship between their sense of cultural congruity and life satisfaction. Further, immersion-emersion attitudes were negatively related to life satisfaction

whereas internalization attitudes were positively related and pre-encounter and encounter attitudes were unrelated to life satisfaction. Ossana et al. (1992) found that pre-encounter womanist attitudes were positively related to undergraduate females' perceptions of gender bias, and internalization womanist attitudes were negatively related to perceptions of gender bias on campus. Moreover, in accordance with the womanist identity model, Ossana (1986) found that pre-encounter attitudes were negatively related to pro-feminist attitudes, while internalization attitudes were positively related to these attitudes. Of particular relevance to this study, Carter and Parks (1996) suggested that women with encounter and immersion-emersion are prone to substantial shifts in their self-concept, values, and ways of coping. Thus, such women experience greater levels of psychological distress than women with pre-encounter and internalization attitudes.

Cross' (1991;1995) Nigrescence model and Ossana, Helms and Leonard's (1992) womanist model provide insights into the development of Black females' self-concepts; however, these models do not address how an individual may simultaneously develop and embrace multiple identities. For example, the integration of race and gender identities is important because in a Black woman's identity, these core elements of gender and race are not independent and static; rather, they are interdependent, interactive, and dynamic (Bell & Nkomo, 2001). In acknowledging this, different dimensions or levels of the womanist identity have been found to be related to racial identity attitudes. For example, Poindexter-Cameron and Robinson (1997) explored the interaction between racial identity attitudes, womanist identity attitudes, and self-esteem among Black women in HBCUs and PWIs. They found no significant differences in

womanist identity attitudes by educational setting; however, several parallel racial identity and womanist identity statuses were found to be significantly correlated among Black college women. Specifically, they found that pre-encounter and internalization racial identity statuses were positively linked with similar gender identity statuses.

Parks, Carter, and Gushue (1996) likewise found that higher internalization racial identity attitudes were associated with higher encounter and internalization womanist identity attitudes in Black women. As a result, the authors suggested that Black women with higher levels of racial identity will likewise have higher gender identities and may be more attune to racism before sexism. Similarly, Watt (1997) studied the development of racial identity, womanist identity, self-esteem, and faith development in Black college women and found a significant relationship between racial identity and womanist pre-encounter, internalization, and immersion/emersion stages. Letlaka-Rennert et al. (1997) studied Black women in South Africa and found three dimensions of racial identity (i.e. pre-encounter, encounter, and immersion/emersion) to be positively correlated to the corresponding womanist identity dimensions.

These correlation studies are significant in that they acknowledge the need for studies that investigate the interactions of multiple identities; however they do not address other intersecting social identities, such as social class, sexual orientation, religion or professional identities that have likewise been found to influence Black women self-concepts and contribute to their identity negotiations (Jones & McEwen, 2000; McEwen, 1996). A consideration of all of these social identities is beyond the

scope of this dissertation; however, a discussion of class identity is warranted as it is lived through race and gender identities (Collins, 1998; Kelley, 2007).

Class identity

There is no universal class identity that would encompass all persons because the experiences, opportunities, and barriers that face one individual in a given socioeconomic class level will differ in terms of that persons' race and gender (Collins, 1998; 1999; Kelley, 2007). This occurrence, known as intersectionality refers to the ability of social phenomena, such as race, gender, and class, to mutually construct on another and shape any group's experience across specific social contexts (Collins, 1998; 1999). The existence of multiple axes within intersectionality (i.e. race, class, gender, sexuality, national, ethnicity, age) means that these sociocultural factors are not equally salient in all groups' experiences. Prior to expanding on these contentions, it is first important to gain an understanding of what socioeconomic class connotes.

Many conceptualizations of socioeconomic class have been advanced; however, overall it is commonly defined in terms of a person's relative income, wealth, power and/or position (Weber, 1947; Beeghley, 2004; Gilbert, 2002; Thompson & Hickey, 2005). Using these characteristics as a basis for categorization, six primary economic class divisions have been advanced: capitalist class, upper middle class, lower middle class, working class, working poor, and underclass. Approximately 1 percent of U.S. citizens comprise the capitalist class (Gilbert, 2002; Thompson & Hickey, 2005). This class is typically encompasses top-level executives/politicians, celebrities, heirs, and individuals with an Ivy League education (Beeghley, 2004; Gilbert, 2002; Thompson &

Hickey, 2005). The amount of disposable income needed to be considered a member of the capitalist class is debatable, as Thompson and Hickey set of value of \$500,000, but Beeghley contends that individuals with incomes over \$350,000 can be included in this class.

The middle class economic division is vaguely defined in terms of incomes and occupations, but it usually consists of professional white collar workers and managers with college degrees (often with graduate degrees; Beeghley, 2004; Gilbert, 2002; Thompson & Hickey, 2005). To capture the diversity that exists within this economic class, three middle class statuses have been posited: upper middle, traditional middle, and lower middle. Individuals in the upper middle class comprise 15% of the population (Gilbert; Thompson & Hickey) and consist of households with incomes in the six figures; whereas those in the lower middle class typically have household incomes between \$35,000 and \$75,000 (Thompson & Hickey). Hence, individuals in the traditional middle class on average make less than \$100,000 but more than those in the lower middle class.

Additionally, it is interesting to note that Bowser (2007) refers to today's Black middle class group as the "affirmative action" middle class because individuals comprising the contemporary Black middle class are byproducts of government regulations and interventions, such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the presidential Executive Order 11246, which required affirmative action in the hiring process. As such, Bowser notes that there are very few Blacks working in professional, managerial jobs that have not directly benefited from affirmative action in college admission and post

college careers. This assertion is important to highlight because many White individuals in organizations, likewise believe that when a Black individual is hired, it is a result of affirmative action (DiTomaso, 2003; St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). As a result, this perception has an adverse effect on Blacks individuals' organizational experiences.

Individuals encompassing the lower economic class statuses are classified in the working class or lower class (Gilbert, 2002). Similar to the vaguely defined middle class, the working class is very diverse and represents approximately 32 to 45% of households (Beeghley, 2004). Clerical and blue collar workers with high school educations typify this class, and the average household incomes range from \$16,000 to \$30,000 (Thompson & Hickey, 2005). Finally, the lower class division includes the working poor and the underclass (Gilbert). About 13% of households are classified as the working poor, and individuals in the division usually perform service, low rung clerical jobs, or blue collar work (Gilbert). The underclass is distinguished from the working poor by their reliance on government funds and their household incomes falling below the poverty line (Beeghley, 2004).

These class divisions are commonly used to categorize individuals that possess the noted characteristics; however, Bowser (2007) contends that "the black middle class more closely parallels the white working class, the black working class more closely resembles the white lower class, and there is no real black equivalent to the white upper class" (p. 6). Bowser's contentions are not based on income and education, as the used of these measures has obscured the prevalence of racial inequality in class division. His contention is based more so on differential experiences. For instance, racial

discrimination in the workplace makes Black workers' jobs less economically secure than White workers (Oliver & Shapiro, 1995). Also, Blacks who have been well educated and have prestigious jobs are still treated as lower class citizens and have to deal with a "Black tax"—presumptions of inferior preparation, motivation, and qualifications (Collins, 1997). As such, in many instances if a Black individual comprises the same class division as a White individual, based on income and education, they will typically "move through life with significantly unequal housing, residential, and education prospects, which means that [they and] their children are not on the same playing field" (Shapiro, 2004, x).

In contrast to the traditional conceptualizations of class, Pierre Bourdieu's (1985) concept of habitus contends that class identity goes beyond income earned and is inclusive of an individual's lifestyle, expectations, learned habits, bodily skills, styles, tastes, and other non-discursive knowledge. Among the Black community Bourdieu's concept of habitus would likely be favored over traditional conceptualizations of class, as class is defined as "a function of attitude, behavior, and personal character, and is independent of power in the wider society" (Vanneman & Cannon, 1987, p. 229). Vanneman and Cannon further denoted that by obtaining their own definitions and standards for evaluating worth, Black people validate themselves in the face of racism.

Development of multiple oppressed identities

In recognition of the need to focus on multiple identities, Reynolds and Pope (1991) advanced a conceptual model concerning the development of multiple identities. Reynolds and Pope's model concern the intersectionality of multiple oppressed identities

and addresses possible ways that one can negotiate multiple oppressions. Specifically, the authors suggested that individuals belonging to more than one oppressed group resolve their identity in one of four possible ways. Using a Black woman as the exemplar, first she may passively identify with one aspect of her self-concept (e.g. gender, race, class) or she may consciously identify with one of her identities. For instance, she might identify as an African American or as a woman, and exclude other identities such as her class, religion, or sexual orientation. In contrast to the former two ways of negotiating their identity, Black women can also choose to identify with multiple aspects of their self-concept. This is typically done in a “segmented fashion” (Reynolds & Pope, 1991, p. 179), one at a time and determined more passively by the context. For example, in one setting a Black woman’s racial identity may become more salient, yet in another setting she identifies more with being a woman. Finally, she may consciously choose to identify with multiple identities and she integrates them into her sense of self (Reynolds & Pope).

Reynolds and Pope’s (1991) model is frequently acknowledged for addressing multiple identities; however, the researchers focus solely on multiple oppressed social identities and not personal identities. This is an important omission to highlight because, as noted in Brown-Collins and Susswell’s (1986) model of self-concept formation for Black women, Black women’s self-concept is likewise comprised of her personal characteristics. In addressing this, Jones and McEwen’s (2001) model of multiple dimensions of identity, includes both social (i.e. role identities or social group

membership categories) and personal identities (i.e. a person's traits, behaviors, and values; Deaux, 1993).

Model of multiple dimensions of identity

Jones and McEwen's (2000) atomic shaped model centers an individual's core identity (i.e. personal attributes, personal characteristics, and personal identity) inside overlapping and intersecting circles that represent different social identities (e.g. gender, religion, class, race, sexual orientation). These identity dimensions become more or less salient depending on a person's internal awareness of the identity, external scrutiny of the identity (e.g. race for Black women), and the context (e.g. family background, sociocultural conditions, current life experiences, and career decisions and life planning; Jones & McEwen). Thus, in relation to this investigation, Jones and McEwen's (2000) model would acknowledge that (a) the workplace environment influences the saliency of Black women's identities, (b) Black women's identities cannot be understood singularly, they can be understood only in relation to other identities, (c) when Black women shift contexts, they must renegotiate their identities, and (d) not all Black women will attribute the same level of salience to their identities. Race may be more important for one; whereas gender might be more important for another.

In contrast to the Nigresence and womanist models, Jones and McEwen (2000) present identity development as (a) a fluid and dynamic process rather than a more linear and static model, and (b) focuses on more than a single dimension of identity. These models, however, can inform Jones and McEwen's model by indentifying personal and contextual factors, such as the internalization of stereotypes or the occurrence of a life

altering experience (e.g. experiencing racism or sexism), that provide insights into why some persons may attribute more or less importance to an identity. For example, Jones and McEwen note that identity dimensions become more or less salient depending on persons' level of identity awareness. Persons characterized by Cross's (1991; 1995) internalization stage have a high racial salience; thus, for these persons, the race identity dimension would be located close to their core or personal identities. Additionally, for Black women typified by the encounter stage of womanist identity, their gender is less salient and further from their core, but if they encounter a negative or positive experience that alters their personal views of gender relations, sexism and/or societal gender biases, then their gender identity becomes more salient and has a more profound influence on their core values.

Identity Negotiation and Context

Regardless of the identity negotiation outcome, individuals' identities are continually emerging through what they feel, do, and say (Halford & Leonard, 2001). Their identities are displayed and performed in many ways, such as through speech, behavior, dress and appearance, and thought and memory (Swann, 1987; Swann et al., 2004) but as individuals negotiate their identities, they do so in the contexts of their everyday lives (King, 1988; Jones & McEwen, 2001). As such, negotiation of identities is not only about what people say and do, but it is also about where they do it and when they do it, with whom they do it. Thus, it is important to likewise identify under what conditions Black female administrators will negotiate their identities. That is, under what conditions will they behave in ways that confirm their self-views, and under what

conditions they will behave so as to confirm the expectancy of others. Accordingly, this section continues my exploration of the identities of Black females by outlining the differing contexts through which Black females' identities may be constructed and performed. In accomplishing this, this section considers the influence of the personal, organizational, and societal factors on the identity negotiation process.

Self-certainty

Swann and Ely (1984) found that if people are highly certain of their self-conceptions, they are less likely to succumb to pressures to exhibit behaviors that are antithetic to the self-concepts. A similar thought was expressed by Polzer and Caruso (2008) who noted that a persons' degree of certainty is influenced by life experiences and feedback from others, and at an extreme "certainty could give individuals' self-views a ring of indisputable truth" (p. 31), making it easier to resist others appraisals. In contrast, persons who are uncertain of a self-conception may be less motivated to preserve that self-concept when it is challenged. Also, research has shown that persons that are conscious of stigmas associated with their social category tend to struggle to maintain self-certainty, and as a result may refrain from challenging stereotypical judgments of themselves (Brown & Pinel, 2001; Pinel, 1999).

Identity development

In addition to a person's degree of certainty about his/her self-concepts, identity negotiation outcomes are likewise influenced by his/her level of identity development. For example, Carter and Parks (1996) suggested that women with encounter and immersion-emersion levels of gender identity are prone to substantial shifts in their self-

concept, values, and ways of coping. These findings are likely true for men and those with similar levels of racial identity development.

Societal status

Polzer and Caruso (2008) looked at the influence that a person's societal status had on identity negotiation outcomes. The authors surmised that persons with a higher status in society, typically White men, are more influential at changing the self-views of persons with a lower status (i.e. women and racial minorities), than a lower status person has of changing high status persons' self-views. Further Polzer and Caruso (2008) noted that in the presence of conventional stereotypes associated with a person's social category, it is easier for a high status person to align his/her positive self-views with others appraisals. Whereas for low status persons, it is easier for them to align negative views of themselves with others appraisals. In other words, individuals at a lower societal status tend to have more negative stereotypes associated with their social category (Ellemers & Barreto, 2008), and as such if they have negative views of themselves these views tends to be confirmed by the societal stereotypes. If they have more positive self-views that are inconsistent with negative stereotypes of their social category, they will have a more difficult time reconciling their self-views with others appraisals that are based on these stereotypes (Polzer & Caruso, 2008).

When considering the stereotypes of Black women, throughout U.S. history in literature, the news media, television shows, and movies, Black women have been denigrated as *Mammies*, *Matriarchs*, and *Sapphires* (Christian, 1980; Collins, 2000; Jewel, 1993), and more recently as *welfare queens* and *Over-Achieving Black Ladies*

(Collins, 2000; Lubiano, 1992). The majority of these images emerged during the slavery era, and were used as a means to justify Black women's marginality, exploitation, and control (Parker, 2002). These images, however, continue to influence perceptions about African American women in society in general, and in the workplace in particular even today (Bell & Nkomo, 2001).

The *Mammy* is perhaps the most prominent image that emerged out of the U.S.-institutionalized slavery era (Christian, 1980). *Mammy* or *Aunt Jemima* was stereotypically distinguished by her occupation as a servant or cook (Collins, 2000; Jewel, 1993; McElya, 2007). *Mammies* are portrayed as submissive to their white employers, blithe, devoted, and content with their lot in life. By giving to the White families more than to their own families, the *Mammy* symbolizes the White community's perception of the ideal Black female—one that is faithful, submissive, and a domestic servant (Collins, McElya).

Although many Black women have stopped performing in house domestic services for White families, the image of the *Mammy* still remains. Omolade (1994) illustrates how “Mammy work” has assumed new forms. She highlights that many Black women are still being positioned as those who service others needs in the private sphere as well as the labor market, and this results in the “mammification” of Black women. For example, Black women are working in fast food establishments, in nursing homes, as secretaries and performing other jobs where they clean up after others. Moreover, even Black middle class women with professional jobs are prone to “mammification.” For example, Higginbotham (1994) noted the prevalent occurrence of Black women in the

government sector relegated to positions in which they took care of the needs of the poor. Dumas (1980) likewise described how some Black women executives were treated as mammies and penalized when they did not display the subservient behaviors or appear warm and nurturing. Additionally, the White females, in Bell and Nkomo's (2001) study of Black and White female executives, considered some of the Black female executives to be *Mammies* because they had demonstrative leadership styles, took on a caretaker role in the organization and were always "willing to lend a hand if help is needed" (p. 245).

