

University of Massachusetts Amherst

ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst

Doctoral Dissertations

Dissertations and Theses

Spring August 2014

"Give Light and People Will Find a Way": Black Women College Student Leadership Experiences with Oppression at Predominantly White Institutions

Andrea D. Domingue

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_2



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), [Other Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Student Counseling and Personnel Services Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Domingue, Andrea D., "Give Light and People Will Find a Way": Black Women College Student Leadership Experiences with Oppression at Predominantly White Institutions" (2014). *Doctoral Dissertations*. 73.
<https://doi.org/10.7275/66m4-6076> https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_2/73

This Open Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Dissertations and Theses at ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

“Give Light and People Will Find a Way”: Black Women College Student Leadership
Experiences with Oppression at Predominantly White Institutions

A Dissertation Presented

by

ANDREA D. DOMINGUE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

MAY 2014

College of Education

Social Justice Education

© Copyright Andrea D. Domingue 2014

All Rights Reserved

“Give Light and People Will Find a Way”: Black Women College Student Leadership

Experiences with Oppression at Predominantly White Institutions

A Dissertation Presented

by

ANDREA D. DOMINGUE

Approved as to style and content by:

Maurianne Adams, Chair

Alexandrina Deschamps, Member

Joseph Berger, Member

Christine McCormick, Dean
College of Education

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to express deep gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Maurianne Adams. Her exceptional leadership was vital in refining the vision of my work, facilitated a rigorous and efficient process, and offered generous support and encouragement. I also would like to thank Dr. Alexandrina Deschamps and Dr. Joe Berger, my committee members, whose genuine excitement and critical insights enhanced the quality of my research.

I am also in deep gratitude to my dearest friends and family. Words cannot adequately express how sincerely appreciative I am for each of you who cared for me throughout my doctoral process and believed in me when I needed it most: Donique McIntosh, Shuli and Betsy Archer, Dave and Maddy Neely, Christopher Hughbanks, Brandi Douglas, Shane Whalley, Rachel Jessica Daniel, Staci Gunner, and Kelly Simon. I would like to thank Prince for his unquestionable companionship.

Successful completion of this dissertation is also attributed to my commitment to my health and wellness. A special thank you to Pata Suyemoto and Joe Mai for helping me to fall in love with cycling and supporting my journey in the sport. I would also like to thank the instructors and members of Pioneer Valley Crossfit who demonstrated the power of community and showed me that no obstacle is too great to overcome. Lastly, a thank you to the countless community members in Western Massachusetts who checked in about my progress and provided me with spiritual, emotional, and physical wellness over the years.

I also would like to thank my colleagues in the UMass Social Justice Education concentration for their mentorship, expertise, resources, and insights that supported my work. A few in particular stand out: Ximena Zuniga as an advisor who guided the early

stages of my work; My cohort of doctoral student colleagues who I worked alongside to finish the dissertation—Keri DeJong, Larissa Hopkins, Molly Keehn, Eric Hamako, Taj Smith, Chase Catalano, Maru Gonzalez, and Elaine Brigham; lastly, Kyle Oldham, Marcella Runell Hall, Tee Williams, Jen Daigle-Matos, Rani Varghese, Mike Funk, and Tanya Williams for their mentorship and guidance.

I am deeply grateful for the women at Riverland University who entrusted me with their powerful and honest stories that made this study possible.

I would also like to acknowledge Nancy Jean Tubbs and Elaine Whitlock as my editors, Lynn Riedesel and Travis Davis as my transcribers and Lorena Holguin and Marsha Philitas as my peer reviewers.

Lastly and most importantly, I dedicate this work to my late parents, Lois M. Domingue and Claude J. Domingue. Both parents were my earliest role models and emphasized that I lead with resiliency, authenticity, and compassion. Their love and encouragement will always nurture my leadership.

ABSTRACT

“GIVE LIGHT AND PEOPLE WILL FIND A WAY”: BLACK WOMEN COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES WITH OPPRESSION AT PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

MAY 2014

ANDREA D. DOMINGUE, B.A., THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

M. A., NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Ed.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Emerita Maurianne Adams

Black women college students have a collective history of marginalization and discrimination within systems of higher education (Brazzell, 1996; Turner, 2008). Unlike their White women and Black men counterparts, these women have unique social location in their racial and gender identity where they experience multiple types of oppression from dominant groups and the target groups they are socially assigned (Collins, 2000; Harris-Perry, 2011). While research argues that leadership development is vital to the college experience as an opportunity to empower and engage students in social change, often the implementation of these models fails to consider how racial and gender identity of students influence leadership development or student peer interactions (Byrd, 2009; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000).

The exploratory study examines the specific leadership experiences of Black women undergraduate and graduate students at a predominantly White institution. The purpose of this study was to identify the challenges they experience expressing leadership and to learn the sources that nurture Black women's college student leadership. Drawing from a demographic questionnaire and a series of individual interviews, I explore the

following research questions: (1) In what ways do Black women college student leaders experience oppression—discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes and internalization—when exercising their leadership? and (2) What social factors nurture and sustain Black women college student leaders when faced with instances of oppression?

Black women college student leaders reported community as a motivation to lead and described challenges navigating racial demographics and hostile campus climates as they entered these roles. Additional challenges with oppression included stereotypes, microaggressions, racialized and gendered self-presentation expectations, along with negotiating voice and silencing. Social factors as sources of nourishment reflected historical traditions of Black women's leadership; specifically through mothering and mentoring as well as through the formation of social networks and allyship among White peers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Study	1
Purpose of the Study	3
Significance of the Study.....	4
Research Questions	7
Key Concepts and Terms.....	9
Organization of the Study	12
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	13
Emergence of College Student Leadership Development	13
Masternarratives of College Student Leadership.....	15
Counternarratives of College Student Leadership	17
Contemporary College Student Leadership	20
Theory and Conceptual Frameworks of College Student Leadership	24
Race, Gender, and College Student Leadership	26
Black Women’s Leadership Traditions	31
Social Construction of Black Families and Community.....	33
Slave Women’s Labor and (Un)Womanhood	34
Women-Centered Networks and Mothering as a Site of Leadership	38
Contemporary Black Women’s Leadership and College Students	42

3	METHODOLOGY	47
	Research Questions	47
	Overall Design and Rationale	48
	Site of Population Selection.....	50
	Participant Selection Criteria	51
	Participant Recruitment Methods.....	53
	Data Sources	54
	Demographic Questionnaire	54
	Interviews	55
	Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations	59
	Data Analysis	59
	Demographic Questionnaire	59
	Interviews	60
	Trustworthiness	61
	Researcher Profile	62
	Limitations	64
4	BLACK WOMEN COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERS' EXPERIENCES WITH OPPRESSION	65
	Description of the Sample.....	66
	Individual Participant Profiles	69
	Undergraduate Participants	70
	Alexandra.....	70
	Geidy	70
	Harmony	71
	Janine	72
	Kim.....	73
	Roxanne	73
	Graduate Participants	74
	Alice	74
	Charlotte	75
	Dawn.....	75
	Lorraine.....	76
	Morgan.....	77

	Nicky	78
	Community as Motivation to Lead.....	79
	Enhance Existing Community Spaces	80
	Sustaining Community Spaces	82
	Creating New Community Spaces	84
	Challenges upon Entry into College Leadership.....	85
	Undergraduate Student Entry	86
	Graduate Student Entry	89
	Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression	93
	Stereotypes	94
	Angry Black Woman.....	95
	Black Mama.....	96
	Jezebel	97
	Strong Black Woman	98
	Exceptional or Educated Black Woman.....	99
	Microaggressions	101
	Racialized and Gendered Self-Presentation Expectations	104
	Voicing and Silencing	108
5	BLACK WOMEN COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERS' NEGOTIATIONS WITH OPPRESSION	112
	Responses to Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression	112
	Non-Response Response	113
	Shifting	116
	Humor	118
	Selectivity of Leadership.....	120
	Speaking Up	123
	Exiting Leadership	126
	Nurturing Black Women College Student Leadership	129
	Mothering	130
	Teachers and Educational Leaders	135
	History Traditions of Black Women Leaders.....	139
	Women- and People of Color-Centered Networks.....	145
	White Allyship.....	149

Mentoring	152
6 DISCUSSION	158
Introduction.....	158
Research Questions	158
Experiences with Oppression While Leading	158
Community as Motivation to Lead.....	159
Challenges upon Entry into College Student Leadership	160
Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression	163
Sources of Nourishment Through Oppression.....	169
Black Women’s Historical Traditions of Leadership as Nourishment.....	169
White Allyship as Nourishment	175
Making the Connection: A Proposed Model of Black Women College Student Leadership Experiences with Oppression	176
Community as Motivation to Lead and Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership	178
Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership and Interpersonal Interaction with Oppression	179
Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression and Response to Oppression	181
Response to Oppression and Community as Motivation to Lead Nurturing Leadership.....	182
Nurturing Leadership	183
7 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	186
Implications for Future Research	186
Implications for Future Student Affairs Practice	192
APPENDICES	
A PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT SCRIPT	195
B CONSENT FORM	199
C DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE	205
D INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	211

E NOT ELIGIBLE FOR PARTICIPATION EMAIL.....	213
REFERENCES	214

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Demographic Information—Academic Background	68
2 Demographic Information—Social Identity Categories	69

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Community as Motivation to Lead Relationship to Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership.....	178
2 Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership Relationship to Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression	179
3 Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression Relationship to Responding to Oppression.....	180
4 Responding to Oppression and Community as Motivation to Lead	182
5 Relationship of Nourishment Sources to Community Motivation, Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership, Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression, and Response to Oppression	183

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

There is a long, historical legacy in the US of higher education institutions playing a vital role in developing knowledge, skills, and traits among its students to encourage civic engagement and leadership beyond degree attainment (Posner, 2008; Schneider, 2000). Further, there are arguments that higher education's commitment to leadership also draws its approaches and models primarily from the business discipline in the process by which educational institutions were invested in developing trained leaders and members of an effective and profitable workforce (Rost, 1991). Contemporary universities and colleges have continued this commitment as they have created thousands of extracurricular activities and academic courses to foster leadership development among students across the country (Clark, 2001). In addition, higher education scholars have also created leadership theories and models to better inform practitioners who implement these programs to better support student leadership development. Despite these trends of program and theory development, there is little research or discussion of how issues of social identities, such as race and gender influence leadership experiences, even as educational institutions as well as the US overall become racially and ethnically more diverse (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000).

There are contemporary scholars who have begun to critique the racial- and class-dominance and the patriarchal social norms of US leadership theory and models (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). As a critique, Rost (1991) attributes the still prevailing majoritarian phenomenon to positivist and industrialist paradigms embedded in early theories that

characterized leadership as individualistic, quantifiable, predictive, management-oriented, and goal driven. These paradigms have been sustained through a lucrative market of books, seminars, and programs created with the intention of offering both business administrations and higher education institutions strategies to develop effective leaders and to enhance organizational productivity (Rost, 1991). As a result, a majoritarian master narrative of leadership has been surfaced by scholars critical of that tradition:

The images of leadership—indeed, the very words leader and leadership—have been culturally framed to equate effective leadership with authoritarian control imposed by those at the apex of a hierarchy. A smooth and seamless ideological manipulation has ensured that those we automatically think of as leaders are precisely the people who represent interest of the status quo: males from upper-class families who function as protectors of wealth and privilege. (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009, p. 2)

Although Preskill and Brookfield (2009) do not refer to race, they do imply that the majoritarian master narrative on leadership reflects a historical tradition of White supremacy, noting that historically, socially, and institutionally White supremacy has characterized the nation's wealth, privilege, and power (Collins, 2000; hooks, 1981; Mills, 2007). This background leads to the question: of how this master narrative about leadership influences the experiences of leaders who are not White, male, or from class privilege. Further, how can leadership be reconceptualized through the incorporation of perspectives from different social locations, namely that of Black women?

The possibilities of leadership for Black women college students reflect the history of marginalization and discrimination within American society at large as well as in systems of higher education (Brazzell, 1996; Nuss, 1996; Turner, 2008). Unlike their White female or Black male counterparts, Black women generally share a unique social standpoint in which they experience multiple types of oppression from both the dominant

culture and from the target groups in which they are socially assigned (Collins, 2000; hooks, 1981). Hine and Thompson (1998) offer a perspective on the experiences of Black women within the context of the United States:

It is tempting to think that Black women are somehow “naturally” stronger and wiser than the rest of the population, that they are born with more courage and resourcefulness and, perhaps, compassion. But that’s no more true than any other stereotype. The values that have helped Black women survive are entirely communicable. And at a time when the problems of our society seem insoluble and the obstacles to peace and freedom insurmountable, all Americans have a great deal to learn from the history of Black women in America. (p. 308)

Specifically, the authors argue that this stereotype is responsible for the impression of Black women’s resiliency despite interpersonal, societal, and institutional challenges. Whether or not this is the actual experience of Black women is debatable, and perhaps situational. However, what the authors do highlight are the ways Black women experiences have not been valued or acknowledged within society. It is my position that this shortcoming is reflected by the limitations of leadership theory and practices within higher education. While a number of models and theories argue that leadership development is vital to the college experience and offer the opportunity to empower and engage students in social change, actual leadership programs and models fail to consider how racial and gender identity of students influence leadership development or student peer interactions (Byrd, 2009; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation study is to explore the experiences of Black women college students at a predominantly White institution who are involved in some type of leadership. While there may be shared racial experiences with Black male

students and shared gendered experiences with White women students, Black women hold a unique social location within systems of racism and sexism. I focus on the ways race and gender affect Black women's experiences of leadership access, perspectives, and practices among Black women college students, a population that experiences both race-based and gender-based oppression, often simultaneously. The study explores the perspectives Black women college students hold about leadership in general as well as their understanding of themselves as leaders. This study presents Black women college students' personal accounts of their experiences as the evidence for my identifying collective themes that describe (1) the sources that nurture their leadership, (2) the challenges they experience in expressing leadership, and (3) their ways of navigating challenges in demonstrating their leadership.

Significance of Study

This study offers valuable contributions to existing literature on college student leadership as well as informing the practice of student affairs administrators. While there is some research on leadership that examines experiences of race and gender, there are few studies that specifically address the experiences of Black women college students. First, a majority of research on Black women's leadership that does exist within the context of higher education often focuses on faculty and senior level administrative positions in student affairs; either collapsing or excluding college student experiences (Henry, 2010). These studies tend to explore issues of employment attainment and retention as well as the (hostile) climates where these women must negotiate instances of

racial microaggressions, sexual harassment, isolation, and discrimination (Benjamin 1997; Gregory, 2001; Jean-Marie, 2006; Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Simpson, 2001).

Literature with attention on college student leadership tends to fall into the following thematic categories: 1) student leadership and gender, 2) comparative studies between Black and White students' leadership and 3) Black student leadership. The central question driving research on leadership and gender is whether there is a difference between the way men and women approach leadership. While there are numerous studies that both support and counter the existence of there being gendered leadership, some scholars have opted to focus on the structural and interpersonal barriers women encounter (sexism) that construct challenges in accessing positions and resources (Ely & Rhode, 2010).