In contrast to the *Mammy*, the image of the *Matriarch* symbolizes the bad Black mother (Collins, 1990; 2000). The *Matriarch* is personified as a female that spends a lot of time away from home, does not properly supervise her children, and emasculates her spouse. The *matriarch* represents a defiant *Mammy*, who rejected her role as a submissive, hardworking, servant (Collins, 2000). She is viewed as an overly aggressive, unfeminine emasculator, and as a consequence of this defiance, the Black woman as a matriarch is viewed as contributing to social problems in Black society, such as poverty and Black children failures in schools, and increased rate of single parent homes. As oppose to the term *Matriarch* some researchers (e.g. hooks, 1981; St. Jean & Feagin, 1998) refer to a Black female with such characteristics as *Sapphire*, the sharp-tongued, domineering, verbally emasculating "bitch." Black women executives noted the profuseness of the *Matriarch* or *Sapphire* image at the corporate ranks (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Many of the women were commonly stereotyped as being unfeminine, domineering, demanding, emasculating, and coarse. Unfortunately, these beliefs are

commonly internalized by Black women who, on the one hand have a need to be assertive and independent, but at the same time feel that if they do so they may strip men of their dignity and manhood (Copeland, 1977). The irony is that although these traits (i.e. independence, assertiveness) are considered appropriate masculine traits that some feminists strive to adopt, Robinson (1983) posits that when Black women develop and exhibit them, they are perceived as threatening. Further, Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) note that this image of non-femininity and aggressive takes a major toll on the psyche of Black women, who may suppress their opinions, voice, and personality and adopt an identity that is not reflective of who they truly are.

In addition to defending their identity against the stereotypical images of the *Mammy* and *Matriarch/Sapphire*, Black women in the workplace are likewise confronted with the image of the *Black Lady* (Lubiano, 1992; Wallace, 1999). The *Black Lady* represents the educated, hardworking, successful woman who is respected in the eyes of the White community. However, despite these positive traits, similarities between the *Black Lady* and the *Matriarch* and *Mammy* do not make her experiences favorable (Collins, 2000) For one, similar to the *Mammy*, the *Black Lady* is viewed as a hardworking Black woman professional that works twice as hard as everyone else for the same or less compensation. Additionally, the image of the *Black Lady* parallels that of the matriarch who is assertive, less feminine, and who has no time for men. Collins also noted that in contrast to the contention that *Black Ladies* don't rely on government

support like the welfare mothers², they inadvertently do so via affirmative action (Bowser, 2007; Lubiano).

In addition to the images of the *Mammy*, *Matriarch* and *Black Lady*, Black women in the workforce may fall victim to the images of the *Jezebel* (Collins, 2000; St. Jean & Feagin). Similar to the other images, the image of *Jezebel* originated during slavery when Black women were portrayed as being sexually aggressive. As a sexually aggressive woman, *Jezebel's* function had a two fold purpose, one rationalizing the widespread sexual assaults of Black slaves by White men, and justification for their increased fertility. Morton (1991) described the context of this stereotype as one in which there was "a double standard that prescribed female purity, and yet ignored White men's sexual exploitation of Black women [;] the plantation mistress blamed the enslaved woman, not the slaveholder, for miscegenation" (p. 9). In the 21st century, the term has been replaced by "hoochie" "gold-digging hoochie", and the "ghetto hoochie," all reflective of a materialistic woman that wears revealing clothes (Collins, 1990; 2000). The perception that Black women are sexually promiscuous causes many Black women in workplace to be propositioned for sex and those who are sexually harassed sometime refrain from reporting it in order to avoid the perception that they are sexually promiscuous and somehow caused this behavior (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003).

These negative images will likely persist as they are continually portrayed in the in the media, in films, and in music videos, especially rap videos (Collins, 2000; Jones &

² The image of the "welfare mother" is tied to the United States' Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, in which Black women are erroneously considered to represent a disproportionate large majority of recipients (US Department of Health, 2007). The *welfare mother* represents the lazy, complacent mother who sits around, collects welfare and has poor values which she passes on to her children.

Shorter-Gooden, 2003; St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). For instance, the *Amos 'n Andy Show*, a popular comedy sitcom aired between 1920 and 1960, perpetuated the myth of the *Black matriarch* with the shrewdness and overbearing behavior of the two leading women (Cummings, 1988). During the 70s and 80s, the image of the *Mammy* was projected in *The Jeffersons* by Louise Jefferson and Florence, the maid, and in *Gimme a Break* by Nell Carter, who played the maid/mom to a white motherless family (Cummings). Moreover, the image of the *Mammy* can be found on a box of Aunt Jemima Quaker Oaks products (McElya, 2007). The manifestation of the *Sapphire* image can be found in an old episode of *NYPD Blue* or *Law and Order* as a hard, loud, crude Black female usually making the other characters seem more professional and dignified by comparison (Jones & Shorter-Gooden).

More positive images of Black women have been portrayed in the media, such as Clair Huxtable on *The Cosby Show*, who was a middle class attorney, Eleanor of *Roc*, who was a married working class woman, or the women of *Living Single* or *Girlfriends* who all held professional jobs (Means Coleman, 2003). Additionally, there are other positive images of Black womanhood such as Audley “Queen Mother” Moore, an inspirational civil rights leader and black nationalist (Hine, 1993), the image of *Mother Earth* (i.e. Black women as the mother of all races), and the *Black Madonna*, which is an image of Jesus’ mother Mary in which she is depicted with dark or black skin (Gustafson, 1990). However, the images of Black womanhood that are portrayed in the media and in literature have focused primarily on negative images of Black women and have negated these positive images of Black womanhood. For Black women who do not

conform to the negative stereotypes, they constantly struggle to guard their identity against being labeled as one of these stereotypes.

Taking the position that Black women would be classified as lower status persons on two dichotomies: (a) being a female relative to a male, and (b) being Black relative to White (Collins, 2000), it would stand to reason that when Black women are working with or against stereotypes of Black womanhood, such as the *Black Lady*, *Mammy*, or *Matriarch*, that it would be easier for them to align these negative self-views of themselves with negative appraisals. Their “low status” may make it more difficult for them to negate these stereotypical expectations (Caruso & Polzer, 2008; Plaks, Stoesner, Dweck, & Sherman, 2001). However, as brought out by Swann (1987) individuals have a need and desire to elicit verification of their self-views. As such, Black women’s need for self-verification might drive them to try to change perceivers’ appraisals of them (Swann, 1987). If successful in this endeavor, their counter-stereotypical behavior may alter the perceivers’ judgments (Richards & Hewstone, 2001) or they may be seen as the exception and the stereotypical attitudes would not generalize. Moreover, if they are able to verify their self-views, their perceived status disparity is reduced, organizational productivity likely increases as they are able to contribute their skills to the work setting, and “a verification effect can also represent an acknowledgement by the high status perceivers that his [sic] judgment is fallible and that he is willing to change his views, lessening the likelihood that he will attempt to overwhelm or ignore the contribution of the low status target” (Caruso & Polzer, 2008, p. 22).

These contentions are similar to those advanced by Pettigrew (1998) who noted that during interracial interactions, learning about the out-group member or target can reduce prejudice, result in the perceiver modifying his or her behavior or attitudes about the out-group member, generate affective ties between the individuals, and cause the perceiver to reassess his or her views. Additionally, Caruso and Polzer contend that a verification effect from a lower status person with positive self-views, can yield the biggest benefits from having diversity in the organization, if “those with high status can understand, acknowledge, and be open to the skills and abilities of the low status person” (p. 29). On the other hand, if Black women conform their behavior to others expectations, their perceived status disparity is reinforced, inaccurate stereotypes are reified, dominant group members may begin to exert undue influence in the organization, and their personal development may halt or even regress (Caruso & Polzer, 2008).

Organizational status

Similar to their lowly societal status, Black women occupy a minute percentage of leadership positions in intercollegiate athletic departments. In fact, during the 2005-2006 school year, the number of Black women athletic directors was approximately 1.2% and the number of Black women associate athletic directors was 0.4% (DeHass, 2007). When excluding Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) from the data, Black women comprised 0.3 % of the athletic director and 1.9% of the associate athletic director positions. As a result of their low percentages, many of these women that obtain senior administrative jobs in intercollegiate athletic departments, especially at

predominately white institutions, are likely the only Black person, or one of a few in the athletic department, and as a result they take on a token status. The use of the term token is not meant to be pejorative; instead, it refers to persons whose social category constitutes 15% or less of the demographic makeup of the group or organization (Kanter, 1977).

Kanter (1977) highlights three perceptual tendencies associated with tokenism: visibility, contrast, and assimilation. First, because tokens are different from the majority, they stand out in the organization, and their behavior is attributed more to their social category membership than it is to their own individual characteristics. As a result of their visibility, tokens experience pressure to perform well, to know their job well with minimal or no help or guidance, to avoid making mistakes, and taking on myriad tasks and roles to prove their worth (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Spangler, Gordon, & Pipkin, 1978; Thomas, 2005). This occurrence was noted by the women in Jones and Shorter-Gooden's study who relayed that they repeatedly received the message that they were inferior to other people, and as a result they were faced with the task of demonstrating or proving that they were as intelligent, competent, trustworthy, and reliable as their friends and coworkers. Contrastly, others may keep low profiles so as to not stick out as much (Kanter, 1977). The second tendency Kanter (1977) noted was that tokens are commonly contrasted to the dominant majority. Through a process of "boundary heightening" dominants tend to exaggerate and affirm their differences from the token(s). Finally, the third perceptual tendency associated with tokenism is

assimilation. In order to make dominants more comfortable, tokens are expected to assimilate their behavior to correspond with the dominants expectations.

In addition to these perceptual tendencies that constantly cause Black women to negotiate their identities, some additional disadvantages that have been associated with tokenism include: lack of role models and isolation, gender and racial stereotyping, ghettoization, distortion of their behavior by others in order to fit them into preexisting stereotypes, and being a test case for future Black women (Davidson, 1997; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Kanter, 1977; Spangler, Gordon, & Pipkin, 1978; St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). Abney's (1988) investigation of Black female coaches and athletic administrators at historically Black colleges reported similar findings. The women reported inadequate salary, lack of support groups, sexism, low expectations by administrators and others, sense of tokenism, lack of cultural and social outlets in the community, and expectations of being the minority spokesperson. Moreover, the Black female athletic administrators in Abney's (1998) study mentioned feeling a sense of tokenism, and several women stated that women were not perceived to be competent and that some members of the athletic department resented women from being in key positions. Similar findings were found for women at predominately White institutions who likewise indicated that they dealt with the same obstacles, but these women additionally indicated that they dealt with racism and that their race was a significant obstacle during their career development. Benton's (1999) dissertation, which focused on Black women athletic directors, revealed similar findings in that the women relayed feelings of isolation and marginalization and discussed gender and racial discrimination

and a lack of institutional support as obstacles they had to overcome during their career development.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCESS

Research is interpretive and is guided by a researcher's epistemological and ontological beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). These philosophical beliefs operate from within paradigms which are the interpretive frameworks that are used to explain social phenomenon and dictate what questions will be asked, how the research will be conducted, and how that data will be interpreted (Collins, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). Therefore, prior to detailing the research design and methods of data collection and analysis that were used in this investigation, it is important to highlight the contours of the Black feminist, interpretive, and critical paradigms that guided this investigation.

Theoretical Paradigms

Dimensions of Black feminist theory

Black feminist theory is a critical social standpoint theory that focuses on the intersections of race, gender, and class and reflects a concern for and commitment to placing U.S. Black women's voices at the center of the analysis. A Black feminist ideology renders Black women's statuses visible, makes self-determination fundamental, challenges racism, sexism, and classism, and endorses an image of Black women as powerful, independent subjects (King, 1988). It challenges perspectives and practices among White feminists and Black nationalists that seek to marginalize or exclude Black women (St. Jean & Feagin, 1998; The Combahee Collective, 1977). Further, a Black

feminist perspective values and centers Black women's experiences and empowers them to interpret and define their own reality and objectives (Collins, 1998; 2000, Hull et al., 1982, King, 1988; Taylor, 1998; see Appendix B for a discussion of other Black women standpoint theories).

Collins (2000) outlines four dimensions of Black feminist epistemology that dictate adequate methodology. The first dimension is that wisdom is essential in order to challenge legitimated knowledge (Collins, 1998; 2000). According to Collins (1998) this wisdom is gained not from the authority of science, but through the authority of concrete lived experiences. When assessing this wisdom, a fundamental tenet of Black feminist epistemology is that lived experiences are deemed the criteria for credibility. Those individuals who have actually gone through certain experiences are deemed more credible than those that merely read, conceptualize, and relay their experiences. Further, in a Black feminist epistemology, the use of dialogue is crucial in assessing knowledge claims. Dialogue requires active participation between both the researcher and the "co-researchers" and consists of "spontaneous verbal and nonverbal interaction between speaker and listener in which all of the speaker's statements, or 'calls,' are punctuated by expressions, or 'responses,' from the listener" (Collins, 1998, p. 261). The use of dialogue promotes connectedness which is deemed an essential component of knowledge validation (Belenky, 1986).

A third dimension of Black feminist epistemology is the ethic of caring. Knowledge validation depends on three components of the ethic of caring: personal expressiveness and individual uniqueness, the appropriateness of emotions in dialogue,

and developing empathy (Collins, 2000). The inclusion of these three components allows knowledge disseminated by individuals to become more believable. In illustrating this, Collins provides an example of the call-and-response discourse that is used in many Black church services. She notes how it is not only the legitimacy of the ideas that the pastor delivers in his/her sermon, but it also the way that he or she delivers those ideas that has a profound influence on his listeners. In addition to an ethic of caring, Black feminist epistemology is characterized by an ethic of personal accountability for knowledge claims (Collins, 2000). When assessing one's knowledge claims, their character, values, and ethics are likewise taken into consideration. Hence, Black feminist epistemology not only assesses whether the individual believes what he or she is saying (i.e. ethics of caring), but it more importantly assesses if that person is credible.

Moreover, Black feminist epistemology acknowledges that individual Black women have not all had the same experiences and do not ascribe the same level of significance or interpretation to these varying experiences (Collins, 2000). Social conditions shape which factors are the most substantive in Black women's lives; thus, the significance and meaning of race, class, or gender depends on the context (King, 1988; Taylor, 1998). As a result, Collins (2000) stresses that no homogenous Black *woman's* standpoint exists. She surmises that "there is no essential or archetypal Black woman whose experiences stand as normal, normative, and thereby authentic. An essentialist understanding of a Black woman's standpoint suppresses differences among Black women in search of an elusive group unity" (p. 28). However, it is important to note that many of the challenges that individual Black women face are common and

recurring experiences faced by other Black women, and that it is not necessary for every individual Black woman to share the same experience in order for her to recognize that as a group, Black females face differential group treatment. Accordingly, Collins (2000) contends that it is more accurate and appropriate to say that a Black women's collective standpoint exists that recognizes the heterogeneity in Black women's experiences and knowledge.

The overarching purpose of Black feminist ideology is to empower Black women to resist practices and ideas that justify oppression (Collins, 2000). This call and quest for empowerment is in response to the differential treatment that individuals are afforded based on their race, gender, class, sexuality, and citizenship status (Collins, 2000). These multiple oppressions respond to human action, and if left unchallenged they are allowed to foster. Thus, Black women who are in "multiple jeopardy" of oppressions are charged with actively resisting the acceptance of political, social, and economic inequalities and oppression (King, 1988; The Combahee River Collective, 1977). This notion of multiple jeopardy advanced by King (1988), posits that Black women encounter all forms of oppression. Thus, "if Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression" (The Combahee River Collective, 1977, p. 67). Similar thoughts were expressed by Fannie Lou-Hamer, a civil rights activist, who asserted that when she liberates herself she is also liberating White women (as cited in King, 1988). These thoughts are in line with the humanist orientation of Black feminism. Black feminists are

incited to not only seek what is good for Black women, but to also to seek human dignity, empowerment, and social justice for all (Collins, 2000).

Tenets of the interpretive paradigm

As a critical social theory, many of the tenets of Black feminist epistemology rightfully reflect components of the interpretive and critical paradigms. Interpretivists feel that there are many truths, and they attempt to understand situations from the point of view of those experiencing the situation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Walker (1983) illustrates this notion of multiple truths in a conversation with her mother in which she states, “I believe that that truth about any subject only comes when all sides of the story are put together, and all their different meanings make one new one. Each writer writes the missing parts to the other writer’s story. And the whole story is what I’m after” (p. 49). Upon obtaining these multiple truths, interpretivists believe that the criteria for judging either “reality” or validity are “derived from community consensus regarding what is “real,” what is useful, and what has meaning” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 197). The ontological assumption of the interpretivist research paradigm is that of relativism in which “the world is constructed by each knower/observer according to a set of subjective principles peculiar to that person” (Sipe & Constable, 1996, p. 158). Further, research within this paradigm is characterized by a hermeneutic dialectical methodology, which deems that in order to truly understand the social world, researchers need to get close to their subjects and explore the participants’ background and life history (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This method emphasizes the analysis of subjective accounts of situations (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Sipe & Constable), and the focus is on thick descriptions of members’

verbal and nonverbal actions, and the meanings and implications that these actions hold for social interaction (Gephart, 2004).

Tenets of the critical paradigm

Similar to interpretivists, critical theorists operate from within a transactional epistemology and contend that there are multiple truths, but they believe that truth is the reality of political and economic power (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Sipe & Constable, 1996). The goal of critical theory is to uncover and transform relations of dominance and subjugation via critique, transformation, and emancipation (Gephardt, 2004). Further, the focus of the critical theory methods is on dialogic and dialectical methods to understand historical evolution of meaning, material practices, contradictions, and inequalities (Gephardt, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b). The underlying premise of this paradigm is that “all discourse is enmeshed in the rhetorical and political purposes of those who speak or write” (Sipe & Constable, 1996, p. 158). A researcher studying race and gender from a critical lens would follow similar methodologies as an interpretivists, but generating emancipatory knowledge would be key (Kershaw, 1992). Utilizing a critical lens, researchers use qualitative methods such as interviews, participant observation, or case studies to generate emancipatory knowledge about the race and/or gender issue (Kershaw, 1992).

Research Design

In line with the research paradigms and the purpose of this investigation, a case study research strategy was chosen to guide this investigation. Case study analysis is appropriate for intensive, in-depth examination of one or a few instances of some

phenomena (Stake, 2005; Yin, 1994). It is differentiated from other research designs by what Cronbach (1975) called interpretation in context, meaning that the case study design addresses the problem of relevance in the social context (Yin, 1984). This approach acknowledges that “the reality perceived by people inside and outside the case will be social, cultural, situational, and contextual” (Stake, 2005, p. 452). Thus, framing my inquiry as a case study allows me to wrestle with questions that are integrally tied to the social context—in this case intercollegiate athletic departments (Stake, 1994).

Three main classifications of case studies have been identified in the literature: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective (Stake, 2005). Intrinsic case studies are those in which the researcher seeks to gain an understanding of a particular case, such as a child, conference, or curriculum (Stake, 2005). Intrinsic case studies focus less on making generalizations or building theory and more on understanding what is “important about that case within its own world” (p. 450). In contrast to the intrinsic case study’s primary focus on the case, an instrumental case study focuses on providing insights into an issue and drawing generalizations. Thus, the interest in the phenomenon goes beyond the case itself as it is used as a mechanism to help understand a larger phenomenon. Finally, the third type of case study recognized by Stake (2005) is the multiple case study or collective case study. A collective case study is an extension of an instrumental case study to several cases in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or condition. These cases may be similar or dissimilar with one another, but they are chosen under the assumption that they will lead to better understanding and theorizing about a larger interest or case.

For the intent and purpose of this investigation an instrumental case study was deemed the most appropriate. However, in remaining consistent with the tenets of a critical-interpretivist paradigm *moderatum* generalizations were formed. *Moderatum* generalizations are simple, practical generalizations drawn from personal experiences that bring a “semblance of order and consistency to social interaction” (Payne & Williams, 2005, p. 296). *Moderatum* generalizations resemble typical generalizations that are made everyday by individuals; thus, they are not grand sociological statements that defy context and time and they are readily open to change. *Moderatum* generalizations are not deemed contradictory to interpretivist research as Williams (2000) and Payne and Williams (2005) note that in “transferring” your findings to a different context, researchers inadvertently form *moderatum* generalizations that other researchers can transfer to different contexts (see their works for examples of prominent interpretivist research that have done so).

Methods of Data Collection

Research methods are inextricably linked to research designs and paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a); therefore, it was important to choose a data collection method that supported my research paradigms. As Black feminist, interpretive, and critical theories highlight the importance of discourse in accessing marginalized groups voices, a qualitative methodology was deemed most appropriate. This choice is likewise in accordance with Merriam and Associates’ (2002) suggestion that “if you want to understand a phenomenon, uncover the meaning a situation has for those involved, or delineate process (how things happen), then a qualitative design would be most

appropriate” (p. 11). Further, qualitative studies are valuable in exploring research on “informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organizations” (p. 57), and coming to a profound understanding of participants’ experiences of the phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). When conducting research on lived experiences, “one cannot understand human actions without understanding the meaning that participants attribute to those actions—their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptions; the researcher, therefore, needs to understand the deeper perspectives through face-to-face interaction” (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 57); thus, qualitative methods of inquiry allow the researcher to understand the deeper perspectives of human behavior.

For these reasons, a qualitative in-depth interview methodology was employed for this investigation. Interviewing as a data gathering tool involves active interaction between two or more people in a question and answer session (Fontana & Frey, 2005), and is a valuable research method researchers can use to gain insight into their respondents’ worlds (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Face to face in-depth interviews allow researchers conducting feminist research to access the voices of marginalized individuals (Hesse-Biber, 2007), and to ensure that the research participants are the actual creators of the data via their interpretations of their experiences (Kershaw, 1992). Reinharz (1992) explains how interviewing offers feminist researchers the opportunity to access women’s hidden knowledge. She notes that:

Interviewing offers researchers access to people’s ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher. This asset is particularly important for the study of women because in this way learning from

women in an antidote to centuries of ignoring women's ideas altogether or having men speak for women. (p. 19).

With Black women's ideas and voices being silenced in research, in-depth interviewing offers them an opportunity to have their voices heard.

In accessing these voices, three primary types of interview strategies can be used: structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. In structured interview sessions, all participants are asked a series of pre-established close-ended questions, and they all receive the same set of questions. As the questions typically are close-ended there is little flexibility in how the questions are answered (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Hesse-Biber, 2007), and they are generally conducted with telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews in households, mall interviews and survey interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2005). The inflexible nature of the structured interview fails to acknowledge that as social interactions, interviews are influenced by the context. Thus, interviewers must be "aware of respondent differences and must be able to make the proper adjustments called for by unanticipated developments" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 703). Unstructured and semi-structured interviews, as compared to structured ones, accomplish this. With unstructured interviews, the researcher has a basic interview plan in mind, but the interview session is largely dictated by the respondents (Hesse-Biber, 2007). With semi-structured interviews, however, the researcher has a specific interview guide with questions that he or she would like answered. With this strategy the researcher has some control over the how the interview is conducted, but unlike the structured interview, it is not tightly controlled and there is room for spontaneity and adjustments.

In choosing which strategy to use, I heeded Hesse-Biber's (2007) assertion, that the strategy selection is dependent on the research goals. She mentions that "a move from the informal end of interviewing to the more formal, structured end is to move from an *exploratory data gathering and in-depth understanding* [emphasis added] goal of a project to a more *theory testing set of goals*" (p. 117). Since the goal of this investigation is to have an in-depth understanding of how Black female athletic directors describe and negotiate their identities, a less structured approach was deemed appropriate. As opposed to leaving the interview session completely unstructured, Hesse-Biber (2007) recommends a more structured interview when researchers have a specific set of issues and concerns that they are interested in investigating. Thus, for these reasons, a semi-structured interview strategy was chosen.

Accordingly, a semi structured interview protocol³ and demographic survey was designed for the participants or co-researchers⁴ (see Appendix C, D). Questions were centered on the co-researchers self-defined definitions of their race, gender, and class identities, and identity negotiation strategies. Prior to contacting the co-researchers, the interview protocol and research proposal were approved the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. Afterwards, each co-researcher was asked to participate in the study via a mailed and e-mailed invitation (see Appendix E, F) which stated the purpose of the research and the methods that were used to collect data and to ensure

³ Some of the questions used in the interview protocol have been obtained from Shorter-Gooden and Jones' (2003) interview protocol for the African American Women's Voices Project with the authors' permission.

⁴ Hence forward, the term co-researcher will be used in lieu of participants. The utilization of the term co-researcher "acknowledges the phenomenological perspective that the emergent meaning is co-constituted by the description of the experiences and the interpretation process of the one seeking the pre reflection structure of the experience" (Shertock, 1998, p. 162).

confidentiality. Following the confirmation of their participation, an email with a copy of the interview questions was sent to each co-researcher and a date for the interview was set. All of the interviews were conducted in Nashville, Tennessee, at the NCAA Convention between January 10, 2008 and January 14, 2008. All co-researchers were asked the same primary questions; however, depending on responses, different probes were used to further facilitate the interview of each co-researcher. All interviews were audiotaped with the co-researchers' consent, and follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with all co-researchers in order to clarify their statements and also to test my propositions by seeking their agreement or disagreement with commonly iterated statements.

Co-researchers

The women who were chosen for this research are Black female athletic directors of NCAA Division I, II, and III intercollegiate athletic departments. The co-researchers had to meet two requirements: 1) be a self-identified Black female, and 2) be currently employed as an athletic director at a Predominately White Institution or Historically Black College or University. The list of women meeting these requirements was generated by sending a brief email detailing the intent of my research and my need for of a list of Black women athletic directors to The Black Women's Sport Foundation, the Women's Sports Foundation, Dr. Richard Lapchick, founder and director of The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Thirteen Black female athletic directors were identified from this process; however, prior to collecting data, one of the women was reassigned and another

resigned, resulting in a population of eleven— of which ten participated in the study (see Table 1 for the co-researchers' institutional information).

Table 1

Co-researchers' institutional demographics

Last Name	First Name	Institution Classification	NCAA Division
Barnes	Clarissa	HBCU	III
Jones	Midnight	HBCU	II
Davis	Renee	HBCU	II
Lee	Erin	PWI	II
Lynn	Erika	PWI	IAAA
Jackson	Yvette	PWI	IAAA
Smith	Ann	PWI	IAAA
Collins	Elina	HBCU	II
Lincoln	Tiffany	HBCU	IAA
Oliver	Leigh	HBCU	II

All of the co-researchers are self-identified U.S. Black women, with one being bi-racial. The co-researchers have an average age of 46.70 ($SD=5.25$), with the youngest being 41 and the oldest 56. Three of the co-researchers have never been married, five are

married, and two are divorced. Moreover, six of the co-researchers have children. Education-wise, eight of the co-researchers hold a M.A/M.S., and two hold PhDs in business, education, or sport management. Eighty-percent of the women are former collegiate student athletes. In terms of work experience, they have an average of 17.11 ($SD=8.82$) years of intercollegiate athletic experience, ranging between 8 and 32 years. These women have been athletic directors for an average of 2.93 ($SD=2.75$) years, with one co-researcher being an athletic director for 3 months and one occupying her role for 9 years.

Methods of Data Analysis

After transcribing the interviews verbatim, the data analysis consisted of coding the data at two levels: first-level coding and pattern coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). First, information gathered from the interviews was summarized, and then afterwards, pattern coding was conducted to group the summaries together based on categories, themes, and patterns that linked the co-researchers disclosures together (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Throughout the transcription and coding process memos were written to make sense of the data. A memo is “the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding” (Glaser, 1978, p. 83). Memos were written to clarify the co-researchers ideas, to tie or differentiate one co-researcher’s ideas to/from another’s, and also to link the information gained from the interviews to the literature. Throughout the memoing and coding processes, the interviews were listened to repeatedly in order to assume a “posture of indwelling,” which, as defined by Maykut and Morehouse (1994), requires “being at one with the persons under

investigation, walking a mile in the other person's shoes, or understanding the person's point of view from an empathic rather than a sympathetic position" (p. 25). This process of listening to the interviews multiple times allowed me the chance to enter the world of my co-researchers vicariously and see life through their eyes. Moreover, this "posture of indwelling" resulted in more insights and additional memos and codes. Following the coding process, I compared the emergent findings with the identity negotiation theory (i.e. self-verification and behavioral confirmation processes) in order to understand how the Black female athletic directors negotiated their race, gender, and class identities.

Research Trustworthiness

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria for judging the trustworthiness of qualitative research. These include (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability. The goal of credibility is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner that the findings are credible or have "validity." As noted by Marshall and Rossman (1989), if an in-depth description of a phenomenon is embedded with data derived directly from the participants and setting, it cannot help but be valid with the parameters of that setting and population; thus, in order to increase credibility as a researcher, the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim with special attention paid not only to what the co-researchers' say, but also to their use of modulation, enthusiasm, gestures and facial expressions. Further, the transcribed interviews and my interpretation of the interviews were shared back with the co-

researchers (i.e. member checks) in order to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations and conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability

Transferability is the ability of the user of the research to transfer the finding of the study from one context to another (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To assist in the transferability of my findings, I provided “thick description” of the co-researchers experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Moreover *moderatum* generalizations with moderating factors were formed to assist in this transference. However, consistent with interpretivist research, the ability to “generalize” these findings to another context lies with the reader.

Dependability

The third criterion for establishing soundness of qualitative research is dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In an interpretivist inquiry, changes in methodology will occur during the inquiry process due to the researcher’s changing understandings. As such, dependability reflects the researcher’s ability to justify that his or her results are dependable and factors that can influence the results are controlled. In order to address this criterion a “dependability audit” was conducted that explained the changes in methodology that occurred while conducting the interviews.

Confirmability

The issue of objective versus subjective research has been debated among researchers and has become “ideological ammunition in the paradigms debate” (Patton, 1999, p. 58). Many researchers question whether qualitative research can be objective.

Others question whether *any* research, regardless of epistemological assumptions, can be objective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Eisner, 1991). As a result of the ongoing futile debates, Lincoln and Guba prefer to use the term confirmability which assesses the neutrality of the qualitative data interpretations (Lincoln & Guba). The authors suggest that researchers demonstrate neutrality by conducting a “confirmability audit.” Specifically, this entailed me acquiring raw data, keeping a reflexive journal that contains the analysis notes, reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, personal notes, and preliminary developmental information (Lincoln & Guba).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

External searches for college administrators are always based on macro-politics. By using the term “macro-politics” I mean that the decision is an unprincipled one based on sociological considerations. The over-riding sociological considerations are gender, race, and sexual orientation. In this case, of course, Landry Mehrtens was at a distinct advantage because she is a Black female. She immediately had a two to nothing lead over McNamee who has the great misfortune of being a White male (Adams, 2007).

Those are statements taken from a blog that Dr. Mike Adams, a professor at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington, wrote about Landry Mertens’ athletic director appointment. As noted in the passage, this professor took it upon himself to describe Landry’s purpose to the public. He asserted that Landry has a beneficial identity because she is Black and a female, and this provides her with a double advantage over other the other candidate. Moreover, he discounted her qualifications by stating that her hire was based on sociological considerations (i.e. race, gender, and sexual orientation) and not job qualifications.

The scrutiny that occurred as a result of Landry’s athletic director appointment is not an isolated occurrence. Other Black women encountered similar skepticism. For example, when Erin was offered an athletic director position her mentored inquired, “Do you think that <president of the institution> hired you because you are Black?”