A second major and emerging theme in the literature consists of studies that compare White and Black student leadership. Most noteworthy is Kezar and Moriarty (2000) who suggest that male students, regardless of race, entered college and continued to hold high self-perceptions of their leadership ability compared with women, regardless of race. Focusing on leadership development programs, their findings also suggest that these programs disproportionately benefited White men and had little impact on the leadership development of Black women.

Lastly, there is a literature that explores the experiences of Black student leadership. Mitchell and Dell (1992) conducted a quantitative study on the relationship between Black racial identity levels and participation in cultural and non-cultural student organizations. Their study found that there was a relationship between all levels of saliency of racial identity with that of cultural student organizational involvement; in

other words, the more conscious students were of their Black identity, the more likely they were to be involved in cultural organizations. In regards to non-cultural organizations, while high saliency of racial identity also had a relationship with participation in these organizations, the results were not significant for lower stages of consciousness (Mitchell & Dell, 1992).

It is important to note that each of these approaches assumes a universal or monolithic approach implied by the single strand isolated for research. In other words, gendered leadership research often views women universally with little or no attention to race or ethnicity. Studies that seek to compare leadership experiences between White students and Black students treat each racial group monolithically without attention to gender. Lastly, Black student leadership studies also view this racial group without discussion of gender. While a focus on race and gender within higher education leadership research offers some indication of how race and gender identity may combine to influence leadership experiences, there has been little attempt at intersectional research. It is my position that higher education research on Black women's leadership must be approached through a Black feminist and intersectional lens.

A goal of this study has been not only to give voice to the underrepresented student population of Black women but also to offer potential implications for student affairs practitioners to reexamine leadership development programs to better meet the needs of this group. The generally accepted role of student affairs practitioners is to offer guidance and to develop resources for all students and to work to create a campus learning environment holistically supportive of student development in the hopes of optimal academic success (Nuss, 1996). Failing to address the specific needs of Black

women college students not only influences their leadership participation but also may contribute to personal and academic difficulties (Banks, 2009; Constantine & Greer, 2003).

Despite elimination of discriminatory admission policies and diversity recruitment efforts, Black women remain an underrepresented group at predominantly White colleges and universities (Banks, 2009; Turner, 2008; Winkle-Wagner, 2009). Studies indicate that Black women college students at predominantly White institutions face multiple challenges on campus, such as difficulty creating social support networks, physical and mental wellness, family obligations, employment, and navigating extracurricular options (Rosales & Person, 2003). In addition, Black women college students experience instances of racism and sexism within the classroom and extracurricular activities (Banks, 2009). Racial microaggression, sexual harassment, discrimination obtaining leadership positions, combating negative stereotypes, and having difficulty collaborating across different social identities are among a few of the challenges Black women face on campus (Byrd, 2009). It is my argument that these experiences, taken together as a unified whole, have significant impacts on the access and the experiences of Black college women leaders.

Research Questions

The research questions for the study center on the reported experiences of Black women college students who identify as leaders and are involved in some form of collegiate leadership. After reviewing various bodies of literature focusing on contemporary college student leadership as well as literature focusing on Black women's

leadership within and outside the context of higher education, I identified the following questions for conducting an in-depth exploration of Black women college student leadership at one predominantly White institution:

1. In what ways do Black women college student leaders experience oppression—discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes, and internalization—when exercising their leadership?
2. What social factors nurture and sustain Black women college student leaders when faced with instances of oppression?

These research questions are derived from multiple sources in the literature that argue that there has been a historical and continued lack of recognition of Black women leadership within the context of higher education (Bower & Wolverton, 2009; Benjamin, 1997; Evans, 2007; Grimes, 2005; Hull, Bell, & Smith, 1982). The ways in which Black women have had access to, define, and practice leadership at colleges and universities have been based upon their social location within multiple systems of oppression where widely accepted notions of leadership do not fully capture their experiences.

Questions 1 and 2 are based upon Black feminist literature that discusses the specific social contexts in which Black women have had agency in leadership despite oppressive barriers. The Black Church, teaching, club movement, and sororities are all spaces that have historically nurtured Black women's organizational and community leadership through the creation of women-centered groups, mothering, and mentorship (Collins, 2000). Consequently, these social contexts have also been sites where Black women were confronted with patriarchy, White supremacy, stereotyping, and discrimination. These literatures are explored in Chapter 2 of the dissertation.

Key Concepts and Terms

In addition to the research questions posed, I feel that it is necessary to offer definitions of key terms that will be used in this study. These terms include: Black, woman, college student, leadership, and leader.

- Black: This term refers to persons who identify as having a collective racialized experience within the United States based upon their perceived African ancestry. This term will include persons of a variety of ethnicities, such as African American, Caribbean, continental Africa, etc. This will be discussed in more depth in the Participant Selection Criterion section of this proposal.
- Woman: This term refers to persons who identify as having a collective sexualized or gendered experience as a woman. This term will include cisgender woman, one who was assigned as female at birth and identifies as female, as well as trans* woman, or one who may have not been assigned as female at birth but identifies as such. This will be discussed in more depth in the Participant Selection Criterion section. It is also important to note that throughout this study, I am specifically using the term woman and not female. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, there is a historical legacy of racial stereotypes and marginalization that has associated womanhood with whiteness. Exclusively and intentionally using the phrase “Black women” offers some visibility and interrupts the notion of otherness.

- College Student: This term refers to persons who are matriculated at the undergraduate or graduate level at a college or university. When appropriate, I will use undergraduate student or graduate student to indicate specific experiences based upon these levels.

- Leadership: Throughout this study I will be drawing from Northouse's (2009) definition which states: "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 3). While seemingly simplistic, this definition is actually quite complex, and I find it especially useful in understanding the phenomenon of leadership in a range of situations or contexts. To better understand leadership, it is useful to discuss specific sections of this definition.
 - Process refers to an ongoing interaction between leaders and others rather than a specific, one-time occurrence

 - Influence refers to how a leader affects others. This effect can refer to motivation to perform tasks, actions, or roles as well as impact one's opinions or ideological beliefs. Northouse argues that if influence is absent, leadership does not exist.

 - Groups: Leadership happens beyond the beliefs, actions, behaviors of an individual person and requires interactions with others. Northouse shows

the ways in which an individual influences others in a group, working toward a common purpose. These groups can range from being task-oriented (program/event planning) to a larger scale as in social or organizational change. What is key here is that leadership cannot take place in the absence of other people. A person or persons must be present to be influenced, moved or impacted in order for leadership to occur.

- Common Goals: People come together to achieve a “mutual purpose.” I think one thing to stress in this area is that “common” refers to shared, but need not mean “exact,” in that some group members and even leaders may vary in the exact specific goal they want to work toward but the goal should be collective enough that there is a reason to work together. Northouse speaks of working toward a common good and working with a shared ethic.

- Leader: There are multiple definitions of this term. First, leader describes a role, duty, or position one has within a context of a group who share collective goals. This role can exist within an intact or loosely affiliated group and may or may not be signified by a title. Second, drawing from the Leadership Identity Development Model (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella & Osteen, 2005), the term *leader* also describes a personal identity taken on by an individual. In other words, what perspective an individual has about oneself with the context of leadership.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 offers an introduction to the study and includes the purpose and significance of the study. Chapter 2 is a literature review of key themes in the historical and contemporary emergence of college student leadership, focusing how these definitions and models relate to the experiences of Black women college student leaders. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the study's research methodology and includes theoretical approaches and frameworks, data collection, management, and analysis. Data from the demographic questionnaire and individual interviews will be described in Chapters 4 and 5. Lastly, Chapter 6 gives a summary and discussion of the findings while Chapter 7 offers implications for both future research and student affairs practice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

While there is little research with explicit attention to Black women's college student leadership, the examination of three bodies of literature will offer insights on factors shaping their experiences. These bodies of literature include: 1) the emergence of college student leadership theory, 2) historical traditions of Black women's leadership, and 3) contemporary literature on Black college women's participation within predominantly White institutions. What follows is an overview of each body of literature. It is important to note that while these overviews will be discussed as distinct sections, these bodies are interrelated, as they each have been shaped by intersectional systems of racism, sexism, and classism. This section concludes with a discussion of three thematic frameworks argued to collectively exist within Black women's leadership.

Emergence of College Student Leadership Development

Despite the historical tradition of higher education's role in facilitating leadership among college students, actual research and programmatic attention to this development is a relatively new phenomenon (Freeman & Goldin, 2008). Historical traditions of college student leadership emerged as a result of two factors: early goals of colonial college institutions and perspectives of what out-of-classroom activities should be included within student life. An early goal of United States higher education institutions had been (until the mid-20th century and with the exception of land grant institutions) to prepare the children of socially elite families for leadership positions within politics, religion, and businesses (Thelin, 1996). During this early period, leadership concepts and

practices were derived from these professional fields. While it was the intent for students to develop skills and competencies to be successful in future political, religious, and business careers, there was little emphasis on leadership development of college students during their tenure on campus (Lucas, 1994; Rhoads, 2000). This lack of attention to on-campus student leadership was due, in part, to the paternalistic perspectives faculty and administrators held about student participation and discouragement of out-of-classroom activities.

Extracurricular activities and student leadership opportunities were rare on campuses from the colonial period through the mid-20th century. Campuses were in large part run by faculty members who often engaged with students through an *in loco parentis* approach (Lucas, 1994). Students were viewed as juvenile and in significant need of guidance where faculty had the responsibility for maintaining order among students and did so in highly paternal and authoritative means (Thelin, 1996). Out-of-classroom activities only existed through faculty-sanctioned activities, as they were viewed as distractions to learning and faculty feared these spaces would encourage disobedience and disruption within the academic environment.

The 1700s and 1800s marked a period where students began to take action to expand their out-of-classroom activities as well as a time university administrations slowly began to shift their perspective on these activities (Chambers & Phelps, 1993; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998). Early student-initiated activities, such as debate, literary, and eating clubs, typically began in secrecy and, if visible, would receive little support or approval from university administration. After some observation and time to assess the value of such groups, faculty and administrators would either officially

institute groups into campus life or explicitly forbid them from existing (Lucas, 1994). Shortly after these clubs became incorporated into campuses, activities, such as Greek organizations, sports, and performance-based activities, such as theater and orchestra, also became widely established activities within institutions (Thelin, 1996). Those activities that were approved tended to coincide with college and university's desired goals of students becoming proper citizens, developing leadership skills, instilling religious ideals, and promoting academic success. Extracurricular activities ultimately became viewed as extensions of academic curriculum where students could continue to learn and practice, such skills as giving sermons, public speaking, teaching, and legal arguments, that ultimately would be valuable beyond the campus experience (Lucas, 1994).

Masternarratives of College Student Leadership

The early goals and climate of higher education institutions within the United States along with the ways in which particular extracurricular activities became institutionalized on campus contributed to the formation of pervasive narratives about college student leadership that prevail today. There are a number of factors that contributed to what I am calling the “masternarratives” that characterized pre-World War II narratives of college student leadership.

First, the foundational principles in which higher education was established centered on elitism. With an initial mission of preparing already privileged individuals into future leadership positions in society, colleges and universities functioned as an environment that reproduced social inequity in regard to what race, gender, social class or religion groups could have access to or were best suited for society's leadership positions.

A second contributing factor of pre-World War II narratives of leadership development comes from the relationship between higher education and business, political, and religious professions. Colleges and universities looked to these fields for cues to determine which aspects of leadership within the professions themselves should be prioritized in academic study as well as extracurricular activities. Higher education institutions ultimately incorporated approaches from these professionals within the curriculum as their way of developing leadership within on campus that would prepare their students for future careers in business, politics, and religion. Although offering some beneficial insights on the phenomena of leadership, a consequence of this approach is that it created a universal approach to leadership development that failed to consider the specific extracurricular interests, career pursuits, or individual challenges of college student leaders on campus, such as intergroup relations and how leadership experiences across social identity groups may differ (Armino et al., 2000; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000). An additional consequence of leadership development drawing from professional fields is that these traditions do not account for social identity among students and how these differences may contribute to group dynamics.

One additional factor that influenced pre-World War II narratives of leadership development in higher education relates to the institutionalization of extracurricular activities on campuses. By formally recognizing select extracurricular activities, such as fraternities/sororities, student government, and other academic or interest-based groups as predominantly structured organizations, student leadership became connected to transactional leadership characteristics, which means that they were organizations that reflected the organizational values of the larger society (Chambers & Phelps, 1993).

Organizations tended to be hierarchical; decisions were based upon formal rules; and they had subdivided duties based upon one's technical skills and competency. In other words, student leadership was associated with formalized positions, structured hierarchy, bureaucratic decision-making and implementation of tasks (Astin & Astin, 2000).

While there was some expansion of this notion of leadership, in summary, events within early predominantly White higher education institutions contributed to this hierarchical, formalized, bureaucratic approach to college student leadership.

Participation was, in large part, limited to predominantly White, upper- to middle-class, Christian men due to historical exclusion of marginalized social identity groups. In addition, principles from fields, such as business, politics, and religion ultimately played a role in conceptualizing college student leadership as positional, hierarchical, and goal-oriented within university-sanctioned student organizations (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006). This paradigm remained unchallenged on most U.S. campuses, which were largely predominantly White and male or coeducational, until after World War II due to multiple critical incidents that shifted dynamics within higher education institutions.

Counternarratives of College Student Leadership

By the 1970s and 1980s, colleges and universities across the United States were in a state of change and “leadership crisis” (Bensimon, Neumann, & Brinbaum, 1989). The period after World War II marked a significant transition point within higher education and college student leadership, due to a number of external factors—sociopolitical movements, increased involvement from the federal government, and changes to long-

standing campus policies and practices. In the aftermath of World War II and the Civil Rights Movement, campus demographics became more inclusive of people of color. Student affairs developed as a profession alongside the faculty, and heightened student activism had a significant impact on the social organization of colleges and universities.

The social institution of higher education became what it is today, a complex, open system influenced by external factors outside the system as well as internal elements on campuses (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). External factors influenced major functional changes, internal to college campuses, such as admission, financial aid, residence life, and student activities were now required to pay attention to inclusion along the lines of race, gender, and social class, particularly in those areas that had prevented access for historically marginalized groups, such as people of color, women, and the socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Comparable to a domino effect, these external factors influenced internal elements within higher education institutions in a mutually reinforcing manner. As policies and practices allowed for more access, institutions began to diversify numerically and also had to address campus climate and interactions of groups across difference. Social identity groups that historically had been separated from each other now had to coexist with each other inside and outside the classroom. In some instances, these interactions resulted in conflicts and tension that required faculty and administration intervention (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1999).

In addition, the relationships between administration, faculty, and students changed. Initially relying on an *in loco parentis* approach to student development and learning, diverse student populations combined with heightened campus activism were

influential in the emergence of a new archetype of college student on campuses. Once viewed as juvenile and controllable, students after World War II were increasingly vocalizing their perspectives on societal and campus issues, articulating their needs, and demanding involvement in decision-making processes. In loco parentis in many situations was no longer an effective strategy for student development, which now required faculty and administration to reevaluate how to support student needs. Given this relationship shift on college student development and several decades of social movements and activism, the system of higher education was in flux. New discourses on college student leadership addressed these issues in an attempt to return campuses to a status quo state and to address the changing (and at times conflicting) dynamics among student demographics.