Moreover, when Erika was offered her athletic director position, an individual wrote the president and asked, “Why did you hire this Black female?” Tiffany had members of the athletic department staff politic against her getting the job, and she stated that due to her qualifications the only reasoning she could come up with to explain why they politicked against her getting the position was because she was a “strong Black female and I was going to hold them accountable.” And finally, when Clarissa asked her coach about career advice and getting a master’s degree the response was, “I think that will be a wonderful idea for you to do that, and she said that you will probably get a job quicker than I would if I was to leave here because of affirmative action...because the market by the time that you graduate for Black females will be quite open.”

I intentionally prefaced this section with those negative experiences to first highlight some of the criticisms, skepticisms, and challenges that these women had to endure while aspiring to become athletic directors. Secondly, these statements raise some interesting questions pertinent to the investigation. For example, how would these women describe their identity? Do they believe, like their ridiculers or like their mentors, that their race and gender provide them with a double advantage in the workplace? Additionally, these comments cause one to question the saliency of Black females’ identities. In these persons’ eyes the athletic directors’ race and sex are very important, but are these identities salient to the Black women athletic directors, or are there other salient identities that these women use to define themselves?

In answering these questions, it is important to follow the tenets of Black feminist epistemology, and allow these women to define their own identities and realities

(Collins, 1998; 2000). It is through self-definition that they liberate themselves from these negative discourses. Thus, in this section, I first address research question one with an exploration of how the Black women athletic directors defined their identities in terms of their race, gender, socioeconomic class, and personal identities. In addressing this research question I also note the level of importance that they associated with those identities, and consider how beneficial they consider their identities.

Liberated Voices: Black Women Self-Defining Their Identities

Racial identity

Similar to the societal debates over what to reference United States citizens with a Black racial identity (McWhorter, 2004; Swarns, 2004), the athletic directors all self-identified as having a Black racial identity, but they used different denotations to reference that identity. For example, six of the co-researchers referenced themselves as African American, but did not provide explanations why, except for Erin who refers to herself as an African American primarily because in U.S. society this is the prevalent denotation for individuals with a Black racial identity. The other four co-researchers preferred to describe their racial identity as “Black,” and Leigh proudly stated that,

I am a Black American and I know that. Now, I think that society has a problem with trying to always be politically correct and determine for us who we should be, whether it's colored or Afro-American, or African-American. I'm a Black American and I'm gonna always see myself that way no matter what the buzz words that are put out.

As noted in her comments, Leigh refuses to let societal traditions dictate how she defines her racial identity. She additionally commented,

I embrace my race first because of just the rich heritage and culture and it just feels so good when, for example, this morning when we were in the HBCU session and I just—I felt so proud. It was just insane. And at that particular time I didn't see myself as a woman, I just saw myself as a Black American.

Cross (1971; 1991; 1995) noted that the extent to which a person feels a sense of belonging and affiliation to other Blacks and the extent to which an individual has considered what it means to be Black provides evidence of his or her level of Black identity development. Leigh's remarks signify "Black pride" and demonstrate that she values Black culture and her Black heritage, all characteristics of someone in the internalization stage of Cross' model. Moreover, her comments highlight that racial identity is about more than just race; it encompasses how much a person prefers and identifies with Black culture and believes she or he shares a common heritage (Cross, 1971; Helms, 1990a).

Interestingly, however, although these women used the term "African American" to reference themselves, throughout their discourse the term Black was used when referencing others. This is consistent with survey results that revealed that when interacting with each other Blacks preferred the term "Black," as it is associated with intimacy and familiarity, but for public or formal use, the term "African American" is preferred (Smith, 1992).

Gender identity

When describing their gender identity all of the athletic directors rightfully identified their sex as being a female, but other than Renee, Erin, and Erika, they did not expound on their gender identity. This unintentional omission points to some of the confusion concerning the difference between sex and gender. To clarify, gender is related to expectations, roles, behaviors, and attitudes that members of one sex have compared to another; whereas sex is a biological comparison based on anatomical features (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 2000; Powell & Graves, 2003). Moreover, someone's gender identity likewise reflects their level of femininity and masculinity (Bem, 1974; Powell & Graves).

In describing her gender identity, Renee mentioned that she was not a "girly girl," and that she has always been a tomboy. She further commented, "I like football, and so I am not pink and lace and, God bless my mother's heart, I never was, and that is all she wanted was a little girl, and I said, I'm sorry you got me." Erin likewise mentioned that, "you know girls are supposed to be prissy. I was this tomboy growing up because I wanted to do everything my brothers were doing." In contrast to Renee and Erin, Erika stated, "I've always identified with my femininity. I'm a heterosexual female, and I've always felt that it's important that we feel that we don't have to give up that female identity just because we work in a male dominated world." Notice that while explaining her gender identity, Erika likewise commented on her sexual identity by mentioning that she is a heterosexual female. Theoretically, sexual orientation is a separate construct from gender identity; however, heterosexual assumptions are

embedded in the notion of traditional gender roles (Acker, 1992; Stacey & Thorne, 1985). Thus, it seems appropriate to mention sexual orientation under gender identity because it is experienced and becomes comprehensible through social gendered practices, processes, and norms (Frable, 1997). Accordingly, similar to Erika, the other athletic directors also identified as heterosexual.

Moreover, in line with Ashmore's (1990) contention that gender identity includes personal and social attributes, interests, and behaviors, the athletic directors attributed certain behaviors to their gender identity. For example, Elina, noted, "As a female I'm very independent, very self sufficient. As an African-American woman I'm very powerful." Thus, for Elina her independent nature, self-sufficiency, and power are a byproduct of her gender identity. Leigh, likewise iterated that her gender identity made her powerful, and she emphatically stated,

I'm definitely proud to be a woman and I'm definitely even more proud when I'm around other women who are empowered or who have empowered themselves and utilized the right resources to be empowered. It's a beautiful feeling as my role of being a woman in America and what I can do to make an impact in my community and my family and for other Black females.

Leigh noted the empowerment that she gets when she surrounds herself around other women. Her remarks reflect characteristics of the final stages of womanist identity development (i.e. emersion and internalization) in that she seeks affiliation with other women and searches for positive models of womanhood. Moreover, as previously noted, she refuses to allow societal traditions to dictate how she references her racial identity,

and the same pattern was noticed in her description of her gender identity in that she does not feel that she has an inferior role in U.S. society—a role that is commonly dictated in the larger society (Rosaldo & Lamphere, 1974). Her remarks also show signs of her developing her own subjectivity. Black subjectivity, as defined by hooks (1990), is “an oppositional worldview, a consciousness, an identity, a standpoint that exists not only as that struggle which opposes dehumanization but as that movement which enables creative, expansive self-actualization” (p. 15). For Leigh, developing an empowered subjectivity means learning how to define herself “through a perspective uniformed by dominant definitions of Black [and gender] identity” (Elliott, 2000, p. 182).

Class identity

The majority of the women, except for Leigh and Ann who grew up in lower middle class families, revealed that they come from working class families. This was not known to a few of them, however, until they moved up in class status. For example, Renee grew up poor, but since she was provided with the necessities she was not aware of this. She stated, “I grew up I guess up until about 13, I thought in a middle class family. Then I thought maybe upper lower class...Because I didn’t know for a long time. I mean oh my God we were kind of poor.” Erin likewise mentioned that she did not know until after she moved that her family was very poor. She mentioned that she was fortunate to get an athletic scholarship because her parents would not have been able to afford to send her to college. Moreover, Erin conveyed the following,

I remember that as a little girl we were the first family in our neighborhood to get running water, and so I remember living in house that did not have running

water; but I never knew that we were poor growing up. I've always felt that we had what everyone else did because I always had food to eat, clothes to wear, there was never something that I needed. And so when I look back, my parents were trying to make sure that it worked for the kids. But there was no way that they could have afforded to send any of us to school on their income.

Similarly Erika was raised in "a poor black family," and she recalled that in the early years her family spent some time getting public assistance from the government. Clarissa also mentioned that she was raised in a lower socioeconomic class status. Although these women were raised in lower class or lower middle class households, their education process, athletic department appointments, and income have moved them up into a middle or upper middle class socioeconomic status. However, despite a shift to a higher class status, Ann noted that she feels very much like working class, because she can relate more readily to people of that particular background than she can to those of wealth.

In contrast to these women, three of the athletic directors did not classify themselves according to class status. For instance, Yvette stated that she had not really thought about her socioeconomic class status, and Midnight defined her status based on her most salient personal attribute. She commented,

I am just a regular 'ole person, okay? I'm down-to-earth. Some people get caught up in terms of money, in terms of titles. I think if anybody classifies me just down-to-earth kind of person, so I don't know how you rate that on a class scale.

Leigh likewise did not classify herself according to traditional class conceptualizations and she explained why she struggled with defining her class status.

You know, I struggle with that because class can be interpreted so many different ways, whether it's class of economic, class of educational status, class of family heritage—of family background. You know, it's interesting that society determines who's rich and who's poor but -- and wherever you go in America, you know, if I had to go with the stereotypical way that America defines class then I guess in terms of economics, I came from a middle-class economical family. It's unfortunate that we tend to define ourselves based upon the economics...I really don't see myself in any particular class.

Midnight and Leigh's statements are significant in that they reflect the different ways that class is defined. According to traditional views one's income, wealth, and/or education determine their class status (Weber, 1947; Beeghley, 2004; Gilbert, 2002; Thompson & Hickey, 2005), but also their comments typify Bourdieu's (1985) concept of habitus (i.e. class is a function of attitude, behavior, and personal character) by noting that class can likewise be defined according to behavior or family heritage and background.

Identity saliency

As previously mentioned, some individuals in work settings assume Black women's gender is more salient and assume that they share similar personal and professional histories with White women; whereas others assume that Black females' race is more salient and assume that the experiences of Black women executives emulate

more of their Black male colleagues (Bell & Nkomo, 2001). Results of this investigation reveal that neither contention is amiss. The saliency of identities is dependent on the context (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Renee exemplified this by stating,

It depends on who I am interacting with to be quite honest. It depends on that person's professional role relative to mine, that person's age relative to mine, that person's gender relative to mine, just so many things that I have to kind of juggle in that relationship. Whether one is necessarily concretely or statically more important-no. But I am one who definitely believes in the fluidity of things that nothing really stands still. It depends with who I dealing with, what I dealing with, and what the desired outcome needs to be.

For Renee, the level of importance that she associates with any one of her identities is dependent on the demographics of the person with whom she is interacting, the situation or issues she is dealing with, and what she wants the outcome to be. Her statements emulate McCall and Simmons' (1978) explanation of the salience hierarchy of identities which posited that the placement of an identity is dependent on (a) its prominence, (b) its need for support, (c) a person's need for the kinds and amounts of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards gained through performance of the identity, and (d) the perceived degree of opportunity for its profitable enactment in the situation. As such, similar to Renee's connotation, within an interaction, the salience of any of her identities is dependent on multiple personal and contextual factors. Thus, it cannot be simply stated that Black women are more like White women or more like Black men.

Identity performances are also a function of how salient an identity is in one's overall hierarchy (Stryker, 1987). This contention was supported in that regardless of their organizational context or interactions with athletic departmental constituents, the women's discourse and acknowledgements indicated that overall their racial identity is their most salient identity. The influences of sociocultural conditions, family background, and current experiences constructed these women's identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000), and resulted in race becoming more salient for them.

For example, one athletic director noted that the importance that she gives her race is a result of her upbringing in a biracial family. She commented that she identifies strongly with being biracial, and that in her household they valued both races and did not negate one for the other. She further noted that her racial identities define how she looks at the world and how she comes at issues. Leigh likewise expressed that her race was very important to her and proudly acknowledged that she is a product of a HBCU. In contrast to these women's positive experiences, two of the athletic directors' experiences with racism resulted in their Black racial identity being their most salient identity. One athletic director revealed that her race is her most important identity because of early childhood experiences. As a teenager in the late 60s, she found out that her mother is biracial (i.e. Black and White) and as a child she remembered people constantly staring at her family because they thought a Black man, her father, was with a White woman. She further recounted a situation when her mother went to give her father some items on a railroad car and the conductor told her that the White men were in another car. This experience brought race to the forefront, but not in a negative manner. Tiffany's

experience however resulted in her not fully embracing her Black racial identity. She recounted the following story:

I can only remember that the day that we went to the high school I had a girlfriend who was different with regard to dress, with regard to makeup. She was into the heavy eyeliner and liked the scarves and that kind of stuff, and I remember there was a guy on the bus that said, "Hey Aunt Jemima." I believe that to this day that had an effect on me in regard to dress and perception. I really do think that with regard to my race. So with my identity I think that I am a Black American, Black African American female that wants to fit into just American society-corporate society maybe. I want to be accepted because I believe that perception, how I am perceived will affect me moving up professionally. I think that I am going to be judged on how I talk. I am going to be judged on how I look...so it is important to me to try to dress nice. It is important for me to try to live well. I try to counteract those negatives that I feel that will go against me.

Similar to DuBois' (1989) notion of double consciousness, Tiffany strives to reconcile her Black racial identity with her identity as an American. Unfortunately in trying to merge these two identities, her strong association with Black racial identity and culture is lessened. This is further exemplified by the following comments,

It was almost like anything that associated with-I don't want to say slavery, but maybe that wasn't White America, I personally think that I steered away from it as a result of my identity. Now I'm Black and I never want to be anything else,

but those things that I felt ... was a negative, and how it affected Blacks in a negative way, I just stayed away from it.

Tiffany's comments echo Angelou's (1969) childhood dream in which she wants to disassociate herself from anything "Black," As noted in Chapter II, these statements are reflective of individuals in Cross' (1991) pre-encounter stage, but what is interesting is that this is not the stage that Tiffany started in. In Tiffany's interview it was revealed that as a child, she was not very conscious of the negative connotations attached to Blacks, but as a teenager, her experience on the bus resulted in her scrutinizing her Black racial identity, and instead of moving forward into Cross' immersion/emersion stage, this incident actually caused her racial identity development to regress back to a pre-encounter stage that had never previously typified her. Moreover, her statements highlight an important correlation, the correlation of success in U.S. society with a negation of Black racial identity. This correlation is supported and expanded on in subsequent sections by some of other women.

Although the majority of the athletic directors identified their race as the most salient identity, it would be imprudent of me to allow readers to believe that all of them identified their race as their most important identity. Black feminist epistemology recognizes that heterogeneity exists in Black women's experiences and knowledge (Collins, 1998; 2000). In recognition of this, the interviews revealed that in addition to racial identity, some of the athletic directors felt that their class identity and personal or core spiritual identity more accurately reflected who they are, how they look at situations, and what they want to be known for.

For instance, two of the athletic directors felt that their class identities were more important. Renee, who talked about the fluidity of identity, insisted that in terms of how life really happens and how career and other things transpire, it is important what people perceive your class to be. She illustrated this by stating that:

I say that it is important in terms of what people perceive it to be, because people will put up barriers if they perceive you to not be like them in this way. And so obviously if I walk into a room of White men, as an African American female, I am already not like them. So if I am also socioeconomically not like them than where are they going to connect me? Why would they lend any validity to what I have to say, because it does not resonate with them.

She further emphasized that,

The color that matters the most in the US is green, so I think in terms of all that we seem to hold sacred as Americans would say that class is extremely important because those that have are trying to keep it and those who don't are trying to get some, but are up and against it.

Midnight, who defined her class status as “down to earth,” likewise contended that her class status is the most important identity to her. She stated, “I define class as who I am. That’s important. Because after all, you don’t have anything but your name and who you are and people respect that.” Other than these two athletic directors, class was not noted as a salient identity. This result was expected because the relative salience of multiple identities is influenced by “those identities that are privileged and by those that are externally scrutinized” (Jones & McEwen, 2000, p. 172). Given that the majority of

the athletic directors classified themselves in a middle class economic status, they are less likely to attribute a high level of significance to their class identity.

In addition to class identity, the importance of the athletic directors' personal identity traits was also evidenced. Leigh and Erin both noted the importance of their spiritual foundations. Leigh revealed that she was a Christian and that she was "very blessed to be selected as an athletic director." And she revealed that she lives her life according to the following philosophy,

I'm gonna make sure that I come as honest as I possibly can in any decisions that I make, so really for the most part I always come with -- I tell my colleagues -- with clean hands, with an open mind and a pure heart every time I talk. And I'm gonna always live with that regardless of what position I hold.

Similarly, Erin noted that her gender and racial identities did not influence her behavior. Her core values do. She remarked,

My parents instilled in me values—to be honest, treat people right. It is kind of like that golden rule. And this is what I would say is at the core of my foundation growing up. My identity is based upon my spiritual foundation, and so I feel like spiritually if I'm connected nothing else really matters. If it is female, Black or White, it does not matter. I think that my spiritual foundation is what my identity is more connected to than anything, because that has been the place that I have really depended on to move forward. Not because this is going to happen or not happen because I am a female, or it's not going to happen because I'm Black. I would say because of my strong foundation and because of what I think is a part

of who I am. That is why I am able to be as successful as I choose to be for the things that I am following.

Tiffany and Ann commented on other personal values. For example, Ann noted the importance of her love for sports by noting that if she had to rank her identities she would put race first and sports second followed by her gender and class identity. She emphatically commented:

My identity with sports is fundamental to who I am! I am just a sports junky, and that has served me so well in terms of who I talk to—especially football. I put it before my gender because I think that it is such a neutralizer because when we talk sports our gender goes away. Or if we play together, if we play a pick up game, our gender goes away and so that is why I put it above. If it didn't then I would put my gender above it.

She further commented that her love of sports has served her very well in the workplace and in her social life. She contends that in the workplace it is a neutralizer with White men, and that it has been invaluable to professional success.

Tiffany commented that when she dies, she would like to be known for her passion. She explained that,

I would rather that when I leave her that my identity be said that she had a passion. She was very passionate about young people. That is very important to me than say “Tiffany, she was the first African American—she was the first female in the <NCAA conference>.” That is not important to me.

Tiffany's comments reflect a central element of black feminist epistemology—an “ethic of care” Collins (2000), and reflect the importance of using internal characteristics to define who she is, as oppose to external labels.

Being Black and female: A beneficial identity?

Prior to concluding this section, I would like to reflect back on the scenarios that prefaced this section. Assertions were made that the Black women had a double advantage over other job applicants in obtaining the athletic director position. Thus, their identities, mainly their race and gender, were described as beneficial identities. The question was asked whether these women thought like their ridiculers or like their mentors that their race and gender provided them with a double advantage in the workplace. In continuing to allow these women to describe their identities, it is important for them to define how beneficial their identities are. As such, in answering that question and expanding on research question one, three of the athletic directors acknowledged that their identities did provide them with some advantages when seeking employment *prior* to becoming an athletic director. Renee, for example, highlighted the following occurrences when working at predominately white institutions,

I think particular opportunities that I've been afforded because some people feeling the need to put together a group that at least appears to be diverse, and they can check two boxes with me. .. I think at least in my experience, a lot of times being African American female, particularly before [working at a HBCU], is like a result of inclusion and things and needing a minority opportunity

planner, committees being put together. Ohh we don't have a minority. Give Renee a call.

Renee's comments reflect a widely held assumption that Black women are hired because, when it comes to diversity initiatives, the organization gets two minorities for the price of one (St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). Midnight likewise mentioned that prior to her being an athletic director, she was able to move up in her job because they formulated a women's task force. Finally, Erin mentioned that she obtained a graduate assistant position because the head coach "wanted to have some diversity on the staff."

Renee, Midnight, and Erin noted that their identity as a Black female or just as a female in general might have helped them with prior job appointments, but just like the other athletic directors, they did not perceive that they had a "beneficial" or advantageous identity for getting an athletic director job. The fact that only 10 women hold this position can likewise contest to this. They felt that they had worked hard and that they had the qualifications to get the job. Erin noted that she might have originally thought that she received some unmerited benefits because of her identity, but afterwards she realized that she was just as qualified as others, or more so to accept an athletic director position. She further noted that a lot of times when "you are the only one that looks like you doing that, you may wonder am I really suppose to be here." She further noted that she use to "sell herself short or play herself small" because she was listening to others' voices that believed that she was not suppose to be there. As a result she did not exercise a lot of confidence in herself or live up to her full potential, but with maturity came increased confidence. She articulated this with the following statements:

Now I could have chosen to listen to that all the way through, or you mature and you say you know what that is not true. It is not true, but the maturing factor for me has become when you become home in your own skin and who you are as an individual. It really doesn't matter what people's opinion is about you because you are so confident in what it is that you are doing. And that is the place that I'm going now. And I'm not saying that I have arrived. It is just now I know. Now I know what I know that I really didn't know before... Even if people are discrediting you, kind of like why are these people offering you jobs, you have to be confident in who you are and why you are. But if you are not you will let other people define your purpose and that is not what I am not doing anymore. I don't let people define my purpose. And my purpose is not made up by someone else's opinion.

Erin's words are very powerful and reflect her journey toward self-actualization or development of subjectivity. For Erin, the development of subjectivity comes with time and maturity and is only realized when individuals become confident in who they are as a person. Only at this point can they begin to define their own purpose. She further exemplified this by stating,

I don't care if you size me up. It is what it is. The people's choice and the opinions it does not influence me as much as it did before. And you want to be accepted. You want to be liked, but if it does not happen that way it is not the end of the world, because you can't please everybody. So that part I get, but I really

have to be about fulfilling my personal purpose and that is me, and doing what I feel is called upon inside of me to do. That is where your freedom comes from.

These statements also exemplify Collins (1998) assertion that the empowerment and liberation of Black women rest on two interrelated goals: the goals of self-definition and of self-determination. As noted by Collins (2000), when Black women insist on self-definition they not only question the validity of what has been said about U.S. Black women, but they also question the credibility and intentions of those trying to define them. Moreover, when Black women define themselves they take the power from those in authority and they use it to empower themselves. This self-empowerment brings these women the freedom to define their purpose and reality. Thus, as brought out in Erin's statements she is no longer allowing others to define her purpose. In other words she is no longer letting them define why she is an athletic director. She has the freedom to now define her own reality.

Challenged Voices: Black Women Negotiating Their Multiple Identities

The preceding section addressed research question one by revealing how the Black women athletic directors described their race, gender, and class identities in order to gain an understanding of what identities in particular are being negotiated, but this was done without a context. It is important to note that with "shifting contexts...people must continually work at their identities" (Deaux, 1993, p. 10). Thus, similar to all persons, Black female athletic directors negotiate (i.e. establish, maintain, and change) the multiple dimensions of their self-concept within a context and within interpersonal interactions (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Accordingly, the focus of this section addresses

the remaining research questions with an explanation of how they negotiated their identities and what factors contributed to them negotiating their identities. The findings of this investigation revealed that the women had to establish, maintain, and change their race, gender, and class identities with the utilization of various self-verification and behavioral confirmation strategies. These negotiations were conducted in response to the expectations that ensued as a result of their role in a leadership position, stereotypes, and intra- and inter-racial interactions. These findings are expounded on in the remaining half of this chapter.

Chameleons: Leadership requisites

Being in a leadership position provides a myriad of interactions which provide social, cultural, situational, and contextual influences on their identity negotiation outcomes. When faced with the requirements and expectations of being an athletic director, traditionally a male's job, certain identity dimensions became more or less salient for these athletic directors. For example, Renee who described herself as "a very forthright, matter of fact, bottom lines results kind of woman," mentioned that with some people she will soften her approach so that they can arrive at a solution or so she can get them to do what she needs to them do. She equates this with how parents deal with each one of their children differently according to his or her own needs. Thus she feels that it is just a matter of managing the dimensions of her identity differently depending on who she is interacting with, what the outcome needs to be, and what is at stake.

These sentiments were echoed by the vast majority of the athletic directors. For example Leigh, who identified strongly with being a Black female, employed a chameleon metaphor, to describe how she adjusts to environments.

I'm that, what is that, that chameleon that makes the adjustment, but the unfortunate part, chameleons adjust as a defense mechanism so they won't be eaten up by other people. Well I'm not a chameleon because I'm trying to defend myself, I just make adjustments accordingly to whatever environment that I'm in. I don't think anybody's gonna try to eat me up because I think everybody knows that I can pretty much stand firm. So I try to avoid using "chameleon," but some people have to do that, they have to change their color to protect themselves, you know.

She exemplified this with the following scenario,

When I'm walking into a president's office, I better not be looking like Shaniqua, you know, I better be looking like someone who's going to be a leader, to take a department to the next level, so what can I do to make sure this woman understands that I'm business just like she is business.

In this example the name "Shaniqua" is chosen to refer to a Black female that is undefined, obnoxious, and exhibits an urban Black working class persona. Leigh's statement explicitly indicates that in order to be taken serious by individuals in leadership positions, a person has to exhibit professional or business like qualities. Thus some parts of his or her "color" will have to be toned down. Moreover, Leigh's example illustrates DuBois' notion of double consciousness by presenting a Black female with

two separate, contradicting identities—a strong Black racial identity and a corporate identity defined by White standards. She is faced with a dilemma that requires her to choose between acting in accord with her Black racial identity or in accord with the expectations of the organization. According to Leigh and Tiffany, whose struggles with reconciling her identities was previously documented, if “Shaniqua” wants to succeed and gain access to leadership positions she will need to choose the latter.

Midnight, a self-proclaimed “down to earth” person, mentioned that when she was younger she did not think that she had to alter her behavior. In fact, she mentioned that during the 60s she was like Angela Davis—a former member of the Black Panther and Communist Parties—she was very radical and wore an Afro, but now since she has gotten older she believes that “over time you sort of modify and conform.” Thus, similar to Leigh and Tiffany, her statements indicate a need to make modifications to one’s identity in order to succeed professionally.

Erin, who noted that her spiritual identity is her most salient identity, used a scriptural proverb (i.e. 1 Corinthians 9:20, 22) to articulate how she negotiated her identity. She remarked:

I become all things to all people so that I might reach some. I think that I can adapt to the situation. Not to a place where I would have to compromise, but to a place where I can be able to communicate. So I am pretty good at adapting to a context that may be different from a group that I might not normally be associated with, and not make anyone feel uncomfortable or threatened, and still feel authentic.

Moreover she indicated,

Because sometimes you may have some folks who are unapproachable and you don't want to have to waste the time with it. But I think that I do have that flexibility in my character. If I'm changing it is because I am trying to reach the group that I am with. If it is student athletes, I am trying to find a way to relate to my student athletes. If it is my staff, I am trying to relate to them. If it is my peers, I am trying to make sure that I can communicate back to my staff, and still be able to connect.

So similar to the other athletic directors, Erin noted the importance of having a fluid identity, and like Renee, she believes that in order to accomplish her purpose for the interaction, different dimensions of her identity become more or less salient; resulting in her exhibiting differential behaviors when interacting with different athletic department constituents.

Additionally, Ann commented that she believes that any person of color in a leadership position has got to have extremely good interpersonal skills. She exemplified this presumption by stating,

You say Jane Doe is a CEO, and she is Hispanic, I guarantee you that she has impeccable interpersonal skills. You tell me she is the general partner at a law firm, and she is Black, guarantee you her interpersonal skills are bar none.

Ann's statement about racial minorities in leadership positions having great interpersonal skills equates professional success with knowing how to relate to people. She further explained why this is important.

There is a requisite that we have to make them comfortable. We as people of color, and so I am including Hispanics, Asians, what have you. We have to make White males in leadership comfortable, or they will not give that power to us. It is a fundamental skill for anyone in a leadership position. You just know how to make conversation, got to do a little homework so that you know what the person is interested in. I think it's just required for people of color in a leadership position.

Thus, similar to sentiments expressed earlier, in order to gain access to leadership positions, it is posited that racial minorities have to know how to talk to White males in leadership. These findings are consistent with the Catalyst (1999) survey that found that Black American professional women believed they needed to adjust their style to fit the corporate environment. Moreover these findings parallel Jones and Shorter-Gooden's (2003) concept of "shifting", as these athletic directors changed their behavior when interacting with White people and talked about topics they felt White people were interested in.

Some of the other co-researchers did not feel that the expression "altering or making changes to your identity" was an accurate reflection of what happens. They mentioned that they "guarded" certain aspects of their identity in different contexts. For example, Erika mentioned that she always tries to present herself as a professional and she does not let her guard down as much when she is in the office. Therefore individuals in the workplace see certain aspects of her identity that she wants to project. Yvette

likewise mentioned that she did not feel that she “changed her identity.” She related the way she negotiated her identity to performing in a play and being on or off stage.

And ‘on’ meaning, you know, whether you’re in class, whether you’re at your job, whether you’re in an interview -- whatever it is where you’re doing your profession, where you’re trying to advance your career, you know, those kinds of things, you’re on. It’s kinda like being on stage and then being backstage if you were in some sort of a play... When I go home or when I’m with friends or, you know, doing that thing, I’m kinda backstage and it’s not that behaviors are vastly different at all, you know. Just actions and interactions may be a different style that I may have with family and friends but that’s not a behavior, it’s a communication style.

Regardless of the terms that the athletic directors used to describe how they behave or communicate with different individuals, the result is the same. Certain identities were more salient in one context than they were in another.

In contrast to all of these women, Clarissa, a self-identified “strong Black woman” noted that she was “even killed when talking to anybody.” She stated that she does not change her identity because she does not think that it is necessary and that it gives an inaccurate picture of the person. She further commented that people need to be true to themselves, true to what they are trying to do, and true to what they are trying to accomplish. She feels that changing up into different behavior patterns is not a truthful way of doing things. Her sentiments correspond with those of some of the Black women executives in Bell and Nkomo’s study (2001) that expressed that they did not want to be

an “incogNegro.” That is, a Black person who attempts to conceal or deny his or her racial identity. However in response to that, the majority of the athletic directors who change, alter, or guard their identities do not feel that they are abandoning any of their identities and that they were still being true to themselves. For example, Ann mentioned that some people may say that she lacks personality or that she is always transient, or “where is your essence of yourself,” but she stated that the essence of her identity is being multicultural. In other words, it’s being able to relate to different cultures. Renee likewise noted that she sees herself as “a very multi-faceted person, very complex.” And she noted that her identity cannot be defined simply as she is a Black woman because being a Black woman is not one thing (Collins, 1998; 2000).

The previous examples indicate that in general by assuming a leadership position the athletic directors have to negotiate their identities. Specifically, results of the investigation revealed that there were four main contextual influences that resulted in them negotiating their identities: the presence of racial and gender stereotypes, interactions with individuals of the opposite race, being a token, and transitioning from predominately White Institutions (PWIs) to Historically Black Institutions (HBIs). In this section, I expound on these contextual factors and show how the athletic directors negotiated their race, class, and gender identities in relation to these factors.

Encountering and resisting antithetical stereotypes

As noted in the previous section, all of the athletic directors are heterosexual women; however, their personas did not shield them from stereotypes that were antithetical to their identities. As these women work in a profession that is traditionally

dominated by men and that is in the sports domain, the likelihood of being labeled a lesbian escalates because regardless of their sexual orientation, women that work in nontraditional occupations, or appear assertive, independent, and strong, risk being called lesbians (Blind & Taub, 1992; Kite, 1994). This contention held true for these athletic directors. For example, Renee commented that within intercollegiate athletics, “the main stereotypes are that as a female you are either a lesbian or you are very promiscuous. So once it is established that you are not a lesbian than they are looking for you to be the girl to call late at night.”

Renee’s contention was supported in that the most commonly described misperception was that the athletic directors were lesbians. Renee recounted the following story to explain how she got labeled a lesbian:

I cut my hair off, all of it and I wore it natural, short and natural for a while, which garnered some new, some new comments. And that was a very interesting time because there were actually conferences that I went to where there were women who approached me. My father even asked me about my hair cut, and I said daddy it is just a hair cut, so that was always there.