As discussed at the beginning of this paper, colleges and universities have had a long-standing relationship with preparing or “grooming” its students for future leadership experiences (Carry, 2003). However, the late 1970s marked a critical period within higher education that paid new attention to the development of college student leaders both during their tenure on campus and beyond degree attainment (Kezar et al., 2006; Roberts, 2011). Attention to college student leadership can be attributed in large part to initiatives within student affairs professional associations, such as ACPA and NASPA, both of which established committees and commissions specifically dedicated to explore and understand college student leaders’ experiences and needs (Roberts & Ullom, 1989). These explorations generated new emphasizes, especially within the profession of student affairs, on diversity and inclusion, on service-learning, and on multicultural college student leadership.

Another motivating factor for the increased attention to leadership development for students was a new body of research and scholarship. Leadership studies came into fruition within such fields as education, business, and psychology during the late 1970s through the 1980s and contributed to a number of articles and books being published, including ones focusing on research findings and empirical works that offered strategies and suggestions on practice (Komives, 2011; Rost, 1991). Privately-funded foundations furthered this effort within colleges and universities. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Ford Foundation not only began to fund student leadership program and research initiatives but incited competition among campuses for external funding (Carry, 2003, Freeman & Goldin, 2008).

Contemporary College Student Leadership

With new attention on college student leadership, historical perspectives and practices on developing college student leadership were examined and reconceptualized to meet the needs of current students and campuses (Kezar et al., 2006). Contemporary college student leadership is argued to be shifting away from what is known as an industrial paradigm of leadership. Heavily derived from the events of the industrial era and capitalism, this paradigm primarily emphasizes productivity where the concept of management serves as a vital role in leadership within an organization (Rost, 1991). Specifically, management is highly bureaucratic and used as a means to “reduce chaos in organizations, to make them run more effectively and efficiently” (Northouse, 2009, p. 9). Preskill and Brookfield (2009) offer a contemporary perspective on what has emerged as a masternarrative about leaders:

Leaders are presented as being somehow higher, smarter, and more advanced than their followers, with a breadth of experience and depth of wisdom they use to help followers see the light of the leader's more progressive vision. Yet, ironically, leaders are also very often associated with maintaining the status quo, with creating an environment where stability and harmony are the highest values (p. 2).

Describing leaders as “higher, smarter and more advanced than their followers” indicates connections to historical depictions of leaders as having qualities superior to others in society. Influences from the industrial paradigm's leadership of hierarchy and goal achievement are present as followers are placed in an inferior position where leaders not only have the task of guiding them in a particular direction but specifically toward a goal desired by the leader. Lastly, management characteristics are found within this description, as it is the leader's responsibility to maintain the *status quo* and to minimize any conflict within a given context. Broadly described, an industrial paradigm frames leadership as quantifiable, predictive, management-oriented, individualistic, and goal-driven.

College student leadership as conceptualized through an industrial paradigm of leadership was generally focused on extracurricular activities (Komives, 2011). In this sense, as noted above, student leadership, like political or organizational leadership, was connected to formal, bureaucratic, structured organizations, such as fraternities/sororities, student government, and other academic or interest-based groups recognized on campus (Chambers & Phelps, 1993). Further, student leadership was associated with formalized positions within these organizations structured in a hierarchy where one person or small groups have the charge of decision-making and implementation of tasks for some common purpose. While there has been some expansion of what is included in initial understanding, such as Resident Assistants, leadership is still conceptualized as

positional, hierarchical, goal-oriented, and accessible to a select few, in keeping with the mainstream view of leadership that historically shaped U.S. politics and organizational life (Kezar et al., 2006).

But the growing attention to social inequities and oppression, taken together with contemporary social movements and student activism, challenged the *status quo* both in the larger social order and on college campuses that tended to replicate the social order. Preskill and Brookfield (2009) mention both the goal of maintaining a sense of harmony in how a particular group functions as well as a desire to maintain a *status quo* in regards to social group categories, namely race, gender, and class. Specifically, they argue:

The images of leadership – indeed, the very words leader and leadership – have been culturally framed to equate effective leadership with authoritarian control imposed by those at the apex of a hierarchy. A smooth and seamless ideological manipulation has ensured that those we automatically think of as leaders are precisely the people who represent interest of the status quo: males from upper-class families who function as protectors of wealth and privilege. (p. 2)

It became obvious to theorists and practitioners that a leadership paradigm based on a racially dominant (White), class-dominant (upper-class) and patriarchal (male) set of social beliefs and practices would not serve the social changes that were emerging on college campuses. These discredited beliefs concerning social organization and leadership not only perpetuated a narrow view of how leadership is understood but also serve as a means to further perpetuate the lack of recognition and access of marginalized groups' leadership.

While this masternarrative on leadership has remained influential in shaping social perceptions of how college student leadership is understood and practiced, it is important to acknowledge that this phenomenon is a social construction that been challenged in major ways (Rost & Barker, 2000). Since the 1980s, there has been a push

for a paradigm shift and reconceptualization of leadership theories and practices toward an inclusive and interdisciplinary approach that expands the meaning of leadership (Rost, 1991). Rather than focusing attention on organizational goals and material success, a post-industrial leadership is focused on service, groups, and community, away from individualism and toward shared power and influence. Post-industrial leadership is conscious of historical and structural oppression and strives to include marginalized social groups, such as people of color, women, and underprivileged social classes. Lastly, dynamism and complexity is acknowledged and necessary in this reconceptualized leadership paradigm. Recognizing that society, organizations, and individuals are not static, Rost and Barker (2000) propose that leadership should also be adaptable to the contexts in which they are functioning in.

Merging post-industrialism with the principles of college student development, the contemporary narrative of college student leadership has several key characteristics as summarized by Komives, Dugan, and Owen (2011) as follows:

- o Leadership is learned behavior.
- o It can be developed with individuals and groups.
- o It should be accessible to all students regardless of social identity group members.

Higher education institutions must have a commitment and responsibility to develop future leaders in society.

- o Leadership must be relational and centered on community building as well as being ethically-focused.
- o Leadership should be diverse across personal and social identity groups and lastly,
- o There must be intentional programmatic efforts of implementation and assessment to make sure efforts are meeting student and campus needs.

What follows is a brief overview of widely practiced contemporary theories and concepts that aim to describe college student leadership development.

Theory and Conceptual Frameworks of College Student Leadership

The Social Change Model (SCM) is perhaps the most widely used leadership development theory within higher education (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). The model has six major assumptions: 1) leadership is centered in social change that ultimately betters others, 2) leadership involves collaboration, 3) leadership is not positional but rather process-oriented, 4) leadership should be grounded in values, 5) any student has the potential of becoming a leader, and 6) service is a beneficial method of developing individual leadership skills (Astin, Astin & HERI, 1996; Komives, & Wagner, 2009). From these six assumptions, the model outlines seven central values that can be placed in one of three domains: individual, group, and community. These seven central values consist of: consciousness of the self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship (Komives, & Wagner, 2009). Although a rather abstract model to understand, SCM has the value of indicating the importance of the individual leader and the impact of the individual leader on the group and community (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005).

Another widely used leadership development model within higher education is the Relational Leadership Model (RLM). With a central focus on how leadership is influenced and dependent upon interpersonal relationships, this model has five main components: leadership as inclusive to the diversity of people and perspectives, all involved must feel empowered, leadership is intentional and has a commitment toward a

collective goal, ethical, and that the above mentioned characteristics are achieved as a process (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). RLM relies heavily on the student developing a consciousness of one's self and others while also developing skills to work across differences, such as listening, perspective taking, collaboration, and managing conflicts. RLM is appealing to practitioners due to its focus on leadership development as an on-going, learning process rather than a destination or outcome a student must reach (Komives et al., 1998).

In an attempt to answer these questions about how students develop an identity as a leader, Komives, Owens, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen (2005) introduced the Leadership Identity Development Model (LIDM). Using grounded theory with a sample population of undergraduate students, LIDM proposes six stages of leadership development, in which the first three stages focus on the how individuals develop awareness, explore, and ultimately identify as a leader. Once an individual self-identifies as leader, the next three stages of the model demonstrate how leadership is reexamined to include positional and non-positional leadership, incorporates a passion to develop others as leaders, and finally reaches a point of viewing leadership as a life-long, ever-evolving process (Komives et al., 2005).

It is important to note that these three widely-used models of student leadership pay little attention to differences across social identities, such as, race or gender in the dynamics of leader and group. At the same time, because race or gender are not identified, the majoritarian assumption is that all the leaders are White and are male.

Race, Gender, and College Student Leadership

The absence of racial or gender specificity in the college student leadership literature poses one set of difficulties. Another difficulty emerges from the absence of research on Black women's experiences as leaders on college campuses. Within the context of higher education, the research that does exist tends to focus on Black women leaders in higher education features achievements and longevity in faculty or senior level administrative positions (Simpson, 2001). If one examines the research on differences of race and gender for undergraduate student leaders, the higher education literature falls into the following thematic categories: 1) leadership and gender, 2) comparative studies between Black and White leadership, and 3) Black student leadership.

In the first theme, the central question driving research on leadership and gender is whether there is a difference between the way men and women approach leadership. In a quantitative pilot study using the Achieving Style Inventory, Komives (1994) argues that college women participants preferred to use practices that empowered others by encouraging peers to take action and tended to struggle with challenging organizational processes, confrontation, and risk-taking. Romano (1996), through a qualitative study of undergraduate women across three institutions, had similar findings reiterating leadership styles that value strong relationship with peers, commitment to organizational goals, and key female role models and predecessors who influenced their development. Looking at potentially different experiences with leadership at women's colleges, Whitt's (1994) qualitative study again concludes that women at these institutions exhibit a feminine or "women's ways of leadership." While there are numerous studies that both support and counter the existence of there being gendered leadership, some scholars have opted to

focus on the structural and interpersonal barriers women encounter (sexism) that construct challenges in accessing positions and resources (Ely & Rhode, 2010).

A second major and emerging theme in the literature is seen in studies that aim to compare leadership experiences between White and Black student involvement. Most noteworthy is Kezar and Moriarty's (2000) quantitative study using three different instruments to look at both race and gender. Their findings suggest that male students, regardless of race, entered college and continued to hold higher self-perceptions of their leadership ability than did women. Additionally, this study found differences within non-positional leadership where women and students of color collectively tended to value and prefer these roles than formal positions. Lastly and perhaps most noteworthy, Kezar and Moriarty found differences among African American women and formal leadership programs. Results show that African American women's leadership development was not impacted by these programs, while White men and women as well as African American men received some benefit. Without any speculation as to why this might be they make a suggestion for additional qualitative research (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000).

Lastly, there is literature that explores the experiences of Black student leadership and involvement. The foregrounding study by Mitchell and Dell (1992) conducted a quantitative study on the relationship between Black racial identity levels and participation in cultural and non-cultural student organizations. Their study found that there was a relationship between all levels of saliency of racial identity with that of cultural student organizational involvement; in other words, the more conscious students were of their Black identity, the more likely they were to be involved in cultural organizations. In regards to non-cultural organizations, while high saliency of racial

identity also had a relationship with participation in these organizations, the results were no significant for lower stages of consciousness (Mitchell & Dell, 1992).

It is important to note that each theme of literature within higher education approaches takes a monolithic comparative approach. In other words, gendered leadership research views women as a single gendered category with little or no attention given to race or ethnicity. Studies that seek to compare leadership experiences of White students and Black students treat each racial group monolithically, without attention to gender, class, or sexuality. Lastly, Black student leadership studies also view this racial group without discussion of gender, class, sexuality, or ethnicity. While a focus on race and gender within higher education leadership research is difficult to find, there is evidence of attempts at Black feminist and intersectional research within the disciplines of history and business administration.

Feminist perspectives toward research have not only critiqued long-standing methodology and methods as androcentric but also challenge the notion of objectivism when conducting studies (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004). Due in part to the evolution of feminist research epistemology and the presence of social movements, the concept of standpoint theory emerged to further deconstruct issues of power dynamics within research. Standpoint theory calls for a perspective on a given phenomenon through the lens of socially marginalized identities with the argument that these insights would potentially evoke new questions and challenge implicit assumptions that may have not surfaced otherwise (Harding, 2004). One such standpoint theory, Black feminism, uses the social location of Black women to look at how issues of race and gender influence a given subject area.

Some scholars argue that Black women have been in the practice of constructing social support systems and employing strategies toward resistance since the origins of slavery (Collins, 2000). While there is ongoing debate of what terminology or definition best describes the recognition and resistance of Black women's oppression, scholar Patricia Hill Collins argues that there is no one universal definition to encapsulate Black feminist thought and practices. She suggests that it is more beneficial to focus on why such a resistance has been and continues to be necessary than to construct and agree upon one standpoint of what Black feminism means and is practiced. In an attempt to loosely connect efforts, Collins identified six distinguishing features of Black feminist thought as a way of moving toward a more cohesive initiative to address Black women's multiple oppression within the United States.

First, Collins (2000) suggests that historical and sociopolitical trends in the United States have socially constructed a collective experience that Black women all share. The institution of slavery and dominant culture's influence on the social views, expectations and roles of Black women have all uniquely shaped how this group experiences race, gender, and class oppression. Recognizing the heterogeneity of Black women's collective and individual experiences, the second feature of Black feminist thought suggests that social location and identity have constructed multiple views and approaches to how Black women's multiple oppression is visualized and resisted. Next, Black feminist thought operates in a dialogical relationship where perspectives on the experiences of African American women incite actions toward resistance that, in turn, incite a revised perspective on experiences and so forth. While the fourth feature highlights the role and importance of Black women intellectuals as facilitators in the dialogical relationship, the

fifth feature characterizes Black feminism as dynamic and evolving as history and society shifts. Lastly, Collins argues that Black feminist thought cannot exist in isolation from other social justice movements and that coalition building is vital to ending the complex system of oppression.

Like Black feminist theory, intersectionality is a response to critiques that an inaccurate universality was being applied to the experiences of women and the oppression they experience (McCall, 2005). Intersectional theorists claim that often (White) feminist theorists fail to consider not only their social location when constructing their arguments but also do not account for how multiple oppressions manifest in society. This unconsciousness and exclusivity creates an invisibility of the experiences of women of color and may further perpetuate instances of oppression in the same spaces that aim to resist such forces (Crenshaw, 2006). While variations exist in how theorists conceptualize intersectionality, the central principle of this paradigm is that systems of oppression are interconnected and uniquely shape the experiences of individuals based on how they are located in society (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 2006).

Combining the goals of intersectionality focusing on simultaneous operation of multiple systems of oppression and Black feminism's goal of centering the experiences of Black women, it is my position that higher education research on college student leadership must be analyzed through these theoretical lenses. Black feminism and intersectionality have the potential of offering valuable contributions to disrupting master narratives of leadership as they each incorporate the influence of racial and gender dynamics. Both theories can surface new insights about the experiences of Black women

college students and the specific ways in which they approach leadership differently from other social identity groups.

Black Women's Leadership Traditions

It should be clear from the preceding section that the traditional college student leadership literature is not helpful in understanding the role of race and gender in shaping the experience of Black women leaders on college campuses. With this challenge, I turn to a second major body of literature to inform Black women college leadership experiences by examining some historical traditions that demonstrate leadership and agency among Black women within the United States. As discussed in the preceding literature section, traditional models of leadership have perpetuated ideologies of White supremacy, patriarchy, meritocracy, capitalism, and Christian hegemony and have been sustained over time through formal social institutions, such as schools, business, churches, and governments (Parker, 2005; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009; Rost, 1991). Participation within these institutions has historically been unavailable to Black women due to a legacy of oppressive practices, such as slavery, segregation, discriminatory laws and policies, and attitudes of prejudice (Byrd, 2009; Gilkes, 2001; Grimes, 2005; Robnett, 1997). The absence of Black women's experiences and the perpetuation of dominant social group ideologies within traditional leadership have rendered traditional models of leadership as not useful or appropriate to Black women's leadership (Grimes, 2005). As a result, traditional leadership models have been largely inaccessible to Black women and contributed to a narrative in which Black women's leadership is either

considered to be nonexistent or if existent, colluding with racially gendered social roles (Parker, 2005; Robnett, 1997).

Despite the exclusionary and oppressive barriers noted above, there is significant historical and contemporary evidence that Black women have had leadership and agency within the United States, largely within Black communities, unaffected by traditional leadership models or formal academic documentation of the experiences of Black women. Instead, feminist/womanist scholarship suggests that intergenerational exemplars for Black women's leadership have come from multiple and interconnected social contexts, namely religion, education, and community organizing/activism (Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Evans, 2007; Fairclough, 2007; Gilkes, 2001; Higginbotham, 1993). Through these contexts, Black women's leadership developed in a strategic and unique manner as a means to support their survival and resistance in oppressive conditions (Collins, 2000; White 1985). These nontraditional spaces of leadership are argued to have roots in African cultural traditions that have been sustained over time and often function in the periphery of institutions established by both White and Black communities (Gilkes, 2001; Ross 2003; Shaw, 1991).

Black women's leadership emerged, not surprisingly, within Black families and extended communities. Only with the emergence of Black feminist/womanist research have these traditions been documented and described. Although these exemplars and opportunities for Black women's leadership have always been available to Black women, through the influence and examples of their mothers, teachers, and female religious leaders, only recently have they been documented in a formal, academic literature that I now describe.

Social Construction of Black Families and Community

The first contributing factor that shaped traditions of Black women's leadership is a legacy of extended family and kinship. Given that a majority of Black slaves within the United States were brought from West Africa, it is argued that early African American notions of family were heavily influenced by cultural traditions from this region (Hine & Thompson, 1998). One such tradition was that of kinship. Rather than the family unit being limited to parents and their children, West African kinship is organized by blood lineage and includes relatives outside the nuclear family of parents and their children (McKenzie, 2005). It was encouraged for there to be close relationships between extended family members, functioning as micro-communities that created a collective support network for production of resources, raising children, and protection. Operating in systems of patriarchy, men and women not only had defined roles based on the given cultures' gender expectations but also socialized in separate gendered spaces (Hine & Thompson, 1998). A primary role for women within this family and community structure would be described as "women's work" by contemporary scholars. Such work primarily took place within the home and included such tasks as intimate companionship to men, childbearing, cooking, textile production, and some agriculture work (Hallam, 2004). Despite significant characteristics of a patriarchy, West African women were not exclusively limited to these feminine gender roles and had a degree of agency for other roles beyond the household and family.

As Africans were transported to the United States through the slave trade, there were disruptions to blood lineages as well as some changes to community and labor expectations for women. White owners held little regard for existing family structures of

Africans and would separate relatives from each other through auctions and trades (hooks, 1981; McKenzie, 2005). Without the legal ability to marry, the deconstruction and reconstruction of African families was almost exclusively dependent upon White owners. It was common practice for owners to facilitate the establishment of slave marriages as a means to maintain a labor source through anticipated procreation from these unions (Collins, 2000). While it was difficult to maintain blood lineage and there were many disruptions to African families during slavery, some cultural traditions of community survived. The notion of kinship expanded beyond blood lineage and became more centered on imposed and self-determined relationships. Perhaps most importantly, a notion of collective responsibility of care was solidified not only for those without family, youth, and the elderly but also for the survival and advancement of the general slave community (Hine & Thompson, 1998).

Slave Women's Labor and (Un)Womanhood

In addition to disruptions to family structures, slavery also had an impact on images of Black womanhood and Black women's relationship within the American labor system. bell hooks (1981) explores how manifestations of racism and sexism simultaneously created the subordinate position of Black women within the United States. Central to her claim is that White patriarchy along with capitalist motivations influenced decisions on how and why African women entered the United States as well as what function these women would have within the system of labor. From its early stages, there was a financial devaluation in regards to the worth of African women as laborers (hooks, 1981). White male slavers over time came to observe and interpret that some

African women engaged in physically arduous work alongside men in addition to domestic labor within the home (hooks, 1981). This observation, along with a need for additional labor, served as a catalyst of the exploitation of African and later Black women within the United States labor structure.

Due to the initially demand for male slaves, African women were exploited reproductively to produce additional labor through child birth. Racist and sexist views of African women simultaneously sexualized and objectified representations of African women's bodies. Further, White men physically and psychologically dominated African women's bodies by not only determining when and with whom she would have "sexual relations" but also used rape, physical violence, and emotional abuse to control women and to maintain a social order among slaves (hooks, 1981). As the presence of slave women increased demographically and entered into the labor system in both agricultural and domestic capacities, White women's position in society had to be reconceptualized. In other words, within the power structure of White patriarchy, there developed a need to sustain their racial superiority over both slave men and women while remaining in a subordinate position under White men (hooks, 1981; Mills, 2007). To codify this status, Victorian principles of sexuality and femininity were systematically introduced. Constructing White womanhood as delicate, lady-like, domestic, and sexually repressed offered a counter-representation to slave women's emerging depiction as hypersexual and less than human. As a result, the position of slave women and ultimately Black women was codified as the most subordinate within the structure of White patriarchy (Mills, 2007).

It should be noted that operations of patriarchy and its impact on Black women's lives was not limited to just White men. As noted previously, systems of patriarchy existed in Africa and traditions of male dominance persisted during the events of slavery (hooks, 1981). While restricted due to White supremacy, slave men still exercised power over slave women and imposed control over their bodies and labor. Slave women were expected to carry out domestic duties and child-raising while demonstrating submission to husbands, fathers, and other slave men in the communities (hooks, 1981). Acts of physical violence, emotional abuse, and sexual assault were also demonstrated among slave men as they used these strategies to maintain patriarchal social order and as they also held views objectifying and exploiting slave women's bodies (hooks, 1981).

The construction of Black women as subordinate within the structure of White and Black patriarchies yield three main archetypes or stereotypes of Black womanhood within the United States: Jezebel, Mammy, and Sapphire. The Jezebel stereotype depicts Black women as seductive temptresses, amoral with an insatiable sex drive. Black women were not only constructed to be sexual deviant but also a threat to White families and marriage, as their uncontrollable promiscuity aimed to corrupt White men for some personal gain (Harris-Perry, 2011). Second, the Mammy archetype within White patriarchy is that of a nurturing caretaker and companion to White families in general but specifically to White women (hooks, 1981). She is often described as a willing and loyal domestic servant to White families who has characteristics of being dirty, unattractive, unintelligent, and passive. Harris-Perry argues that Mammy is an ideal and desired representation that Whites had hoped Black women would fulfill post-slavery. Literally in a position of (labor) subordination, what is noteworthy about this stereotype is the

explicit non-threatening nature of this woman who willingly accepts her racial and gender inferiority.

Lastly, Sapphire is arguably the most hostile and negative depiction of Black women. Personality traits associated with Sapphire are distinct and widely accepted: emasculating, angry, bitchy, outspoken, deceitful, and verbally insulting (Harris-Perry, 2011). What is significant about Sapphire is how she imposes a threat not only to White men and women but also to Black men. Specifically her verbal insults and independence, often inaccurately framed as the Black matriarch, are said to threaten Black men's patriarchy over Black women within the familial and community structures, ultimately preventing him from fulfilling his role as dominant in these spaces (hooks, 1981). The Sapphire stereotype serves as a means to control and ultimately to punish Black women who do not stay in the boundaries of feminine gender expectations and womanhood. Through the threat of solitude and social isolation, Black women are coerced into passivity, silence, and ultimately acceptance of an inferior status (hooks, 1981).

While each stereotype has distinct characteristics, Jezebel, Mammy, and Sapphire have a common theme of depicting African American women as a monolithic analytical category without considerations of aspects, such as religion, social class, or sexuality. Similar to Said's (1978) and Mohanty's (1991) argument of Orientalism and Third World women, Black women are situated as Other and inherently oppressed by the very association of being Black women. Further, stereotypes of these women have been produced and taken as universal truth, ultimately used to justify their inferior status within White and Black patriarchies.

Women-Centered Networks and Mothering as a Site of Leadership

Despite the oppressive conditions of multiple forms of patriarchy, Black women developed strategies to survive, resist, and claim agency through these oppressive conditions. According to White (1985), female slave networks were created by Black women as a method of survival and resistance to the condition of slavery. Given that slave women often existed in separate spaces from slave men, these networks functioned as community space where women socialized and found companionship, as well as allowing for women to form strong kinship-type connections to manage difficult conditions during slavery (Collins, 2000).

First, the networks helped women to ease the slave labor expectations of women. In these spaces, women shared tips with each other on how to get through tasks faster or in ways that were less physically taxing. A second benefit of these networks was how Black women were able to discuss domestic responsibilities. Networks became opportunities for slave women to share information about healthcare, cooking, and textile production, as well as a source of childcare when women had to fulfill slave work obligations. Lastly, female slave networks served as a safe space for social and emotional support. While slave men shared some common experiences with psychological and physical violence, slave women also had to contend with gender-specific racism and violence (Davis, 1983; Hine & Thompson, 1998; hooks, 1981). In these networks, women could share and console each other about these experiences as well as air grievances about family struggles, offer a source of companionship, and exchange information about incidents on plantations. Although primarily functioning interdependently, female slave networks also operated with some degree of social order

where leadership roles emerged. Access to leadership was often self-determined by slave communities where authority and degree of respect a woman received was based upon a woman's age or work responsibilities (White, 1985). One notable leadership position was created through reclaiming Black motherhood.

Combining the ideology of kinship and the expectations of domestic and family work, motherhood emerged as a site of empowerment and leadership for Black women (Collins, 2000; Edwards, 2000; O'Reilly, 2004; White, 1985). Simply put, motherhood is said to include both the biological ability to carry and give birth to a child as well as the relational role of caretaking and socialization of children (Littlefield, 2007). Through the lens of patriarchy and capitalism, motherhood was a key social function that solidified men's dominance in the labor system by restricting women's work to be confined in the home and thus financially inferior and dependent upon men (Littlefield, 2007). This was particularly the case for White women. For Black women whose lives have been impacted by both White and Black patriarchy as well as White supremacy, motherhood took on a more complex meaning and had different impacts on Black women's lives.

As stated earlier, slave women as property whose bodies were available for economic and sexual exploitation by White men resulted in Black motherhood as a source of creating human labor to sustain the institution of slavery (Collins, 2000; O'Reilly, 2004). Within this context, the biological function of Black motherhood was not a choice and often violently forced upon Black women (Hine & Thompson, 1998; hooks, 1981). In addition, slave women's roles as caretakers and domestic servants for White families contributed to an understanding that Black motherhood involved the care of White children. This role allowed for White women to have dominance over Black

women, as it relieved them of household responsibilities without having any financial loss (Littlefield, 2007). Lastly, Black motherhood was viewed as a necessity for slave and later Black family survival. Within the context of Black patriarchy, it was the Black woman's role to produce, nurture, and socialize children in addition to their labor functions through slavery. Again, the role of motherhood was not a choice but a social expectation placed upon Black women.

While motherhood can be viewed as a tool of multiple systems of oppression, motherhood was also an opportunity for Black women to take agency within their lives as well as the lives of their families and communities. Extreme instances of resistance to Black motherhood included abortion, infanticide, suicide, and attempts to leave plantations (Littlefield, 2007). Arguably, the most consistent and practiced form of resistance was through the care and protection they demonstrated for children and communities. Drawing from African traditions of kinship as well as a legacy of dual-sex systems, women-centered networks were formed to address caretaking needs and fostered slave women's agency through the circumstances of racial patriarchies and White supremacy. From these networks, traditions of leadership were established, namely othermothering, that centered on Black women's individual and collective self-definition of motherhood as a means to nurture and uplift Black communities.

As mentioned previously, slave women had significant difficulty fulfilling work obligations while caring for their families. One vital role that emerged from the female slave networks described above is "othermothering." Often older women physically incapable of participating in slave work, othermothers provided care, guidance, and discipline to children whose mother was working in the fields or domestically in White

homes (White, 1985). During slavery, children along with the elderly and those who were orphaned were considered to be part of a larger community and therefore care for these individuals was a community responsibility. Further, this type of care involved a high degree of cooperation among slave women who had to have trust and be in regular communication with each other. Despite a lack of biological ties, it was common practice to call those women in othermothering roles “mother” or “auntie,” and it was an expectation that those under their care would offer comparable respect to one’s actual mother.

Perhaps the most important function of othermothering is serving as a foundational tradition of Black women’s leadership (Gilkes, 1980). Upon the conclusion of slavery, many Black women felt a sense of responsibility not only to continue to collectively care for children but also to provide support to their emerging segregated communities (Collins, 2000). Although operating in an overarching system of Black patriarchy, community othermothering became a symbol of power that offered Black women a sense of status and respect that was not readily available to them. According to Gilkes (1980), traditions of othermothering have been a vital motivator for Black women’s activism in local as well as national contexts. Duties that began as daily routines combined with a critical consciousness for a need for systemic changes, contributing to community othermothers presence and integration within social institutions.

Contemporary Black Women's Leadership and College Students

The preceding literature section offers insights on historical traditions of Black women's leadership, and there is research that these traditions are applicable within the context of colleges and universities (Benjamin 1997; Gregory, 2001; Jean-Marie, 2006; Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Simpson, 2001). Specifically, existing literature on Black women's leadership within higher education focuses on faculty and senior administrators, and there is little known about leadership of contemporary Black women college students (Henry, 2010; Kezar & Morarity, 2000). While Black women college students have more considerable access to higher education since chattel slavery and Jim Crow laws, these women still face a number of contemporary challenges on college and university campuses.

Black women are considered to be an underrepresented group within higher education, particularly at predominantly White institutions and make up approximately 13% of the national undergraduate population (Constantine & Greer, 2003; National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). When attempting admittance, some women face challenges with academic preparedness (e.g., grade point average, standardized test scores, etc.) or financial barriers, such as paying application fees, tuition, and housing cost (Turner, 2008; Zamani, 2003). Black women who are able to enroll in colleges and universities may still encounter obstacles that impact their academic and out-of-classroom experiences. Studies on Black women college students at predominantly White institutions report feelings of a hostile campus environment where participants describe these settings as generally unwelcoming and isolating, with faculty as inaccessible, and being misunderstood by peers (Constantine & Greer, 2003).