Zipkin (1999) refers to short hair as the “lesbian flag” (p. 97); thus the reaction to Renee’s haircut correspond with perceptions of what homosexuals and heterosexuals think a lesbian looks like. Renee further explained that she used to bring some of her female friends to receptions or other athletic department events, which likely further reinforced the lesbian stereotype. Despite others perceptions of her, Renee noted that in reinforcing her heterosexism, she did not go out of her way to alter their opinion. She

commented, “I know what I am doing. And I am cool with whatever I am doing and that is not really any of your business.” She did, however, mention that she did not cut her hair that short again for seven years. After that time period she cut her hair into a “short tapered cut” prior to taking her current athletic director position, and the rumors manifested again.

Clarissa and Elina likewise had to contend with being stereotyped as a lesbian while they were student athletes. Given that we reside in a society that traditionally equates sports with masculinity (Messner, 1992), this was not surprising. Female athletes are frequently subjected to lesbian stigmatization because of the perceived gender role incongruity (Blinde & Taub, 1992). Clarissa commented that when rumors surfaced that she was a lesbian she was very distraught and she employed ways to directly and indirectly reinforce her heterosexual sexual orientation. First she verbally refuted being a lesbian:

With my teammates, I was captain of my team, and so it had become a hot discussion in a very quiet way amongst different teammates, and so it had gotten back to me not per se Clarissa was, but the women on the basketball team. And so I just told everybody in the locker room that “I am not a lesbian. I am not gay.” I said it like this, “I need for all of you to know that I love men, and there is nothing any of you can do for me except have a conversation.

In Clarissa’s case, she was stigmatized as a lesbian because other members of her team were. Thus, she was “guilty by association” and she received a “courtesy stigma.” That

is a stigma “conferred despite the absence of usual qualifying behavior” (Blinde & Taub, 1992, p. 526).

Blinde and Taub (1992) note that since stigmas are perceived to taint and discredit individuals, attempts are generally undertaken to control and manage the stigma. In accord, Clarissa, Elina, and Renee relied on what Goffman (1963) terms disidentifiers to reinforce their heterosexual identity and separate themselves from things stereotypically associated with lesbianism. Prior to getting an athletic director position, Renee noted that she did not do anything to curtail the rumors, but upon obtaining her athletic director position, this time instead of ignoring the rumors Renee made some personal changes. For example she stated, “I need to put on some lipstick. I smile a lot anyway...I guess I have to wear dresses a little bit more often and you know just kind of let them be comfortable at first.” In addition to verbally discounting the lesbian stereotype, Clarissa supplemented her verbalization with an identity cue. She did the same thing that Renee did—she wore dresses. When divulging that information she laughed at herself because she said that when she thinks back on it, she realizes that it probably did not make a difference:

Whether that did it or not, I wore dresses. I was actually dating a guy, but that did not matter. But that is how I felt that I was getting my point across, but that didn't have anything-now that I think about it and go back and look at it, it's like so what you wore a dress. What difference does that make? ... Plenty of lesbian women wear dresses. But still that doesn't change anything. At that time I thought that by wearing dresses after the game, but I felt like I have always had

very feminine traits, but that doesn't mean anything. It doesn't mean anything to show feminine traits because things are so different now.

Surprisingly Elina did the same thing to discredit rumors about her being a lesbian while she was coaching. She commented that when she coached at the college level she never coached in a pair of pants “just because of that trying to deter people thinking, oh, she's not, she has a dress on.” Similar to Clarissa, she noted that reflecting back on this her wearing dresses did not mean anything, but at that time she used it as an identity cue of her heterosexism. As an athletic director Elina has not had a problem with people thinking she is a lesbian primarily because people see her family with her at athletic department functions. Something that's she stated she consciously did.

In addition to the lesbian stereotype, the interviews also revealed that the athletic directors grappled with stereotypes of Black womanhood—specifically the *Mammy* and *Sapphire*. These terms were not mentioned verbatim, but the co-researchers stories alluded to these images. For instance, Renee mentioned that she is frequently in a room with White males, and there is a general assumption that the woman will get the water or other items. Renee mentioned that to remove all doubt, if a visitor comes in that does not know who she is and asks for some water, she will immediately turn to the junior most person and ask for some water also. She further noted that she had a habit of always taking notes at meetings and providing people a copy if they needed it, but at the advisement of one of her former athletic directors she stopped because she realized that to a certain extent in their mind she was being relegated to a secretarial role.

Whereas Renee tried to dismiss the presumption that she was the secretary or junior member, Ann remarked how she has been directly asked numerous times to go get coffee or water. She stated, “People would peek in my room and say hey can you go get coffee and I was like ‘I’m the associate a.d.’” She attributed this to her gender identity and not racial identity, but with a history of Black women occupying lower class statuses and performing servitude jobs (Harley, Wilson, & Wilson-Logan, 2002; Woody, 1992), it is hard to distinguish whether the differential treatment is a result of her sex and gender or a combination of her gender, race, and perceived lower class status. Renee and Ann’s experiences do however conjure up images of the Mammy performing domestic service to White males (Collins, 2000; McElya, 2007).

In addition to the image of the *Mammy*, the prevalence of the *Sapphire* image was also noticed in the women’s discourse. The modern day *Sapphire* is a Black woman with an attitude (Bell & Nkomo, 2001). Often when a Black woman is “too outspoken and aggressively pursues privileges that are customarily given to Whites, she can find herself seen as a *Sapphire*” (Bell & Nkomo, 2001, p. 247). Further, colleagues may respond to or pay more attention to her outspokenness than her performance and contributions. These sentiments held true for the athletic directors. Tiffany commented about being stereotyped as being assertive and aggressive by noting that people “automatically think that if you are trying to get your point over you are aggressive if you don’t agree with them, but then you don’t move your program, then you don’t know what you are doing.” Yvette likewise mentioned being stereotyped as aggressive and angry. To fight against this stereotype Tiffany makes changes to her communication

style. She first revealed that she lowers the pitch of her voice when she is talking to men so that they don't feel like they are being scolded. Secondly, she silences herself by not making comments in meetings.

A lot of times in open meetings we can be talking about a certain thing that I feel that I have a strong voice in that particular subject, and I don't say anything...I just don't say anything and so yeah sometimes I feel that I do have to downplay because people will label you as she thinks that she knows everything.

Midnight also mentioned that the first time that she goes to a meeting she intentionally sits and observes and does not provide a lot of input. She further commented:

I find that sometimes you've got to lull people – well not lull them I guess into a false sense of security, but you gotta put them at ease with you, because, again, you've got to overcome those perceptions. Those stereotypes that we are bossy and we are gonna take over if given the opportunity, you know, let them know that we can be team players as well, and we can contribute quietly and without having to always be in charge.

Erika who talked about being stereotyped as bold and “tough to work with,” responded similar to Tiffany and Midnight in that she plays the “meek and mild role.”

These women are consciously aware of how others may perceive and evaluate their behavior; thus they regulate their communication or silence their own voices in meetings. The same response was enacted by Black women in Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003)'s study as they likewise suppressed their voices to avoid being perceived as aggressive, overbearing or difficult.

In a sense, it can likewise be stated that they are downplaying a part of their racial/gender identity. To expound on this contention, research has shown that Black women have a characteristic communication style (Scott, 2000). For example, in their study of how Black women talk, Hecht, Ribeau and Roberts' (1989) interviewees made several references to Black women's talk as "tough;" in the sense that Black women have historically had to take charge and exert strength. Whereas Houston's (2000) findings reveal that "Black women value speaking out and speaking strongly, but not without a basis in knowledge and experience" (p. 15). She further noted that "Black women's talk" is characterized by wisdom, fortitude, and caring, and fortitude or strength should not be confused with dominance. This erroneous association leads to the type of stereotyping that these athletic directors have to negotiate their identities against—that they are domineering and obstreperous. Instead of playing the "mild and meek role" other athletic department constituents need to understand that "an assertive speaker who conveys strongly held opinions and ideas is not necessarily one who wishes to exert undue control over the conversation, to silence others" (Houston, 2000, p. 16).

Finally a fourth stereotype that these women have to defend their identity against is the prevalent racial stereotype that Black people are not articulate and do not speak Standard English. For example, Renee stated that she has received "compliments" that she speaks very well and writes very well. Ann also commented on individuals saying "wow you are very articulate." She pondered if that would be said to a White athletic director, and she concluded that she does not know, but she does know that she has heard it numerous times.

These comments about the women being articulate or speaking well can not be taken simply as a nice compliment. It is acknowledged that significant numbers of Black Americans speak nonstandard dialects of English (Baugh, 1983; Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003), but perceptions that all Black people speak Ebonics⁵, Black English, or Black vernacular⁶ fails to acknowledge the heterogeneity that exists in the Black community (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau). As noted by Baugh, “speakers with different backgrounds will possess ranges of styles that reflect their personal history and social aspirations” (p. 4). Thus, it should not come as a surprise that these women speak Standard English. Ann likewise recognized this as a stereotype. She stated,

I think that is a stereotype that they think I am not, or you meet a donor or a coach on the phone and they meet me and they are like “I had no idea that you were ethnic, Black, or whatever. Because the stereotype-with me on the phone the diction and all the other stuff they probably expected me to be a White person or something, and so you know they are stereotyping... There is some kind of stereotype there that no one is going to say openly, but because you get these awkward compliments, you kind of go okay you must have had a preconceived idea of what I should have been, or what I should look like, or what I should be.

⁵ Ebonics is characterized by homogenous consonant clusters, aspectual “be”, no copula between the subject and predicate, double negatives, and unique lexical forms, such as “I’m finna go” (Baugh, 1983; Hecht et al., 2001).

⁶ Black English or Black vernacular is characterized by the habitual use of the word “be,” the use of the term “done” (e.g. she done did it again) or “been” (e.g. “I been seen that a long time ago.”) to emphasize the extent or degree of something (Winford, 2000), and also by the omission of the “s” on words that should be plural, on contractions, and on third-person singular present tense words (Dandy, 1991).

In negotiating their identities in relation to this stereotype, Renee and Ann focus on establishing and maintaining their identity as educated women that speak Standard English. Erin's comment that reducing these stereotypes "comes with building relationships with people" and Whites being exposed to a diverse group of Blacks is also a likely strategy.

Being a token

A second factor that was revealed in the interviews was that the women negotiated their identities as a result of their token status. Recall from the literature review, that the use of the term token is not meant to be pejorative; it simply denotes a demographic group that has less than 15% representation in an organization (Kanter, 1977). Further, the women never mentioned the term "token" in their interviews, but they did mention "quota filler" which is a common expression used to describe tokens. For instance, Erika acknowledged, "a lot of times people associate quotas with us [Black females], you know, they think we just got the job to fill a quota." To combat the perception that they were hired as "quota fillers" the athletic directors employed similar strategies that the Black female executives in Jones and Shorter-Gooden's (2003) study did. Erika combats this perception with her job performance and by "being professional." She stated, "I've always stressed job performance, it's about job performance, judge me on my job performance."

Erika also mentioned that she felt that she always had to have her "stuff together" because of the perception that she was a "quota filler." Interestingly, Erika noted that others individuals also try to validate her hire by stressing her credentials.

To hear people introduce me to a group that doesn't know me, you know, they build me up, build me up based on my credentials, and it's like, why don't you just talk about me as an AD? Why does the stress have to be on my credentials so much? Why don't you assume that I know what I'm doing based on the fact that I have the job, and then look at what I've done since I got the job, and, yeah, and look at my job performance before I got the job 'cause that's what you tend to do with other groups, so why look differently at me and my ability to get the job done...

Erika's statements implicitly reveal that others are also cognizant of the fallacious perception that she might have gotten her job because she was a "twofer;" therefore, they try to prove her worth by constantly advertising her credentials.

Leigh also combated this perception with job performance. She noted that when she worked at a Predominately White Institution she put increased pressure on herself because she knew she was the first Black coach, and that "I better know my sport, you know, and I better dog gone make sure I do everything professional." This trend continued when she became an athletic director. She further mentioned, "You know what, now when I speak, I better make sure that I articulate, I better make sure that they understand when I say something, I mean business." Erin also mentioned that she feels that she has to "become more of a perfectionist" and that she goes the extra mile to make sure that whenever she is communicating verbally or in writing that there are no mistakes, but she did mention that you can't be so "concerned with making a mistake because the mistakes are going to come because we are human."

In trying to discount misperceptions about why they got hired the athletic directors try to get people to overlook their observable identities, primarily their race and sex, by presenting identity cues of their personal identities. In other words they present signs that they are competent, smart, or knowledgeable by working harder at tasks or putting more stress on themselves than individuals that don't have to contend with such misperceptions. Subconsciously they are also reinforcing the myth of the superwoman. The myth of the superwoman partially refers to a woman of "inordinate strength with an ability for tolerating an unusual amount of misery and heavy, distasteful work" (Wallace, 1978, p. 107).

Cross-racial interactions

A third factor that resulted in some of the co-researchers negotiating their identity was then they were interacting with individuals of an opposite sex or race. Erin commented that she communicates a little bit differently when communicating with members of an opposite race. She exemplified this by stating that in the Black culture there is a "cut up mentality that you get and people are not going to hold that against you." Erika likewise mentioned that she changes the way that she speaks when she is "sitting around with the girls." She stated "I've even seen Oprah Winfrey do it, you know, she'll talk a certain way, you know, she likes to talk about the sisters and stuff like that." She further stated that when talking to her "girls" the comfort level is more at ease; whereas when at work she has a more professional demeanor. Ann relayed a similar experience of feeling at ease when talking to her "girls".

I just had two Black women soccer players in my office yesterday and we were just chopping it up as only we can do. We were talking about some guy because they worked the men's basketball game. And so we were talking about so and so's hair was nappy. We were just acting up. There is no way if there would have been a White girl in the office that we would have had the same conversation.

She further mentioned that when a White female entered the room, they instantly "without skipping a beat" changed the way that they talked to each other. She mentioned to me that as a researcher I may call it "compromising our culture or our identity a little bit," but she said that minorities just learn to do it. "We just really learn to do it, and we get really good at it. Really, really good at it."

The way that Ann instantly changed the way she talked to the Black female soccer players and the White soccer player reflect the subconscious nature of identity negotiation (McAdam, 1999; Swann, 1987). She and many other racial minorities are able to shift into and out of identities without much thought or awareness. The only time that they become aware of this is when they receive information that suggests that others see them in an identity-discrepant manner (Swann & Bosson, in press). Moreover, these women's accounts exemplify the process of code or style switching, which refers to speakers that switch between language styles during interpersonal interactions (Baugh, 1983; Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003; Heath, 1990).

Similar to findings from Scott's (2000) study of Black women's language use, the women in this study switched from a more Standard American spoken speech to "talking like a Black woman" (p. 243). Scott contends that Black women's talk is

characterized by distinguishing features, such as the use of the words “girl” and “look,” and it includes lots of laughter, and enhanced nonverbal behaviors and gestures (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003). In these women’s examples, “girl” becomes a mark of solidarity when used to discuss how they interact with other Black women. As the athletic directors statements consistently illustrate, when they are with their “girls,” or with family and friends, a feeling of comfort or ease is evoked.

Transitioning from PWIs to HBCUs

The fourth significant finding that surfaced in the interviews was that the women felt that they had to make changes to their racial identity when they transitioned from working or attending school at a predominately white institution (PWI) to working at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). These two contexts were developed “within vastly different socio-historical conditions that contribute to each one having its own set of social requirements, values, and behavior patterns (Bell & Nkomo, 2001, p. 231). Thus when transitioning from one context to the other, many of these women experienced a “culture shock” because they were use to working in predominately White environments and living according to those standards. For instance Renee commented:

It is interesting, not surprising necessarily that I do have a level of comfort at PWI that I haven’t completely developed at an HBCU because professionally that is where I grew up and those are the rules that I know, that is the way of doing things I know and it fits who I am. Very male dominant, very get the job done, top down kind of authority that I think because I grew up around a bunch of boys that I can respond to. I know how to work in that. And at the end of the

day it got things done in way that I recognized how they were done, and not that we don't get things done we just get them done a little differently.