One such study by Cerri A. Banks (2009) looked at the ways in which Black women negotiated various dynamics within higher education and gave specific attention to stereotypes and misrepresentation. Specifically, she found college women highly conscious about the stereotypes targeted toward them and how they manifested through interactions with peers, within the classroom as well as with institutional policies on campus. Participants in this study discussed how they are regularly faced with a decision of whether to “speak up and be heard” in resistance to these stereotypes and the risk of being marked the “angry black bitch with attitude” (Banks, 2009, p. 92). Beyond this negative label’s legacy of the Sapphire, undergraduate women who do decide to speak up discussed consequences of alienation and stigma as well as fear of lower grades or silencing from instructors. However, elements of the strong Black women’s coping strategy are also present as they described a resiliency and willingness to sacrifice the self through a “desire to carve out a path for students who come after them” (p. 92-93). While an exploration of stereotypes was a small subsection of Banks’ study, it offers some initial key insights on how misrepresentation of Black women is produced within undergraduate student populations.

This literature review has focused on the socio-historical construction of a master narrative of leadership to illustrate the many reasons why Black women’s leadership departs from traditional notions of leadership and to show how these traditions come from different social, economic, political, and gendered sources (Grimes, 2005; Parker, 2005).

Although there is a parallel Black feminist/womanist literature focused on the specific historical experiences of Black women in the major social contexts of religion,

education, and community organizing, it is not necessary, for the purposes of this study, to explore each of these non-traditional leadership sites individually. Instead, and despite the significance of Emancipation, Jim Crow laws continued to segregate Black people as they had been segregated by slavery, so that they functioned in relatively cohesive communities (Harley, 1993). For Black women, lines of continuity stretch from slavery through Jim Crow in regards to leadership roles that were available to them. Racial uplift combined with African cultural traditions of kinship established mothering and othermothering as a site of leadership for Black women (Collins, 2000, Edwards, 2000; O'Reilly, 2004). This leadership role, supported largely by Black women's social networks, emerged as a historical and persistent tradition of leadership in social contexts, such as the Black Church, teaching, and the Black women's club movement.

Following World War II, which forms a fault line between the maintenance of Jim Crow and the beginnings of a civil, political, legal, and social rights movement, the earlier lines of influence for Black women's leadership remain, in my view, intact although the ways they play out became somewhat different. Because of the war mobilization of Black men, many Black women moved into industrial and workplace roles that had been previously closed to them (Giddings, 1996). As noted in the earlier period, most of their leadership roles were some expression of mothering and domestic, gendered roles. During and after the war, there were many more women in the workplace and in the public sphere, a shift that changed the expression of Black women leadership even though the sources of continuity remained much the same.

Similarly, the social movements from the 1950s through the 1980s take the mobility and public leadership expression of Black women from the war time period and

play it out in unheard of areas of leadership and resistance (Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Robnett, 1997; Springer, 2005). At the same time, there are continuities from the earlier period, symbolic if not actual mothering or othermothering, even within the long Civil Rights Movement and Black women's activism within Women's Movements, when these social movements dramatically opened up social spaces for Black women as well as the leadership opportunities available to them. With the results of these social movements, Black women have access to higher education in numbers and opportunities they have not had before (Evans, 2007). In addition, affirmative action and similar ideological laws and policies also opened previously closed institutions for Black women that increasingly moved them into professional roles in areas, such as education, business, and government (Bower & Wolverton, 2009; Davis, 1983; Harris-Perry, 2011).

One area that is dramatically new to the post-Civil Rights and post-feminist period is that of Black queer expression. Except in urban areas and movements, such as the Harlem Renaissance, public discourse on non-heteronormative sexuality and gender identity were relatively nonexistent. Hostile climates within and outside of Black communities as well as the prevalence of respectability politics promoting traditional notions of gender and sexuality left little room for individuals of queer identities to participate in activist and leadership efforts. Further, there was a legacy of tension between Black male patriarchy and Black women that depicted Black women's autonomy and leadership as emasculating to Black men. This notion was highly popularized through the release of *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, commonly referred to as the 1965 Moynihan Report, that viewed Black women's professional success as a disruption to Black families and a source of blame for the plight

of Black men's social problems (United States & Moynihan, 1965). Continued notions of emasculation manifested at the height of Women's and Gay and Lesbian movements as Black feminists and Black queer women were viewed as a threat to Black patriarchy and viewed as breaking allegiances with Black communities.

It is worth noting the ways in which the social movements after World War II have opened opportunities for Black women at a personal and social cost. Often these consequences have not been visible or acknowledged in the pre-war time period. Having said all this, I have set the stage to study contemporary Black women leadership to explore not only what are the roots but also what are the complications for their leadership. My argument is that the continuities of Black women's leadership still exist in contemporary leadership contexts, although I believe these traditions get complicated. I also argue that there have emerged new social contexts that have nurtured Black women's leadership, particularly among Black women college students.

The next chapter, Methodology, takes in account theories of college student leadership, Black women's historical leadership traditions and the contemporary experiences of Black college women as guiding frameworks for my dissertation study. What follows is a detailed overview of my research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The limited research available today strongly indicates that Black women college students experience multiple and systematic oppression at predominantly White higher education institutions (Banks, 2009; Hrabowski, 2002; Rosales & Person, 2003; Winkle-Wagner, 2009). Contemporary literature on college student leadership offers some insights on how definitions and models of leading have responded to diversification of campus populations, political activism, and globalization (Astin & Astin, 2000; Komives, Wagner, & Associates, 2009). The purpose of this dissertation study was to create a link between these bodies of research by exploring the experiences of Black women college student leaders at a large, public, predominantly White institution, Riverland University. The specific research questions guiding the study are:

1. In what ways do Black women college student leaders experience oppression—discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes, and internalization—when exercising their leadership?
2. What social factors nurture and sustain Black women college student leaders when faced with instances of oppression?

It is important to note that at the time the dissertation study proposal was drafted there was an additional guiding research question: What perceptions do Black women college student leaders hold about leadership in general as well as their own understanding of themselves as leaders? While subsequent questions related to this research question were included in the interview protocol, data analysis of these responses did not yield particularly insightful data nor did it take the research in a meaningful or compelling direction. Based upon this development, my faculty committee

and I made the decision to delete this research question and its corresponding findings in this study.

Overall Design and Rationale

To answer the two research questions that guide this study, I conducted an in-depth qualitative study of 12 Black women who are currently matriculated as undergraduate or graduate students at a large, rural, predominantly White, public institution to explore the individual and collective experiences of these Black women college student leaders. To gain insight into these experiences, I drew upon a phenomenologically rich qualitative research approach, shaped by Black feminist standpoint theory.

Phenomenology in qualitative research method explores a particular phenomenon by gathering and interpreting in depth the experiences by individuals through intensive interviewing techniques (Merriam, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Through this in-depth analysis, common themes are identified. Phenomenological principles are incorporated in this study through the numerous in-depth individual interviews and focus groups.

The study had an emergent, iterative, and naturalistic design. As discussed in the previous chapter, the modes of personal communication and technological advancement over the last several decades has generated multiple and ongoing points of contact with individuals. This shift in accessibility, particularly among college students, allows for a type of immersion and ongoing observation, contributing to richer, interwoven data. Further, this study proved to provide a developmental experience for Black women

participants; this was the first time some had systematically considered these issues.

Through an initial interview, participants may want to share moments of reflection, while focus group participation may trigger memories and themes with other participants. Part of the support of the naturalistic, emergent, iterative design is that it is a developmental process as well.

Whereas a naturalistic and emergent phenomenology shapes the in-depth approach, Black feminist and intersectional standpoint theory principles guided the specific questions that provide focus to this study. Standpoint theory calls for a perspective on a given phenomenon through the lens of socially marginalized identities with the argument that these insights would potentially evoke new questions and challenge implicit assumptions that may not have surfaced otherwise (Harding, 2004). One such standpoint theory, Black feminism, uses the social location of Black women to look at how issues of race and gender influence their experience within a phenomenon (Collins, 2000; Davis, 1983; Harris-Perry, 2011; hooks, 1981). Given that Black women's lives are impacted by multiple and often intersecting systems of oppression, this study also uses intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2006). Not to be conflated with an additive approach, an intersectional study would require that data collection, data analysis, and interpretations examine structural racism and sexism individually as well as simultaneously (Bowleg, 2008).

I interviewed 12 Black women college leaders who are currently matriculated as undergraduate or graduate students at a large, rural, public institution. Given the likelihood that undergraduate and graduate Black women leaders may experience Black

women's leadership differently, I interviewed 6 Black women who were undergraduates and 6 Black women who were graduate students,

My qualitative methodology consisted of a series of individual interviews. This series was structured as such so that after the demographic questionnaire, there was an initial interview with a potential for additional points of contact (interviews, email, or Skype) to seek clarification and the opportunity to pursue questions that came up during analysis.

Site of Population Selection

I conducted my dissertation research at a large, predominantly White, Research I, public, rural land grant university located in the northeast region of the United States. This campus, which is the flagship campus of a state-wide, multi-campus university system enrolls just over 28,000 students, consisting of 22,000 undergraduate and 6,300 graduate students ([Riverland University]¹, 2012). As of the 2012-2013 academic year, approximately 21% of the total undergraduate and 21.4% of the graduate population at this campus was considered to be students of color. Students that identified as Black/African American represented 4.1% and 5.4% of the total of the undergraduate and graduate student populations respectively (Office of Institutional Research, 2012). The campus includes 13,957 female students who constitute 62% of the total population.

¹ Riverland University is a pseudonym to ensure anonymity of the selected university for study and allow for confidentiality of the study's participants. All statistical information derived from the selected university's institutional research division.

Participant Selection Criteria

As noted above, I recruited a total of 12 participants for this study, 6 undergraduates and 6 graduate students. Given the scope of examining student leadership experiences within the context of a predominantly White institution, participants must have had at least one semester attendance at a predominantly White higher education institution before participating in the study. This criterion was used to include any individuals who may have transferred to this campus from another institution as well as to exclude those who are just beginning their postsecondary education. Self-identification as a leader was also a criterion. More specifically, participants must have attended for the full academic year, as individual interviews took place in the fall semester, and participants must be available for possible follow-up during the spring. In addition to meeting educational background stipulations, participants must have self-identified as racially Black and self-identified as a women. As noted earlier, the definition of leader is intentionally broad to allow for the variety, complexity, and context of how leadership is exercised.

I used the term “Black” to recruit participants who identified as Black, were seen as Black, and had a current racial experiences as a person of African descent, regardless of various ethnic identifiers. Grounded in Black feminist thought, it was my goal to capture the collective lived experiences of Black women who have experienced racism as Black peoples within the United States. Any unique distinctions across ethnicity, geographical background, citizenship status, and immigration history of my participants emerged from the phenomenological richness of my data (Collins, 2000). Further, the campus site for this study has a significant Cape Verdean and Haitian population who

identified by ethnicity and who were included in my study if they also identify as Black ([Riverland University], 2012).

Further, while my racial identity as a Black woman gave me some insider status when interviewing and relating to participant experiences, my ethnicity as African American who grew up in the southwest region of the United States yields potential differences of racial ideologies between my participants and myself. It was necessary when conducting this study that I asked questions about how women identify in race, ethnicity, citizenship status, residency location, and time lived within the United States to gather a full context of heritage and cultural practices to avoid making assumptions or generalizations based on my own racial ideology.

With comparable goals of recognizing the collective yet distinct differences of gender, I used a broad definition for the term of woman. The analytical category of woman within research has been highly contested by feminist scholars. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler (2006) critiqued tendencies to universalize the category of woman, based on assumptions of group cohesion. Butler's critique included noting essentialist notions of sex, namely biological and anatomical characteristics, as well as patriarchal and heterosexist notions of gender. Scholars have also critiqued analytical categories of women as being problematic for non-Western and/or non-White women. Mohanty (1991) also critiques "Western feminism" as conceptualizing both a universal patriarchal framework that has constructed an analytical category of Third World women (and women of color in general) as a monolithic group of study. Differences across race, ethnicity, and nationality are also not acknowledged in these categories and the distinct social structures in which women are oppressed in these systems are rendered invisible.

To address these concerns, I recruited participants who self-identified as a woman, recognizing identities beyond cisgender women may be represented in my study.

Participant Recruitment Methods

My approach to recruiting participants across multiple levels of academic classification for this study drew upon two techniques: convenience sampling and snowball sampling. I began recruitment for my study by using convenience sampling and looked for participants by contacting several colleagues at Riverland University and asked them to suggest names and contact information of potential participants. My rationale for beginning recruitment here is that through my past involvement working in student affairs positions and teaching at Riverland, I have established a relationship and trustworthiness with colleagues. Further, my colleagues spanned a variety of areas on campus, such as the Center for Student Development, Center for Multicultural Advancement and Student Success, Residence Life, Student Bridges, Emerging Scholars, and various academic programs to offer a diverse representation of leadership within my study.

I spoke with my colleagues by email or in-person to discuss the goals of my study, requested permission to speak with appropriate student spaces and/or distribute advertisement materials for my study. I recruited participants by electronic advertisements (Appendix A). Electronic advertisements were sent through email invitations, and I create a Facebook note that was shared by those I contacted about the study.

While I was largely successful recruiting a majority of my participants through convenience sampling, I also used snowball sampling to expand the population for my research participants. Using this approach, I asked three women who have already agreed to participate in my study to suggest names and contact information of Black women leaders within other spaces on campus. Upon getting these names and contact information I sent these individual a request to participate in this study via email, therefore recruiting the remaining targeted number of participants.

Data Sources

Data for my study was through the following two sources: demographic questionnaire and individual interviews. What follows is a detailed implementation of how each data source in the order in which they were conducted.

Demographic Questionnaire

This questionnaire (Appendix C) served as a means to determine eligibility of individuals to participate in the study by verifying that they meet the selection criteria: self-identity as racially Black, self-identify as a woman, current enrollment at the designated campus site, at least one semester at a predominantly White higher education institution prior to the study, English-speaking, and involvement in leadership on or off campus.

Participants were also asked social identity demographic information, such as ethnicity, social class, nationality status, and religion/spirituality. They were given adequate space to fill in additional information that they consider relevant and to explain,

in as much detail as they wish, the ways in which they see themselves as Black women leaders. This questionnaire was administered online using the GoogleDocs Form feature through a private link only accessible by email invitation.

Interviews

Drawing from phenomenological interviewing techniques, I conducted a series of in-depth interviews for each participant. Prior to scheduling interviews, I asked participants to review the consent form (Appendix B). Given the anticipated participate size and scope of the dissertation, I conducted each initial interview using an interview protocol (Appendix D) that was segmented into thematic sections to address each of the guiding research questions.

First, the interview focused on gathering background knowledge about the participants. Questions focused on how they describe their current leadership involvement, background of leadership experiences prior to attending Riverland University, motivation for involvement at the college level, examples of Black women leadership exemplars who inspired or supported them personally, and how they described the concepts of leader and leading.