Renee's statements highlight perceived differences in how the athletic department in PWIs functioned compared to HBCUs, and she noted that she was use to the way that the athletic departments at PWIs ran. As a result of her background, however her Blackness was called into question when she transitioned to an HBCU. For example Renee relayed that an alumni said to her, "Are you really Black because you have been going to school and working with those people, so are you really Black?" Since Renee had gone to and worked at PWIs, it was believed that she had "lost" her Black racial identity.

Midnight was likewise questioned if she knew about Black issues since she went to a predominately White undergraduate school. Elina who also transitioned from a PWI to an HBCU as a coach relayed the challenges that she faced:

My team, of course, was all Black, and they really had a hard time with me because I was not going to lose my identity, and they were not going to lose theirs. Who does she think she is, coming in here gonna make us jump in the swimming pool and go swimming every day. What are we gonna do about our hair? You know, that's what -- and they were going, "You're not Black," you know, and "You just wanna be Black,"

Elina mentioned that she told her husband that they had made a mistake and that it was not a good fit because similar to Renee, she felt that she couldn't relate to her own people. She further commented that she and her family were not "trying to be White,"

and she acknowledged that Black people are different in different parts of the world. Leigh's transition to an HBCU occurred when she first entered college and similar to Elina and Renee, she was called "White girl." She recounted feeling confused because she could not understand what she was doing that made her not Black.

These women's stories draw attention to the concept of Blackness. According to this concept, being of a Black racial identity is no longer defined by the color of your skin (Dickerson, 2004; Lubiano, 1992). It is defined by how you act, how you dress, how you behave, how you talk, and if you don't fit the standards, your Blackness is revoked (see Appendix A for a discussion of acting White). As noted by Dickerson, the concept of Blackness places strictures and limitations upon "the growth and free will of those to whom it refers, it diminishes their sovereignty as rational and moral actors" (p. 3). In other words, for Black individuals, the standards of Blackness restrict their freedom to choose their own style of dress, political affiliations, beliefs, and political, intellectual, and social discourse (Dickerson).

To prove their "Blackness" the athletic directors employed different identity establishing strategies. For instance, Renee used verbal cues by bringing up her background and how she was raised in a predominately Black city. She would also mention names of Black people that she went to school with. Elina mentioned that in order to lessen the identity conflicts between her and her team, she adopted some of their ways and they adopted some of her ways. Thus her identity negotiation process entailed her conforming some of her behaviors to some of her players' expectations, but she also sought to maintain some of her identities by having the team conform to her

expectations. Thus, Elina signed what Jackson (1999; 2002) refers to as a quasi-completed cultural contract. Quasi-completed cultural contracts are identity negotiation contracts established during interpersonal interactions when individuals don't fully value each other's cultural worldview "because the effect they think that might have on maintaining their own worldview" (p. 48). Accordingly, the contract mitigates identity conflicts by all parties negotiating part of their identities.

In addition to adjusting mentally to their new environments, the athletic directors had to make changes to their identity in order to adjust to the degree of formality at HBCUs, concerning how people are addressed and how they dress. In terms of identity negotiation, these women had to make changes to their current racial identity to correspond with things associated with Blackness. To illustrate this, Renee commented that while working at a PWI everybody pretty much referred to their coworkers by their first names, but at her current institution "everyone is addressed by a title." In her words,

I understand historically where we come from with that in terms of respecting people in positions and how rare it was for some of us decades ago to be in certain positions, so that was a source of community pride and you know you use those titles. But it makes interesting transitions when you have not been doing that.

During the Jim Crow era in the South, many Whites felt it unnecessary to use formal titles when addressing Black Americans (Alexander, 2006; Sears & Connors, n.d.). For example, it was very common for store clerks to address black patrons by their first name during a transaction; whereas white patrons would be referred to by "Mr.," "Miss,"

"Mrs.," "Sir" or "Ma'am." Thus, as noted by Renee, the use of formal titles takes on high significance given that a lot of Black individuals previously were not privileged to such respect.

In addition to noting the formality used when addressing others, the women who made the transition from PWIs to HBCUs, also commented on how they had to change the manner in which they dressed. For example, Tiffany remarked that at Predominately White Institutions "they are going to look at more what you are saying, but I think that at an HBCU you are scrutinized by what you say, but also how you look." Comments made by Renee and Elina provide support for this contention. Renee stated that when she worked at PWIs she could put on something that she perceived to be dressy, but at an HBCU that would be considered dressed down. She further remarked, "Pretty much in athletics there is a joke about the uniform, which is a polo and some khakis. I mean you know any given day in an athletic department across America you will find a whole lot of polos and khakis. Not at State University [pseudonym used]."

Tiffany also noted that there were more pressures to dress nice at HBCUs. She mentioned that when she goes to NCAA regional seminars she does not dress up because she knows that people are going to be "laid back. Some are going to have gym shoes on...some are going to have jeans on." But she mentioned that when you go to an HBCU you will have a little of that, but for the most part, the people are going to be dressed up. Elina likewise said that when she worked at a PWI, they would go to work in "work clothes" but now that she is at an HBCU she is wearing "church clothes." To illustrate, she explained,

You know when you were growing up—and I don't know because you're very young—we had work clothes, we had school clothes, and we had church clothes, you know? You did not wear your church clothes to school. You didn't wear your school clothes to church, and your work clothes, you didn't wear those to school, and you certainly didn't wear your church clothes to work! When I got to Hall University [pseudonym used], they were wearing their church clothes to work! They were dressed up every day—heels, stockings, I mean, dressed up like they're going to church! I told my husband, I said, they're wearing their church clothes to work. Because they dress up at the basketball tournaments, they are dressed up, heels, suits, skirts, hats, mink coats, you know, and it's just the difference in the different lifestyles.

Renee's observance of Black individuals dressing up at basketball tournaments is similar to what occurred during the Negro Leagues. Individuals would dress up in their best clothes, sometimes their church clothes just to go to a baseball game (Robinson, 2000). Thus, similar to the use of formal titles, clothing and appearance also takes on high significance in the Black community and is a part of Black racial identity.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings in this case study underscores the importance of seeing Black women athletic directors as they see themselves or as they reveal themselves to others. The women in this study want to be understood as they understand themselves and as the totality of who they are, rather than be understood through imposed labels, criticisms, or solely by their gender and race. Framed as an instrumental case study, the purpose of this investigation was to understand how a select group of women, Black female athletic directors, define and negotiate their race, gender, and class identities. The findings of this investigation are specific to these women, but Black or other racial minority women in similar roles and in lower athletic administrative roles, such as associate or assistant athletic directors, coaches, or other athletic administrators may have similar experiences. Further, it is important to note that common experiences in the athletic departments may predispose these women to develop a distinctive group consciousness (Collins, 2000), but they does not guarantee that “such a consciousness will develop among all women nor that it will be articulated as such by the group” (p. 25). As such, caution should be taken when “transferring” or “generalizing” these results to other Black female athletic administrators. Moreover, Ann noted that a lot of the experiences that she is having in the athletic department, she did not experience when she was working in the public sector. As such, the findings of this study may not be transferable to Black females outside the athletic context.

Summary of Findings

Research question one sought to understand how Black female athletic directors describe their race, gender, and class identities. This investigation found that Black women athletic directors used two different denotations (i.e. African American and Black) to reference their racial identity, and race was the most salient identity because of their upbringings, childhood experiences, and dealings with racism. All of the women are heterosexual, but insufficient data did not allow me to fully understand how they define their gender identity. The interviews did however highlight the importance of personal characteristics, such as independent nature, self-sufficiency, and power, which were ascribed to their gender identity. Although these characteristics were ascribed to their race and gender identities, it is important to note that the intersection of multiple identities makes it difficult to clearly delineate which identities are responsible for which traits. Finally in describing their class status, the majority of the women came from a traditionally defined lower socioeconomic class background, but as a result of their athletic director appointment they now reside in the middle or upper middle economic class status.

In addressing the later two research questions: (a) how do Black female athletic directors negotiate their identities within and outside the athletic department, and (b), what factors are associated with their negotiation of their identities, Collins (2000) noted that Black women's lives consist of a series of negotiations that aim to reconcile how they see themselves with how other perceive them. This held true for the women in this investigation. Overall, the vast majority of the women felt that in order to become an

athletic director and to be successful once getting the position, they had to learn how to effectively negotiate their identities. Regardless of what this identity negotiation process was called—being a chameleon, being on and off stage, or being on or off guard—the reality is that it exists for these women. Ann summed this best up by noting,

And so the chameleon part of what we need to do I think as minority leaders, to me it is a reality. Leaders have done it well and gotten access to power and authority, but it is real and it exists. It would be a disservice to put in your research that it wasn't—it exists. We are making sure that they are comfortable.

Ann is correct in that it would be a disservice to not acknowledge that these women have to make adjustments to their identities. In their role as an athletic director having fluid, dynamic identities almost becomes a requisite in order to deal with stereotypes, deal with members of the opposite and same race or sex, and deal with family, friends and athletic department constituents.

First, when confronted with negative stereotypes, the athletic directors' accounts revealed that they employed various identity negotiation strategies. In establishing and maintaining their identity when faced with lesbian stereotypes, the athletic directors sought to verify their heterosexual identity by using direct verbalizations and eliciting self-verifying identity cues or behaviors that they felt would reinforce their heterosexism, such as having longer hair and wearing dresses or makeup. They likewise used direct verbalizations to establish their class identity or leadership status in the athletic department. However, when confronted with the *Sapphire* image, the women played down their racial and gender identities and sought to disconfirm the expectancy

that they were aggressive or domineering. This outcome, a self-disconfirming prophesy, occurs when a person behaves in a way that is counter to the expectation (Miller & Turnbull, 1986). Moreover, the act of silencing their voices also denotes silencing part of their race, gender, class, and personal identities.

Secondly as a result of their token status, they try to make sure that they are “perfect” in order to ward off any questions of their qualification. In doing so they however place more pressure and stress on themselves than others who don’t have to contend with being labeled a “quota hire.” Third, the women change their communication style when interacting between members of their same and opposite race and also between family and friends, and athletic department constituents. This shift in communication style is primarily motivated by their need to minimize tensions between their needs for agency, communion, and psychological coherence (Swann & Bosson, in press). Agency includes feelings of autonomy and competence in order to accomplish things. The need for communion reflects a need to belong or connect with other individuals, and the need for psychological coherence entails feelings of regularity, predictability, and control. Thus, the athletic directors meet their need for agency by negotiating a professional, self-reliant identity in the workplace, and at the same time they meet their need for communion by negotiating a more relaxed unguarded identity in their relationships with family and friends. In each context, they meet their need for coherence by seeking verification of the identity that they negotiated. Finally, some of the Black women athletic directors had to maintain or change their racial identity or their

“Blackness” when they transitioned from PWIs to HBCUs in order to fit in to their new setting.

In this investigation, I specifically identified an identity (i.e. race, gender, or class) that was negotiated, as these were the most salient identities that were being negotiated. However, it is important to note that other less salient identities were being negotiated as well. For instance, in addressing the *Mammy* stereotype, I posited that the women had to establish their class identity. Their perceived lower athletic department position is influenced by race, gender, and class assumptions about Black women, but in establishing their leadership status they primarily had to establish their class identity, not their race or gender identities.

In negotiating their identities, the Black women athletic directors chose to identify with multiple aspects of their self-concept and consistent with Reynolds and Pope’s (1991) conjecture they did so in a “segmented fashion,” according to the context and interactions. For example, when interacting with White athletic department constituents their Black racial identity became less salient; whereas for those that work at HBCUs their Black racial identity became more salient. Moreover, the findings of this study correspond with Jones and McEwen’s (2000) model of multiple dimensions of identity that posited that the saliency of identities is influence by the workplace environment, identities cannot be understood singularly, identities are renegotiated in different contexts, and individuals with similar social identities don’t attribute the same level of salience to their identities.

Additionally, this research supports the identity negotiation claims advanced by Swann and Bosson (in press); however, there is one area in which the findings of this study do not line up with identity negotiation assumptions. The researchers claimed that: people's initial identities and relationship goals should guide them toward certain environments and situations...For example, people's identities may guide them toward certain vocations, living environments, hobbies, and leisure activities, thereby ensuring that the experience they routinely encounter are ones that support and buttress their chronic identities" (p. 13).

This does not seem to be the case with these women. Their desire to advance professionally seemed to outweigh any potential identity conflicts that they might have expected. This was evidenced by the women who transitioned from PWIs to HBCUs and experienced "culture shock." Additionally, this was evidenced by Barbara and Elina who both claim to be introverted and shy, but pursued a profession that requires them to be engaging and outspoken. Thus, it would seem that professional goals would moderate the relationship between a person's identities and chosen vocation.

Contributions

A perusal of the empirical literature on identity negotiation reveals that a detailed discussion of the underlying mechanisms of identity negotiation is lacking (e. g. Abrams, 2003; Allison, 2008; Harris, 2007). These studies focus primarily on whose identity is being negotiated and what contextual factors contribute to identity negotiation and the outcomes, but fail to consider the psychological processes (i.e. self-verification or behavioral confirmation) that resulted in these outcomes. In contrast to those studies,

with the utilization of an identity negotiation framework, I sought to not only detail who negotiated their identity (i.e. Black women athletic directors) and what was negotiated (i.e. race, class, and gender identities), but to also explain how (i.e. identity negotiation strategies), when (i.e. contextual factors), and why (i.e. identity related needs) Black women athletic directors negotiate their identities. Moreover, the use of sociological, psychological, communication, and organizational literature to guide my investigation allowed for a greater understanding of how, when, and why the athletic directors negotiated their identities. The utilization of one perspective would have painted an incomplete picture. Thus, by shedding light on the struggles that Black female athletic directors face in the workplace, this work will contribute to feminist, identity, and organizational literature by examining the complex configuration of gender, race, class and leadership identities through the lived experiences of Black female athletic directors. Additionally, with the lack of information concerning intercollegiate athletic administrators, Black women, and race, class, and gender identities, the results of this study will add to the overall knowledge base of sports research.

Implications

As noted in the introduction, research of Black women athletic administrators has focused primarily on their experiences in the workplace, but an investigation of their identities and how they negotiate their identities in relation to these experiences is lacking in the literature. Therefore this study is significant as it addresses a void in the literature and it contributes to the overall knowledge base in sport research. However, the practical significance of this study became more evident as I listened to these women

relay their stories. As evident in the interviews, when these women became athletic directors, their profession became inculcated into their identities and it influenced all aspects of their lives. By understanding what identity related issues Black women face in the workforce, researchers and practitioners can begin to understand one factor that is contributing to the low percentage of Black female athletic administrators. To expound, a few of the athletic directors believe that some Black women consciously choose not to enter this profession because their athletic director role identity conflicts with their social and personal identities.

Identity research brings these identity conflicts to light not to discourage individuals from applying for leadership positions, but to let aspiring athletic administrators and administrators in leadership positions understand what identity conflicts these women are dealing with and how they can be lessened. In Ann's words, "we definitely need something where we can be real about what we do and how we behave." This investigation seeks to do exactly that—let individuals know what Black women athletic directors do and how they behave. For instance, this investigation revealed that many of athletic directors play the "mild and meek role" so that they will not be perceived as aggressive or bossy, but this is a part of their identity that needs to be understood. I agree with Ann when she noted that it is important for others to understand how "Black women talk" so that they will know, "That she is really not going to kick our ass, but that is how we talk...and she acts this way that is not a sign of disrespect. That is not a sign of aggressiveness. That is heartfelt comfort if she can be herself in the workplace and embrace that in the workplace." Thus to repeat for emphasis, instead of

these women having to play the “mild and meek role” other athletic department constituents need to understand that “an assertive speaker who conveys strongly held opinions and ideas is not necessarily one who wishes to exert undue control over the conversation, to silence others” (Houston, 2000, p. 16).