Second, interviews collected information about the ways in which Black women college student leaders negotiated oppression. Participants were asked to offer examples on interpersonal, organizational, and institutional oppression as well as instances of prejudice and discrimination. Stereotypes of Black womanhood were also explored along with how participants negotiated projections of these negative images. Lastly,

participants were asked about how their involvement as leaders informed their consciousness of identity as a Black woman.

To address the second research question, the interviews focused on what social factors nourish and sustain Black women's college student leadership. Specific questions were asked about mentorship, historical influences, sources of inspiration, extracurricular activities and academic curriculum that allowed them to persevere.

When developing the interview protocol, I anticipated facing two major challenges: developing intersectional questions concerning race and gender and co-constructing a language about leadership. When doing qualitative intersectional research, as noted in the literature review chapter, it is critical to pose questions to participants that are themselves intersectional (for example, "What are some instances where Black women college student leaders experience oppression?") to generate data in the participants' words that shows their understanding of intersectionality (Bowleg, 2008). I used this method rather than asking separate questions about race and gender (such as "What are some instances where Black women college student leaders experience racism?" or "What are some instances where Black women college student leaders experience sexism?") and myself drawing any conclusion about intersectionality that may not represent the understanding of the participant. It was vital for me to have a critical reader review my questions before the study's launch to make sure I do not pose any additive questions.

Another issue I anticipated encountering was with language and difficulty discussing the concept of leadership with Black women. As noted in my literature review, there is not a current language available to Black women leaders that draws upon a

coherent, accepted model of Black women leadership. In many cases Black women college student leaders may not themselves be aware of the traditions I am drawing upon in my literature review. For that reason, it was important for me to separate any definition I have developed from the literature about Black women leadership and views of leadership that my participants would have so I asked them for their own definitions of Black women's leadership. As noted earlier, I have not included this line of investigation in this dissertation study. Devault (2004) raises the issue of language when conducting research and how it can reflect language based on the experiences of men that may not fully capture the experiences of women. Consequently, some participants used "woman-talk" in explaining their leadership experiences. This gendered communication, women use phrases, such as "you know," as a means to convey they assume that other women would understand what is not being said explicitly or hard to communicate (Devault, 2004).

As argued earlier in Chapter 2, Black women conceptualize leadership differently from White and/or male counterparts and may gravitate toward non-positional leadership or operate in free spaces between the community and formal leaders (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Parker, 2005; Robnett 1997). Race further complicates concepts of women developing a language with participants to discuss leadership. From my experience advising student leaders and through a pilot study I conducted on this same topic, I discovered that I understood and described leadership in ways that differed from the participants, who used the phrase "you know" exactly as Devault noted. As a researcher I had the difficult task of co-constructing a language with the women I interviewed to

capture how they experience leadership beyond what has been socialized or valued by dominant society.

Interviews lasted between 45 and 120 minutes and I used a semi-structured, formal format. I used an open-ended interview protocol as a guide, only deviating from the protocol to ask relevant or follow-up questions when necessary. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim in preparation for the data analysis process. Participants were informed prior to the interview that a follow-up conversation may be requested in the event that there needs to be further clarification or because of audio-recording issues, and a few follow-ups took place via email. During and after each interview, I documented comments, observations, and potential points of inquiry in my researcher's journal and included in the data analysis process.

In a few instances, my review of interview transcriptions prompted both clarifying and additional questions. To address these questions, I emailed participants my questions along with an excerpt from the interview transcriptions to give context to what initiated my inquiry. Participants answered these questions by email, and their responses were added to transcription documents to be included in the coding process.

It is important to note that at the time of the dissertation study proposal, focus groups were proposed as a third data source. The purpose of the focus groups as a data sources was to confirm, clarify, and elaborate on the initial themes identified from the interviews. Focus groups were anticipated to take place several months after the conducting the interviews and completion of an initial data analysis. Given the volume of data collected, reaching saturation from these interviews and limited scope of a dissertation study, my faculty committee and I decided not to include focus group data.

Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

Given that participants shared in-depth details about their personal lives and accounts within and outside of campus, it was necessary to maintain confidentiality throughout my study. Data collected from interviews and demographic questionnaire were located in secure locations within my residence and on my personal computer. As an extra precaution, a secure access code was required to log-on to my computer and file storage systems to access participant data. Pseudonyms replaced participant names, university, organizations, campus locations, and people discussed in interview transcripts. The only exception to the use of pseudonyms was with a participant who requested that her real name be used. Despite these efforts and my desire to maintain complete confidentiality for participants, I recognized that I could not ensure this in instances of theft, computer hacking, or other comparable situations. Lastly, it is important to note that this was a single-campus study, and I am not identifying the name of the campus.

Data Analysis

As noted previously, there were two sources of data for analysis: demographic questionnaire and individual interviews. What follows is an overview of the data analysis for my study.

Demographic Questionnaire

Participants' responses to the demographic questionnaire were collected electronically using Google Docs Form feature. Responses were collected through my personal Google account, password-protected, and accessible only by the researcher.

Upon collecting all responses, some quantitative analysis, specifically a summation of like responses, was used to help construct a broad overview of the personal background of participants.

Interviews

As mentioned previously, individual interviews used a question protocol and were audio-recorded. Immediately after each interview, I took notes in my researcher's journal, writing any striking aspects and areas for follow-up as well as tone, body language, and interaction with me as the researcher. I then listened to each interview, making any further notes before having the recorded audio professionally transcribed. The transcriptionist was instructed to remove any identifying information to ensure a commitment to anonymity and confidentiality. Once the transcriptions were complete, I again listened to the interviews to check for accuracy and made any corrections and took additional notes of commonalities between participants in preparation for coding.

Transcripts were imported to the software program NVIVO in preparation for data analysis. This used both open and axial coding as means to make meaning of the data (Merriam, 2009). First, I used open-coding of all transcriptions to gain general meaning and to group initial thematic coding categories that were identified. Next, I used axial coding to first inductively identify how initial themes from open-coding related to each other. Using index cards and Microsoft Word, I grouped similar codes with each other to begin to determine overarching themes and speculate relationships across these themes. Axial coding also included deductively identifying how open-codes link to existing literature and my study's theoretical framework. Through this process I

confirmed the relevance of codes identified from the initial open-coding as well as identified additional codes. To finalize the coding system, themes from the open and axial coding were examined in an attempt to eliminate duplications and revise wording. All transcripts were coded using these finalized thematic categories where I made note of any salient quotes.

I reviewed the data several times to familiarize myself with the interview content and the coding themes. To check the accuracy of my interpretations and resolve any inconsistencies, I used two peer debriefers: one Afro-Latina and Dominican woman who attended Riverland University as an undergraduate student and one Haitian American woman with a background in working with youth leadership development and Black feminism. These peer reviewers were influential as I reviewed interview transcripts from participants who identified as racially Black and ethnically Dominican or Haitian. Final thematic codes were then organized based upon the guiding research questions. A comparison between participants also took place within and across academic classification to identify common experiences to stay true to the scope of a phenomenological study.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness for this study will depend upon various techniques to address issues of credibility, reliability and transferability. First and foremost, long-term engagement with the study occurred as I requested that participants be able to commit to involvement with the study for both semesters of the 2013-2014 academic year. Next, triangulation was used to support credibility and reliability, as there will be two sources

of data collections: demographic questionnaire and a series of individual interviews. Individual interviews occurred at multiple points throughout the study among 12 participants beginning with an initial in-person interview and follow-up communications that asked participants to clarify or expand their experiences. Confirmation of emerging themes and peer debriefers also supported credibility of the study. Participants had the opportunity to clarify and offer feedback on the collective, emerging themes from interviews through follow-up conversations. I also used two peer debriefers throughout my data analysis: one debriefer who is a White male with expertise in college student leadership development and a second who is a Black woman with an extensive background in Black feminist thought. Both debriefers along with my faculty committee were vital in validating and offering insights in how I interpreted the data of the study.

Transferability deals with the degree to which a study's finding can be generalized to other situations beyond that of the study (Merriam, 2009). Acknowledging the small sample size of the study, highly detailed descriptions provided significant information about the setting, participants, and findings of the study. In addition, intentionality of participant recruitment through multiple methods enhanced the maximum variation in the sample. Lastly, an audit trail through a researcher's journal documents the data collection and analysis processes to allow for other researchers to follow these procedures.

Researcher Profile

In addition to outlining the study's methods, it is important to note my own subjectivity as a researcher. I identify as a Black woman doctoral student pursuing a degree in student development with a concentration in social justice education. The topic

of leadership and Black college women's experiences is of personal and professional interest to me. I have an extensive background in leadership as a college student, my 10-year professional career in higher education, and through my leadership positions within national professional organizations. Through multiple roles as a student affairs professional, I have had the opportunity to specifically focus on leadership development as an advisor to various student groups at two large, predominantly White institutions.

I designed and implemented this study through the foundation of my historical literature review research on Black women's leadership where I identified thematic traditions of leading. I also developed this study on the basis of my personal beliefs about student leadership development, which are grounded in reflective practice. Originating in the field of education and coined by Schön (1983), reflective practice is the cyclical process of an educator informing and enhancing one's pedagogical approaches by critically examining past incidents. As a long-time student affairs professional with a concentration in student leadership development, I approached this study to better understand the experiences of Black women college student leaders to enhance my personal practice and that of other professionals in my field.

In addition to reflective practice, critical humanism, a view that accounts for "individual consciousness as the agent to empower, transform, and liberate groups from dominating and imprisoning social processes" guided the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 46). While the central goal was to inform student affairs practice by highlighting the experiences of Black women college leaders, the study also aimed to assist participants in developing a critical consciousness about their experiences. Empowerment theory suggests that the first step in changing one's social situation, particularly in regards to

powerlessness, is developing an awareness or a critical consciousness about how one's social identities influence experiences that may necessitate social change (Gutiérrez & Lewis, 1999).

Limitations

This study has a few limitations. First, data were collected at one predominantly White institution, geographically located in the northeastern region of the United States. A second limitation is that the study exclusively focused on the experiences of Black women college students. While there may be some common experiences with other marginalized identities, such as Black men, White women, and women from other racially marginalized groups, implications will only be specific to Black women. The sample size was small, which impacted the diversity of opinions and social identities represented (e.g., ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, social class, religious/spiritual identity, etc.). Participant recruitment is a third limitation of this study, given that participants had been recruited initially by Student Affairs professionals, and the snowball technique perpetuated the tilt toward student leadership with Student Affairs. These Black women were primarily affiliated with campus student groups or programs with little mention of leadership beyond the scope formal organizational structures.

CHAPTER 4

BLACK WOMEN COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERS' EXPERIENCES WITH OPPRESSION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the leadership experiences of Black women undergraduate and graduate students at a predominantly White institution. Specifically, the study aimed to address the following research questions: (1) In what ways do Black women college student leaders experience oppression—discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes, and internalization—when exercising their leadership? and (2) What social factors nurture and sustain Black women college student leaders when faced with instances of oppression?

Participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. Data were collected from 12 participants (6 undergraduate and 6 graduate students) who self-identified as Black, woman, and as a leader. Chapter 3 describes in detail the qualitative interview-based, phenomenological methodology and Black feminist theoretical framework grounding the study as well as the process of data collection and data analysis.

This chapter offers a portion of the findings from the individual interviews. This chapter begins with a description of the sample's demographic information as reported by participants from the online questionnaire. Next, participant individual profiles that describe the personal background and leadership experiences for each woman are presented. The chapter concludes with an introduction of the findings. Due to the substantial amount of information collected, the study's findings will be discussed over the span of two chapters. In this section, the focus will be on the community as

motivation to lead, challenges upon entry into college leadership, and interpersonal interactions with oppression faced by Black women college student leaders.

Description of the Sample

Prior to interviewing, participants were asked to complete an online Demographic Questionnaire. The data provided is self-reported information from the 12 study participants. Information from this questionnaire is represented through Table 1: Academic Background and Table 2: Social Identity Categories. Undergraduate student participants ranged from the age of 19 to 24, while graduate students ranged from age 20 to 33. It is important to note that the oldest undergraduate participant, at age 24, was a transfer student from a 4-year institution and anticipated to graduate with her bachelor's degree May 2014. Also, the youngest graduate student, at the age of 20, had recently graduated with her bachelor's degree and was in her first semester as a doctoral student at the time of the study. Participants had different academic majors, and three women were pursuing multiple degrees or certificates.

In regards to social identity categories, racial identity of participants is not noted in Table 2, since one of the criteria for participation in this study was that participants identify racially as Black, see themselves and be seen as Black, and think of themselves as persons of African descent. Ethnically, participants largely identified as African American or having Caribbean heritage. Two participants reported not being born within the United States: one woman born in Haiti immigrated to the United States 5 years ago, and another woman born in the Dominican Republic immigrated to the US 14 years ago. Socio-economic class of participants ranged from "upper-middle-class" to "poor" where

all participants except one were raised in a two-parent household. While 8 participants reported some religious affiliation with Christianity, four described themselves as “spiritual,” “agnostic” or “non-religious.” Lastly, it is important to note while it was a criterion that participants self-identified as woman, one participant described her gender expression and identity as masculine of center which she explains as:

I would be defined as masculine. And not even my appearance—like that’s how I feel, like how I present myself, my mannerisms, the way I eat food, like it’s all a part of how I was socialized and how I perceive to be a very masculine woman.

Table 1. Demographic Information—Academic Background

Category	Description
Participants	Undergraduates: 6 Graduates: 6
Age Range	Undergraduates: 19-24 Average Age: 21
	Graduates: 20-33 Average Age: 27
Degree Level	Undergraduate-Sophomore (1) Undergraduate-Junior (2) Undergraduate-Senior (3) Graduate- Masters (2) Graduate-Certificate (2)* Graduate- Doctorate (3) *One graduate student is pursuing a Master's and Certificate simultaneously.
Transfer Status	Undergraduate from Community College (1) Undergraduate from 4-Year Institution (1)
Majors	<u>Undergraduates</u> Chemistry, Biochemistry, and Molecular Biology Civil Engineering Mathematics and Economics Psychology Sociology Women, Gender, Sexuality, and Civic Engagement <u>Graduates</u> Afro-American Studies (3) English and Feminist Studies Social Justice Education Sociology

Table 2. Demographic Information—Social Identity Categories

Category	Description
Ethnicity	African American (6) Creole Haitian (2) Haitian and Cameroonian Latina, Dominican West Indian
Socio-economic Class	Upper-Middle-Class; two-parent household Middle-Class; two-parent household (3) Lower-Middle-Class; two-parent household Working-Class; two-parent household (4) Working-Class; single-parent household Poor; two-parent household (2)
Nationality	United States Born (10) Internationally Born (2) Haiti; in US for 5 years Dominican Republic; in US for 14 years
Gender	11 Female 1 Female, Masculine of Center
Religion	Christian (8) Spiritual (2) Agnostic Not Religious

Individual Participant Profiles

What follows is a brief profile of each study participant. To protect their anonymity and confidentiality, each participant selected a pseudonym. Profiles are grouped by academic classification (undergraduate and graduate), then each is listed in alphabetical order based upon pseudonym.