Identity research also allows individuals to make a more rational career decision, thus lessening the potential for higher turnover rates. This investigation revealed that success in leadership positions is correlated to identity compromise, as Ann mentioned, “it is okay if we say no we are not going to lose our cultural identity. We are going to bring this to the table ... and if we want to bring that then let’s consciously bring that into the workplace. But let’s just have a conversation about the consequences of bringing that into the workplace ... that is a real dialogue.” She further acknowledges that

We are not at a point where people are saying yeah we accept cultural differences. You mean that you have diverse people, but they need to act like you. We can be a different color, but we need to act like you. We have to do that. But that meaning that we have to do our own. We have to do that for ourselves, just to have a conversation so that you know that when you are going to interview for an associate athletic director job, somebody would have pulled your shirt tail and said this is what it is going to be like.

Hopefully this investigation allows athletic directors, senior level administrators concerned with recruiting Black female administrators, academics studying race and gender in organizations, and Black women aspiring to be athletic directors to know what

it is going to be like so that these identity conflicts can be lessened by all parties involved.

In an attempt to help facilitate this process, I offer a few lessons that I learned from this investigation. Hopefully others will take heed to these suggestions in order to help reduce identity related conflicts in the athletic departments.

1. Because of some preconceived notions about Black women being aggressive and domineering, some of these women are silencing their voices, thus limiting their potential to contribute fully to the organization. Efforts should be made to measure these women by their own standards, and not by whatever the stereotype is.
2. It is important to know that not all Black women in athletic departments are administrative assistants. Although the numbers are low, there are Black women who hold leadership positions, and they were not hired to take notes for others or to get coffee or water.
3. All Black people are not the same. We don't all speak Ebonics, and we don't all ascribe to the same level of "Blackness." Acceptance of differences from members inside and outside the Black race is needed.
4. Leadership success should not be correlated with assimilation and negation of identities. It is important for individuals in leadership positions, typically White men, to acknowledge this correlation so that they can self-evaluate their own held stereotypes, biases, and subjectivities that influence their hiring decisions.

Epilogue

I conclude this investigation with an experience that I had while conducting an interview with Erin. At the end of the interview, Erin asked me to stand up. I did and she said

All I did was put words out there. What did my words do? They brought an action. Words are extremely powerful. When you put your word out there, they send an assignment and it will get you a result. So if I ask you to stand up and you respected my words look what I got. So now, what I would encourage you to do is be careful of the words that you put out there, because when you put your words out there you send them on an assignment, and it is going to bring back to you what you called. And so I have decided that I am going to live by my words. I am going to be influenced by my words, but I have to govern the words that I use because my words can help me or they can destroy me. And a lot of us today are where we are because of the assignment that we put on ourselves, and a lot of times it comes from our thinking, which comes out in our words. And I just asked you to stand up. So if you respect the authority that is in me, or if someone respects the authority that is in you... your words will be able to bring that result to you. And that to me-that's where the rubber meets the road. the rubber meets the road. Your words set your destiny.

As reflected in Erin's quote, words are very important in liberating and guiding people (Collins, 1998; 2000). These women have trusted me with their words. And, in return, I have been given the opportunity to allow their words to be heard, their voices to be

heard. But opportunities come with responsibilities, and as Jeannie mentioned words can help you or destroy you. The words that were selected are meant to have an emancipative function and help others that currently work in this position, or aspire to these positions to understand what it means to be a head Black woman in charge. These words seek to increase cultural sensitivity by allowing others who work with Black women to recognize that these women have different and unique experiences and challenges. These words are also meant to encourage others to reject their preconceived notions or stereotypical assumptions about Black women and listen to their actual words. The challenge lies in trusting in their authority and using their knowledge for everyone's betterment.

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APPENDIX A

DEFINING “ACTING WHITE”

Not all scholars define “acting White” in precisely the same way. For example, Cook and Ludwig (1998) and Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey (1998) examined the existence of “acting White” using the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS), and both studies dismissed “acting white” as nothing more than an urban legend. Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey’s (1998) analysis showed that Blacks actually had more favorable attitudes toward school than Whites; whereas, Cook and Ludwig (1998) found little difference between the level of importance that Black and White adolescents placed on academic achievement.

Although these studies suggest that the “acting White” notion is not influential, other scholars have found circumstantial support for the legitimacy of this notion. Neal-Barnett (2001) questioned a group of students about what specific behaviors led to accusations of “acting white.” The students listed being enrolled in honors or advanced placement classes, speaking standard English, wearing clothes from the Gap or Abercrombie and Fitch (instead of Tommy Hilfiger or FUBU), and wearing shorts in the winter. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) likewise support the existence of the “acting white” notion, and suggested that the classification of excelling academically as an “acting white” behavior arose because White Americans traditionally refused to acknowledge that Black Americans were capable of intellectual achievement and because Black Americans bought into this notion and began to doubt their own intellectual ability. As a result, academic success began to be defined as white people’s prerogative, and Black

students began to consciously or unconsciously discourage their fellow peers from achieving academically.

The association of academic success with being White is so prevalent that U.S. Senator, Barack Obama addressed it in 2004's Democratic National Convention. He said, "Go into any inner city neighborhood, and folks will tell you that the government alone can't teach kids to learn. They know that parents have to parent, that children can't achieve unless we raise their expectation and turn off the television sets and eradicate the slander that says a Black youth with a book is acting white" (American RadioWorks, 2004). Similar thoughts were expressed by the Reverend Al Sharpton who commented that, "young men have become stigmatized by this image of young Black men as thugs. And young Black men have bought into it. Now studious young Black men aren't really Black, and the people who are fighting this imagery aren't keeping it real" (Kelly, 2007).

In addition to academic success being acquainted with "acting white," the expression is also used to refer to individuals that do not exhibit behaviors that others feel that Black Americans should exhibit. For example, the Reverend Jesse Jackson accused Barack Obama of "acting like he's white," because he felt that the senator had not spoken out on behalf of six Jena, Louisiana students charged in a racially charged brawl (Kehnemui-Liss, 2007).

APPENDIX B

BLACK WOMEN'S STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGIES

Many investigations of women use a feminist perspective, but this perspective has been criticized for its “inability, unwillingness, or complete lack of awareness of the need to focus on the conceptual systems that construct, legitimize, and normalize the issues of race and racism.” (Gordon, 1995, p.189-190). These sentiments were echoed by hooks (2000) who noted that, “white women who dominate feminist discourse today rarely question whether or not their perspective on women’s reality is true to the lived experiences of women as a collective group. Nor are they aware of the extent to which their perspective reflect race and class bias” (pp.77-78). The absence of Black women in feminist scholarship prompted scholars to develop theoretical discourses that considered the complexities of Black women’s lives (Taylor, 1998). What resulted was a proliferation of discourses ranging from Black feminism, Afrocentric feminism, womanism, and Africana womanism, and subsequent debates over the correct terminology to reference epistemologies concerning Black women.

For instance, the term Afrocentrism was typically used to reference traditions of Black consciousness and racial solidarity, but members of academia and the media criticized the term in the 1980s and 1990s (Collins, 2000). Some academics defined Afrocentrism as an ideology or dogma, and claimed that it “romanticizes the African and rural African-American past while ignoring social issues in the urban Black present; suppresses heterogeneity among Black people in search of an elusive racial solidarity; forwards a problematic definition of Blackness as an essential, innate quality of a

general ancestral connection to Africa; and remains male-centered and heterosexist” (Collins, 1998, p. 155). In respect to being male-centered and legitimatizing patriarchy, Cummings (1995) declares that “Afrocentrists continue to perpetrate a patriarchal vision of the African American community... This philosophical stance is counterproductive and divisive; it calls for separation and hierarchy instead of mutuality, health, and wholeness in the community” (p. 62). Therefore similar to traditional feminist perspectives, scholars have concluded that Afrocentrism renders the Black woman theoretically invisible, (Williams, 1995; Cummings, 1995).

The term “feminist” has likewise been maligned in an attempt to discredit a women’s empowerment movement (Collins, 2000). Walker (1983) coined the term “womanist” in objection of the term “feminist” to reflect the differential and unique experiences that Black women face as opposed to White women. However, her classical definition of womanist is inclusive of Black feminists or feminists of color, and she broadly defined a womanist as “a woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women’s culture, women’s emotional flexibility, and women’s strengths. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally universalist” (Walker, 1983, pp. xi-xii). Thus, Walker (1983) does not make a distinction between the terms. Similarly Omolaade (1994) points out, that Black feminism is sometimes referred to as womanism because “both are concerned with struggles against sexism and racism by Black women

who are themselves part of the Black community's efforts to achieve equity and liberty (xx).

Other womanists have sought to sever the feminist-womanist connection. Most notable is Hudson-Weems (1993) who views feminism as a White theory that was designed to meet the needs of White women. Alexander-Floyd and Simien (2006) assert that Hudson-Weems characterization of feminism as a White theory serves to “disqualify it as a legitimate political theory for Black women” and it serves to undermine the contributions that Black feminists have made in exposing the racism of White feminists (p. 4). Further, Hudson-Weems (1993) sought to distinguish her theory of womanism from Black feminist theory by applying it to all women of African descent. In doing so, she coined the term “Africana Womanism” in 1987 and asserted the difference between Africana womanist and Black feminist is the prioritization of racism, classism, and sexism. By positioning race and class before gender, Africana womanism distinguishes itself from other antisexist political theories (Alexander-Floyd & Simien).

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. In this investigation, I am seeking to understand how you negotiate your race, gender, and class identities as a leader within and outside the athletic department.
How do you define the term identity?
2. How would you describe your racial, gender, and class identities and their importance to you?
3. How important is being an athletic director to your identity?
4. How do your identities (race, gender, class) influence your ability to work effectively and exert influence in the athletic department?
5. Let's now discuss your different identities and their salience and level of importance. Are some more important than others. Why and why not? When?
Explain
6. In thinking about how you have identified yourself thus far. Let's discuss some of the potential benefits and detriments that are associated with your race, class, and gender identities in relation to your position as an athletic director.
7. What are the stereotypes of Black women that you are aware of, and how have these stereotypes affected you?
8. Do you feel that you have had to change who you are in different contexts when dealing with other in-group and out-group members.
9. Have you ever felt that you needed to alter your behavior in order to be accepted or fit into different contexts?

APPENDIX D

PERSONAL AND ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

1. Name: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Years of intercollegiate athletic experience: _____
4. Years as an athletic director: _____
5. Current athletic department tenure: _____
6. Marital status: Never married Married Divorce or separated Widowed
7. Children: No Yes
8. Education
B.A./B.S. degree Some graduate school M.A./M.S. degree PhD
J.D.
9. Undergraduate degree:
Liberal arts Business Education Other _____
10. Graduate degree
Liberal arts Business Education Other _____
11. Former student athlete: Yes No
12. Prior collegiate positions:
13. Status: PWI HBCU
NCAA NAIA
14. Division: I II III A AA AAA
15. Number of full-time employees: _____
16. Sex demographics of athletic department: Percent females: _____ Percent males: _____
17. Racial demographics of athletic department
Percent White: _____ Percent Black: _____
Percent Hispanic/Latino(a): _____ Percent Asian: _____ Percent Other: _____
18. Dominant Sex of Alumni: Male Female
19. Dominant Race of Alumni:
White Black Hispanic/Latino(a) Asian Other
20. Sex demographics of Student Athletes: Percent females: _____ Percent males: _____
21. Racial demographics of Student Athletes:
Percent White: _____ Percent Black: _____
Percent Hispanic/Latino(a): _____ Percent Asian: _____ Percent Other: _____

22. Dominant Sex of Fans: Male Female

23. Dominant Race of Fans:

White BlackHispanic/Latino(a) AsianOther

APPENDIX E

LETTER TO CO-RESEARCHERS

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation research on the experience of African American female athletic directors. I value the unique contribution that you can make to my study and I am excited about the possibility of your participation in it. The purpose of this letter is to reiterate some of the things we have already discussed and to secure your signature on the participation-release form that you will find attached.

The research model I am using is a qualitative one through which I am seeking comprehensive depictions or description of your experience. Through your participation as a co-researcher, I hope to understand the experiences of African American female athletic directors. You will be asked to recall specific episodes, situations, or events that you have experienced in the workplace. I am seeking vivid, accurate, and comprehensive portrayals of what these experiences were like for you: your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, as well as situations, events, places, and people connected with your experience.

I value your participation and thank you for the commitment of time, energy, and effort. If you have any further questions before signing the consent form, I can be reached at the following correspondence.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline McDowell

Ms. Jacqueline McDowell, Principal Investigator

Texas A&M University

Department of Health and Kinesiology

TAMU 4243

College Station, TX 77843

979-862-1703

jmcdowell@hlkn.tamu.edu

APPENDIX F
CONSENT FORM

Head Black Female in Charge: An Investigation of Black female athletic directors' negotiation of their gender, race, and leadership identities.

You have been asked to participate in a research study of the experiences of African American female athletic directors. The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of African American athletic directors by exploring your interpretation of the intersection of your race, sex, and leadership identities. All African American female athletic directors have been asked to participate in this study.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be sent a series of questions pertaining to your experiences in the athletic department. Upon receipt of the interview questions, you and I will schedule a face to face interview in your location of choice. The interview will be audio recorded with your consent. If you do not consent to be recorded, I will manually take notes of the interview. This interview will take between approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour in length. No risks are likely to occur from participating in this study. There are no anticipated direct benefits to you for participating; however, your participation in the study will benefit other African-American women, other minority women who seek these positions, or for those who seek minority women for these positions.

All data will be dealt with confidentially. In order to ensure confidentiality, your name will not be recorded in the interview or recorded on any documents. A pseudonym will be used in exchange of your name and the name of any persons that are stated in the

interview. Only me, the primary investigator, will know the true identity of the people. Additionally in the write up, I will leave out any descriptors that would indicate your identity.

Research records will be stored securely and only Jacqueline McDowell, the primary investigator, and three professors, George Cunningham, John Singer and Kimberly Brown will have access to the records. Jacqueline McDowell will be the only one that will have access to the audio tapes, which will be erased within 12 months. If you decided to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. You can contact Jacqueline McDowell at jmcdowell@hlkn.tamu.edu with any questions about this study.

This research study had been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted through Ms. Melissa McIlhaney, IRB Program Coordinator, Office of Research Compliance, (979) 458 -4067, mcilhaney@tamu.edu.

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to participate in the study.

- I consent to be audio taped
- I do *not* consent to be audio taped

Signature of Participant: _____

Date:

VITA

- Name: Jacqueline McDowell
- Address: Dept. of Health and Kinesiology, Texas A&M University, TAMU
4243, College Station, TX 77843-4243
- Email Address: jmcdowell@hlkn.tamu.edu
- Education: B.S., Kinesiology, Texas A&M University, 1999
M.S., Kinesiology, Texas A&M University, 2005
- Journal Articles: McDowell, J., & Cunningham, G. (2007). The Prevalence of Occupational Segregation in Athletic Administrative Positions. *International Journal of Sport Management*, 245-262.
- Sosa, J. & McDowell, J. (in press). Fan Perceptions of Latino Baseball Players and its Influence on Overall Fan Satisfaction of Major League Baseball. *NINE: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture*
- McDowell, J., & Cunningham, G. (in press). Aggression on the field: The influence of Gender Role Attitudes and Sex of Coach and Player on Individuals' Perceptions of the Appropriateness of Aggression. *Sex Roles*.
- Selected: McDowell, J. (2007, October). *Football, It's a Man's Game: An Exploration of Gendered Discourse in The Gender Bowl*. North American Society of the Sociology of Sport 2007 Conference, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- Presentations McDowell, J. (2007, June). *The supply and demand side of occupational segregation: The case of an intercollegiate athletic department*. North American Society for Sport Management 2007 Conference, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
- McDowell, J. (2006, June). *The Prevalence of Occupational Segregation in Athletic Administrative Positions*. North American Society for Sport Management 2006 Conference, Kansas City, Missouri.
- Selected Grant: Pickney, H., Cook, K., McDowell, J. (Spring 2007). Black Aggies' Welcome Week. Grant awarded by the Minority Recruitment and Retention Leadership Team, Texas A&M University. \$7000.