Undergraduate Participants

Alexandra

A senior majoring in sociology, Alexandra is 24 years old and has been at Riverland University for three years. The only transfer student participating in the study, she previously attended a predominantly White university for two years and was a member and at one point captain of the school's track and field team. Alexandra grew up middle-class and in a two-parent household near Boston. While she mentions having a distant Caribbean ancestry, she identifies as African American with "a lot of old school Black family values" due to her father's upbringing in South Carolina.

When Alexandra first arrived to Riverland, she was on the track team but eventually left the team due to academic challenges and a hostile environment as will be explained in this study. I first met Alexandra in 2010 through her participation in a student group, As I Am, a writing and performance group that focuses on leadership and positive self-image for women of color. She describes herself as a "quiet leader," preferring not to be in the spotlight and feels she is still trying to navigate her involvement on campus. Currently, she is trying to start a student group for Black women who have or plan to transition to natural hair.

Geidy

An energetic woman with a self-described passion for social justice, Geidy is a 20-year-old junior, majoring in women, gender, and sexuality studies and is pursuing a certificate in civic engagement and public service. She was born in the Dominican Republic and moved to Massachusetts 14 years ago with her immediate family. She

considers herself to be working-class and speaks at length in her interview about having a class consciousness at Riverland. When asked about her racial, she identifies as Afro-Latina and commented in an email follow-up that delineations of race and ethnicity are complicated for her as a Latina. Specifically, she wrote, “It is difficult to say whether I am Black or not because I am Latina. I consider myself to be Afro Latina because of my ancestry and features. This is a complicated question for me because of the many different labels that exist to identify Latina women.”

Geidy was heavily involved in leadership at her high school, ranging from mock trail, volunteering for a nonprofit group dedicated to college access, and the Boys and Girls Club. At Riverland, she recently became a Resident Assistant and leads the public relations efforts for La Familia, a group for Latino students on campus. Lastly, Geidy has an interest in law and government. She secured an internship position at a local law firm and is planning to run for a student government position at Riverland.

Harmony

Describing herself as outgoing and being able to relate to a lot of people, Harmony is a 20-year-old junior, studying mathematics and economics. Born and raised within the United States, she identifies as Haitian American and says she grew up in a “West Caribbean culture [that had a] very strict background, high expectations, and ‘old school.’” She is from Massachusetts and grew up in a two-parent, middle-class household, however states that she was primarily raised by her mother as a single-parent. Another salient identity for Harmony is her religion as Christian.

While she is deeply devoted to her faith and had numerous religious leadership experiences in high school, she expressed challenges getting involved in Christian spaces at Riverland. This difficulty is largely associated with her finding existing spaces as predominantly White, isolating, and not reflecting the same religious practices she grew up with in predominantly Black churches. As will be discussed in the Community as Motivation to Lead section, she is significantly committed to sustaining students of color student organizations on campus and served as an executive board member of participated in the Lift Ev'ry Voice spoken word group. Currently, she serves as the president of the Black Engineers Association and has a part-time job in the Student Activities Department.

Janine

A senior studying civil engineering, Janine is 21 years old. While she identifies as African American, she also mentions that her father is from Ghana. She grew up in a two-parent home in Massachusetts and reported that she is middle-class with both parents having graduate degrees. Janine commented that her leadership development has been influenced by her mother who was raised in Mississippi at the tail end of the Civil Rights Movement.

As will be explained throughout this chapter and chapter 5, Janine tries “really hard not to be in leadership roles that like a stereotypical Black person would be in.” At Riverland, her leadership has primarily been within the Department of Engineering as a mentor, statistic grader, and study leader. She is also the current co-president of the

Seismic Design Team. Additional extracurricular activities include track and field, orchestra, and violence prevention peer support.

Kim

I first met Kim in spring 2013 when she was a first-year student as I was her instructor for the Social Justice in Schools course. I knew her as an outspoken student in class, performed a spoken word piece about her experience as a Black woman, and expressed feelings of isolation at Riverland University. Kim is a 19-year-old sophomore, studying psychology and is looking to incorporate a field of study supporting her interest in social justice. Identifying as African American, she grew up in Rhode Island in a two-parent home and considers herself as lower-middle-class.

Kim describes herself as having a difficult year navigating student leadership at Riverland. While she eventually joined a spoken word group at Riverland called Lift E'vry Voice as a way to connect with other students of color, she has yet to find a leadership role that suits her on campus. The summer before this study, Kim worked as a teaching assistant for a nonprofit arts organization in Rhode Island. She specifically requested to work in an area similar to the neighborhood she grew up in to support youth of color gain exposure to the arts. Beginning her second year at Riverland, she was interested in starting a group for Black students to dialogue on gender dynamics.

Roxanne

Transferring from a community college, Roxanne is a senior majoring in chemistry, biochemistry, and molecular biology. She was born and spent most of her life

in Haiti and came to the United States 5 years ago to pursue higher education. Roxanne's mother passed away at a young age, and she was primarily raised by her father. She describes her socio-economic class as working-class. She also attributes her upbringing to a few aunts who cared for her like a daughter, and she considers them as her role models.

At Riverland, Roxanne has had a difficult transition as a transfer student and new to the United States. She describes being self-conscious of public speaking due to English being her third language. Despite these difficulties, she was encouraged and successfully obtained a leadership position as a Resident Assistant as well as being involved in the biochemistry club and pre-medicine club.

Graduate Participants

Alice

In her second year at Riverland University, Alice is a 24-year-old master's student in the Social Justice Education concentration. She considers herself of Haitian and Cameroonian heritage, was raised in Massachusetts in a two-parent home and describes her socio-economic status as poor.

Prior to attending Riverland, she attended a predominantly White institution in New England and commented that she had a difficult time adjusting to the racial climate as being one of few Black students. As a student leader, she addressed this isolation by initiating a woman of color student group and a Black Family Reunion weekend. As a graduate student at Riverland, she works as an Assistant Residence Director in the same department as another participant, Morgan. She also recently got involved with the

Graduate Student of Color Organization and serves as a mentor in the multicultural office on campus.

Charlotte

Starting her first semester at Riverland at the time of the study, Charlotte is a 20-year-old doctoral student studying Afro American Studies. Coming from a West Indian heritage, she grew up in Maryland as upper-middle-class where both parents are educators with graduate degrees. As an undergraduate student, she attended a small, elite, predominantly White institution in Massachusetts and was heavily involved in extracurricular activities. Specific leadership roles include co-leader of a first-year orientation program, co-chair of the Black Student Association, and co-captain of a step team. She also was a co-founder of the Africana Studies Student Journal, a space for her and her peers to distribute their work beyond the classroom. At Riverland, she is currently not involved leadership, as she is focusing on transitioning to a new campus.

Dawn

Dawn is a 29-year-old doctoral student studying Afro American Studies. I consider Dawn to be a long-time casual friend and colleague who I met in 2010 through mutual friends. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, Dawn has a distinctly humorous personality that makes her approachable, yet serves as a strategy for her to respond to oppression. Identifying as African American, she grew up in an urban city in Michigan in a two-parent home as working-class. As an undergraduate, she was heavily involved in extracurricular activities ranging from being a Resident Assistant to active on the school

newspaper and her campus' chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

While at Riverland, Dawn has held a variety of leadership positions. First, she was the leader of the Black Graduate Student Union and organized a conference focused on the Black Arts Movement. In addition to working as a Teaching Assistant within her academic department, she also taught for the Students United program, a community-based learning, educational advocacy agency based at Riverland for underrepresented students. Currently, Dawn has stepped down from leadership positions at Riverland due to exhaustion and a desire to focus on her dissertation.

Lorraine

Like Dawn, I first met Lorraine in 2010 through mutual friends and consider her to be casual friend. Originally from Michigan, she is a 33-year-old graduate student at Riverland, seeking her second master's degree in English and seeking an advanced graduate certificate in Feminist Studies. Her undergraduate institution and the institution from which she acquired her first master's degree were both located in a major city in Michigan. Identifying as African American, she grew up working-class in a two-parent home and is the first person to attend college within her immediate family.

Lorraine describes herself as an artist and playwright who has gravitated toward leadership involving the performing arts, particular among youth of color. While she has been involved as a board member for several local nonprofit organizations in the town where Riverland is located, she expressed challenges working with White and class-privileged people that resulted in her leaving many of these roles. On campus, she works

full-time in the Department of Student Affairs and is one of Harmony's supervisors. Working in this position for the past year has sparked her interest in pursuing a career in Student Affairs as she enjoys working with student organizations on campus. As a graduate student, she recently took on a leadership role with the Graduate Student of Color Organization, and as will be discussed in Community as Motivation to Lead, she has a strong interest in reviving and sustaining community spaces for graduate students of color.

Morgan

A graduate certificate student in Afro American Studies, Morgan is a 26-year-old graduate student who has been at Riverland University for about a year and a half at the time of the study. She attended two previous predominantly White institutions. As an undergraduate, she held multiple leadership positions, such as a Resident Assistant and was on the school softball team. Pursuing a master's degree in higher education administration and holding a position as An Assistant Residence Director, she attended a campus in Florida that she described as racially diverse. Morgan grew up in Connecticut in a working-class, two-parent family. She considers her Creole ethnicity to be important to her identity.

We first met in the spring semester of 2013 through Lorraine and had an instant friendship due to our shared interest in leadership, social justice, and sports. Her current leadership on campus is through her full-time position as a Residence Hall Director. She also has interned with the campus multicultural office and athletic departments. As will be discussed in Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression, Morgan has faced a variety of

challenges at Riverland, which she attributes to an intersection of her identities as Black, masculine of center, and queer. When asked to explain her gender identity, Morgan uses the term masculine of center, which she explains as,

I would be defined as masculine. And not even my appearance—like that’s how I feel, like how I present myself, my mannerisms, the way I eat food, like it’s all a part of how I was socialized and how I perceive to be a very masculine woman.

Nicky

Lastly, Nicky is a 30-year-old doctoral student studying sociology who has been at Riverland University for three years. She spent her childhood in the southern region of the United States in areas, such as New Orleans, Memphis, and Jackson. Describing her ethnicity as African American, she grew up poor and lived in a two-parent home until the age of 12 when her parents divorced. Like Harmony, Christian religion is important to Nicky, and she too comments on facing challenges negotiating her faith and expectations of objectivity as a scholar.

She had multiple experiences at predominantly White institutions as an undergraduate and graduate student but commented that the racial and ethnic dynamics after arriving at Riverland University as more disproportionately White than those other campuses. She has faced a number of challenges on campus due to her identity as a Black woman. Specifically, as will be discussed at length in Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression, she feels she is constantly negotiating the stereotype of the mammy and has made decisions to be selective in when and what capacities she will lead. While she was vastly involved in leadership at her previous schools and communities, she says her leadership at Riverland is being kept to a minimum. She currently works as a Teaching

Assistant in the sociology department and is involved in the Sociology Graduate Student Association.

The next section of this chapter focuses on findings from the individual interviews. As mentioned earlier, the findings from the individuals interviews will be discussed in this chapter as well as in Chapter 5 and include the following five overarching themes: 1) Community as Motivation to Lead, 2) Challenges upon Entry into College Student Leadership, 3) Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression, 4) Responses to Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression, and 5) Nurturing Black Women College Student Leadership. Findings for Chapter 4 include three overarching themes: Community as Motivation to Lead, Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership, and Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression.

Community as Motivation to Lead

Community as Motivation to Lead is an overarching theme that captures the reasons these Black women college students decided to pursue leadership at a predominantly White institution. During interviews, participants were asked not only what types of leadership they were currently involved in but also what motivated them to gravitate toward those specific leadership roles mentioned. While a few participants mentioned getting involved in leadership to support career and academic goals, the central motivation to lead on campus revolved around the notion of community, specifically developing community among Black students on campus. Participants recalled observations made about the campus racial and ethnic dynamic after recently arriving to Riverland University. While navigating academic, social, and extracurricular

activities, women noted not only that they were one of few Black women on campus but also expressed difficulty connecting with other students on campus who shared their racial or ethnic background. Based on these experiences, participants discussed pursuing leadership as a means to 1) enhance, 2) sustain, and 3) create community spaces. In the context of this study, the term space is used to describe formal student organization or programs supported financially or structurally by Riverland University as well as informal group gatherings initiated by Riverland students.

Enhance Existing Community Spaces

The comments grouped under the theme, Enhance Existing Community Spaces, focus on motivations to get involved in campus leadership. Participants talked about joining organizations on campus and after attending meetings or events mentioned critiques of existing leadership. What is noteworthy in these accounts is how participants talked about visions they had either for the specific student organization or for the Black community on campus in general. Charlotte, a new graduate student to Riverland, reflected on her motivation to join the [Black Student Association] at her undergraduate institution:

I think it was primarily just seeing that there was a roll to be filled and thinking that I would be a good person to be able to do it because of the vision that I had for the [Black Student Association] in particular... I didn't really think that the other people who were potential candidates would've been able to serve the needs of all of the Black students on campus. I thought that the people who were running would probably cater more to their friend group or to people who were similar to them. And I personally wanted to expand the scope of the [BSA].

In this example, Charlotte implies a sense of self-confidence about her abilities as a leader due to what she envisioned for the organization. She continued to explain how she

came to make the assumption that her peer leaders might not only direct the group's efforts to their friends but to a particular audience of Black students on campus. Specifically, she wants to expand a limiting, if not pejorative, depiction of Black students on campus as partiers:

I felt that, in previous years, it seemed as if the BSA was exclusive, not just to Black students, but to a particular kind of Black student. And that's something that we really wanted to change. We wanted to change the BSA's reputation of only throwing parties. Because while that is not all that we did, that's what the majority of campus perceives us as doing, despite having weekly meetings, where we're just discussing different aspects of the Black experiences in the US and outside of the US.

Dawn, also a graduate student, has similar motivations as to why she joined the Black Graduate Student Union at Riverland University. As a then new graduate student coming from a predominantly White institution with a surrounding city that was more racially diverse than the town of Riverland, Dawn had prior experience leading Black students through her involvement at her undergraduate's chapter of the NAACP. Drawing from this experience and other campus leadership, Dawn brought an existing vision of how Black student organizations should function and self-confidence that she could lead a similar group at Riverland. She explained:

Well, the [Black Graduate Student Union] was chosen by me because I went to a few meetings, and I said to myself, "I can do it better." (Laughter) You know, not talking to anybody about what they did before, which was my style back then – like I said, very humbling being in grad school (laughs) and learning from your mistakes. And I realized how hard it was, like why those people in leadership before me really struggled. And like quite honestly, I wasn't looking to join any other organizations, because I didn't trust people who weren't people of color (laughs), like coming from Detroit and that experience.

Like Charlotte, Dawn depicts self-confidence in her capabilities to lead this organization. While Charlotte shared in her interview that she felt her attempt to rebrand the BSA was successful, Dawn reflected on her experience differently. Describing this experience as

“learning from a mistake,” she recognized how her experience from undergraduate only partially prepared her for this graduate role. As will be discussed in the next section, Creating New Community Spaces, Dawn faced some challenges navigating the ethnic diversity among Black students at Riverland University, making it difficult to transfer her leadership experience from undergraduate NAACP to the Black Graduate Student Association.

Sustaining Community Spaces

The second motivation for pursuing campus leadership among Black women college students was centered on sustaining community. Again drawing from observations of racial and ethnic dynamics on campus, several participants noted that while there were several student organizations for Black students on campus, their vitality was questionable. Participants discussed a sense of urgency to take on leadership as a means to keep Black student organizations running on the predominantly White campus. Lorraine, a graduate student who has been at Riverland University for several years, noted the dwindling opportunities for graduate students of color to socialize beyond their academic departments. She explained her motivation for her involvement in the Graduate Student of Color Organization:

When I first moved to the area, the graduate students of color and faculty and undergrads used to be a pretty cohesive network where there would be formal type of events where people of color from [Riverland University] would get together....Over time, those kind of faded, and so people kind of got lost in the shuffle, and lost in their own departments. And so what I’m hoping to happen with this organization is that we can regenerate that formal kind of networking and community that needs to happen. Undergraduate participants also made comparable observations that Black or student of color organizations in general were in jeopardy of becoming inactive.

Harmony, a leader active in several students of color organizations, explained what motivated her to get involved in campus leadership:

First off, if nobody wants to be a leader or wants to be a president, who will? And if nobody becomes a president or whatever, all the [student organizations] will be inactive. So who's really gonna step up? Somebody has to step up. So I chose to step up because I want to see [Black Engineers Association] ... flourish, I want to see [Haitian Students United] and [Organization for African Students] ... flourish, I want everything to still be the same my senior year. And making sure that we encourage the underclassmen to, you know, shadow us so that they can be the [executive board], so that they can keep going and doing what they're doing. Because if we don't do that, at the end of the day, all cultural events, the Black community, people will just be all over the place, not knowing where to go or not knowing who to turn to.

Harmony expresses a sense of urgency and necessity to get involved in leadership.

Similar to Lorraine, her motivation to keep these student organizations going is based on her earlier years on campus. Recognizing a time when these groups had strong involvement and visibility on campus, Harmony wants to reestablish this presence for the benefit of current and future students of color at Riverland University.

What is noteworthy in Harmony's motivation and is shared across participants is a desire to develop community among their African-heritage peers, an opportunity they feel is necessary, given their experiences at a predominantly White institution. While women often discussed willingness, if not eagerness, to take on campus leadership, upon entering these roles participants confronted issues that created challenges in their effectiveness as a leader.

Creating New Community Spaces

The third motivation for Black women college student leadership was Creating New Community Spaces. Statements grouped under this theme involved efforts participants made to establish new spaces or organization that did not already exist on campus. As mentioned in Dawn's experience, there is ethnic diversity among Black students at Riverland's campus. While some Black student organizations exist on campus, these groups do not always meet the needs of the ethnic diversity of Black students on this campus. One such case was explained by Geidy, an undergraduate participant who identifies as Dominican and Afro-Latina and who decided to establish a Latino student group with her friends:

And with [La Familia Latina], we are the only Latin America organization on campus....getting together and recognizing the fact that our voices need to be heard, and that we need to be there for each other, is really empowering for me. And I think it's a way to form a support group, because sometimes I wanna listen to Hispanic music and to my Latin American groups, and speak Spanish, because I can't do that on campus, because nobody else does that....That's like the ultimate goal of all [student organizations], is that they leave a footprint.

Creating this organization was particularly important for Geidy and her friends at a predominantly White campus. Geidy recognizes her social location and how she is racialized differently from some of her Latino peers due to her thicker hair texture and darker skin tone, yet she has had a different experience with Blackness due to her ethnicity as Dominican. As indicated in this quote, Geidy's experience was not being fully supported on campus, and she felt a sense of invisibility. This new Latina organization was important for Geidy to establish for her current time on campus and to create a sense of formal presence that future students could access.

Also considering the needs of her peers, Alexandra, an undergraduate transfer student, talked about creating a space specifically for Black women who are interested in

transitioning to natural or unprocessed hair. Based upon her own struggles moving toward natural hair and through conversations with peers, she has made attempts to start a group:

I was trying to start with a friend a natural hair group on campus.....I just conceived like for newly naturals and people that were transitioning, just how much it helps to just have a community aspect, just helping you talk about it, sharing your problems with it. I definitely think that you can't find that in a college....I just know for myself, if I had something like this when I started going natural, how much that would have helped me.

Similar to Geidy, Alexandra observed a need felt by herself and peers and took steps to address this need for support. Hair processing among Black women is a heavily debated topic, rooted in historical and political movements. A decision to maintain or transition from processed hair to natural hair textures is viewed as a type of resistance to White standards of beauty and an affirmation of African heritage. To organize a group centered on this notion at a predominantly White campus is an effort not only to network Black women together but to work toward creating a visibility of Black women.

Challenges upon Entry into College Leadership

After ongoing observations that prompted the desire to enhance, create, and/or sustain Black student community on campus, participants encountered several different kinds of challenges to their leadership. These challenges are grouped under the theme, Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership. In the interviews, participants were asked what challenges they faced in their current leadership roles. Frequently, they reported that these challenges were unanticipated and connected to racial and ethnic dynamics of leading at a predominantly White institution. It is important to note that there were

distinct entry differences in the experiences reported by undergraduate and graduate participants.

For all but one of the undergraduate woman—and she was a transfer student—Riverland University afforded the participants’ first experience pursuing leadership opportunities on a college campus and in some instances a predominantly White educational setting. On the other hand, all graduate student participants indicated they had previous experience leading at predominantly White universities during their previous undergraduate careers. Due to these different experiences, the Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership theme is discussed in separate sections: differentiating between undergraduate experiences and graduate experiences.

Undergraduate Student Entry

One of the most reported challenges among undergraduate participants was in regards to navigating college campus leadership. Women described Riverland University as being significantly larger than their high school population, making it difficult to decide which student groups to get involved with and establish themselves as leaders. Harmony recalls her early attempts at becoming a leader:

It was different in high school because it was such a small school, so I knew everybody, than it is Riverland. Going to a big school like Riverland and not really finding yourself your freshman year. And like being active in so many clubs, but it was just like, “What club do I want to specifically target?” And so it took me a while to find my way.

Although confident and ready to be a leader, Harmony reflects on how she felt overwhelmed when she first came to campus. As a way to deal with this challenge, she opted to try a variety of student organizations and leadership roles until she settled on

being the president of the Black Engineers Student Association. Alexandra, a transfer student to Riverland and now a senior, also depicts a sense of being overwhelmed.

Despite previous leadership at her first undergraduate institution, she still has trouble navigating the size of Riverland. Initially coming to campus as a student athlete in track and field, she explained how she faced challenges getting involved in leadership since leaving the team:

I feel like I'm still actually learning this campus, and I haven't joined many groups.... My former track coach said it best that here at Riverland, it's more of a real life, real world, experience but still in school....I'm not baby'ed here. You're literally one of 20,000 because it's a bigger campus here....I did miss that family feeling, and when I got here, I have to find that, and this usually comes to me, but ... that's what I mean when I say, I found meaning in myself and just jumped over those fears because the school's telling me to. You really have no choice. You either do it, or you sit there by yourself, or just leave.

While Harmony and Alexandra had difficulty navigating the large size of the campus, other participants attributed challenges related to racial and ethnic climate. For a few of the undergraduate participants, the student demographic of being on a predominantly White campus was significantly different from their high school population, creating a sense of culture shock. Kim, now a sophomore, reflected on her first year at Riverland University and how she encountered challenges navigating the racial climate:

Last year, I was really scared because I really had an idea like, "Oh my god, I'm in college, I'm a freshman in college, and I'm Black. Nobody is gonna like me!" (laughs) I was living in Northeast (residential area), and it's primarily White people and Asian people. And so I'm sitting there, and they're like, "Wow, you're really loud. Are you always like that?" So that's, you know, so I wasn't me my freshman year, and I wasn't comfortable walking into different groups or clubs or whatever because like they're not gonna like me.

Kim's account of being racially isolated was a new experience for her as she grew up in a predominantly Black and Latino area in Rhode Island. While Kim readily observed that

she was a racial minority on campus and in her residential area, this challenge was exacerbated by being described as “loud.” This type of comment, as will be discussed in the Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression theme, reinforces a common negative stereotype associated with Black womanhood. Kim later elaborated that adjusting to this hostile climate deterred her motivation and confidence in pursuing any leadership on campus for her first year.

Racially charged comments also were present for Geidy, a junior who is beginning her first year as a Resident Assistant on campus. She was motivated to be a leader in this context based on a positive experience with her Resident Assistant the previous year, and she wanted to foster a diverse, inclusive community within the halls. Geidy recalled some interactions she had with her peers during the position selection process and the summer training:

During the training and during the selection process, there was a lot of students in general who would say that if you were a person of color, you were gonna get hired...and [students of color] were gonna add diversity to the staff on campus.... But I think I was hired because of my qualities, my ability to be an inspirational person, and to work hard, and to put value into the things I do....It just really makes me think about perhaps it was also the fact that I’m a person of color, you know? And maybe it was my identity too that played a role in them hiring me.

While the comments said to Geidy were not as hostile as the comments Kim received, these words still had an impact on how she viewed herself as a leader. Rather than feeling fully confident that she was selected as a Resident Assistant due to her interpersonal skills and work ethic, these repeated comments made her question whether she was hired based upon these attributes or to fill a perceived racial quota. Geidy has continued to persist in this leadership role, however, has continued to face some tensions with peer staff members on their lack awareness and the comments they continue to make.

Hostile comments, racial isolation, and campus size were among the top entry difficulties undergraduate participants indicated from the interviews. While graduate participants also implied facing these issues, their entry experience was noticeably different as they compared their entry into leadership at Riverland University with that of their undergraduate institutions. What follows is a summary of the shared challenges Black women graduate students described from their interviews.

Graduate Student Entry

Graduate students described their entry into leadership at Riverland University as familiar, and they drew upon their undergraduate experiences to help ease their entry. While these undergraduate experiences offered some skills and knowledge, graduate students still faced some unanticipated challenges in regards to the unique racial and ethnic demographics at Riverland University. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Riverland University is located in a small, rural town in New England whose racial demographic is less diverse than the campus itself. For Alice and Charlotte who attended undergraduate institutions in areas comparable to Riverland, adjustment was a bit smoother than it was for the remaining participants.

Alice, a second year master's student who had attended a college in New England as an undergraduate, talked about how she approached her leadership as a graduate student:

Being at a PWI for me is normal, like I'm numb to it. But I can tell you, when I first got to [my undergraduate institution], I swear for like the first 3 years, like into my junior year, I wanted to transfer every day. I mean culture shock....but I'm glad I went through it because it really tested my will power, my strength, and me as a leader. So now that I'm here at Riverland and there is still that need for me to have that counter space of Black women. But the leadership looks different

because the [academic] program that I'm in, you have people who have great resumes, who are very well established, even at the master's level...There's still a need for me, again, to have that like counter space of women of color around me, and get that, just those positive vibes, and that encouragement, empowerment that I need.

Alice acknowledges a similar sense of culture shock as undergraduate participant Kim yet looks back at the experience with a sense of gratitude that helped her ease into leadership as a graduate student. While describing a feeling of familiarity and numbness to the racial dynamics at a predominantly White institution, she notes a difference in how she attempts leadership academically. The notion of leadership expanded beyond extracurricular activities to include campus employment and Alice's academic department. Observing the accomplishments of her peers and that she is one of few Black women in her program, she feels some insecurity about her credentials. Recognizing this different type of leadership she must navigate, she seeks support specifically from other Black women to persist and validate her achievements.

Despite familiarity with predominantly White institutions, Dawn, Lorraine, Morgan, and Nicky as Black women graduate students all faced a different set of challenges with the racial and the ethnic demographic of Riverland that did not exist at their undergraduate institutions. Dawn, a doctoral student who held multiple leadership positions on campus, describes how she had to re-conceptualize the meaning of her Blackness beyond the scope of African American ethnicity:

I had to realize that this community was much different from the one I came from. And you know, where I was looking for, you know, like so-called Black-Black people. There are all types of Black people here (laughs), some who don't know they're Black. Not saying that as a consciousness statement, but those who are like "Well, I'm such-and-such ethnicity, but I'm not Black. Don't call me Black," which is interesting in conversation. But you know, over the years I began to get it, especially as I began teaching some of these not-Black Black students.

Growing up in a large city in Michigan where she also attended college, Dawn understood Black to equate simply to African American heritage. At Riverland, there is a significant population of students who identify with Caribbean or African heritage, as an identity that is distinct from their perceived Black racial identity. She notes through her involvement with the Black Graduate Student Association that this range of self-identity made it difficult to organize students on campus. Either students identified as Black but opted to stay within their ethnic groups or did not identify as Black at all. To lead at Riverland, Dawn had to navigate this complicated terrain by expanding how she talked about Blackness with students on campus as well as learn about the nuances of various ethnic groups.

For Lorraine, Morgan and Nicky, challenges in entry were connected to racial demographics, in particular interactions with White peers, faculty, supervisors, and students. Lorraine, a third year master's student, mentioned how she has felt she had to approach leadership differently at Riverland due to the low enrollment numbers of Black students on campus and the geographic location of the university:

I've become more aware of my Blackness being here. Being at Riverland I am now more militant when it comes to being Black. I am more outspoken about my identity than when I first moved here. Like I have now become a poet. I was involved in theater troupe...I made an effort to really, really speak out about being my identity. And I've never had to do that anywhere else....but it's just something unique about the Riverland experience that's made it more necessary.

The necessity Lorraine mentions is connected to her experience interacting with White people on campus. During her undergraduate career she described a "blending" and an ease in making White friends on campus that she has been unable to replicate at Riverland. She attributes the difficulty to past experiences where White peers, faculty,

and students she supervised have “stabbed her in the back,” compromising whether she could rely on them and trust these individuals during times of support or conflict.

Morgan also faced challenges working with White peers and students through her role in residence life. Similar to Lorraine, she talked about how the context of Riverland as distinctly different from her earlier campuses based upon unanticipated hostility from her White residents who refused to return a greeting when she said hello or even make eye contact. It is important to mention that Morgan has had two previous experiences working in residence life at predominantly White institutions. The lack of acknowledgment as a staff member and Black woman on campus did not shift despite her attempts to get to know her residents and continues to be an issue she faces after changing residence hall buildings.

Nicky, a graduate student in the humanities who works as a Teaching Assistant also described a sense of culture shock and difficulty working with White people on campus. While Lorraine felt the need to be more outspoken and visible with her leadership, Nicky has opted to be highly selective in what leadership she takes on:

Something happened when I came to a PWI with numbers as low as they are regarding Black enrollment. This was a shock for me....I'm more aware of how the expectations to be a leader is tied to something that I feel is a pejorative label of who I am....I find myself backing back a bit and not wanting to take on as much as I would have....I feel like there is something underneath that expectation. There's a reason why you want to call on me... I'm not your Aunt Jemima....I became more sophisticated in my analyses going up the academic ladder. I started to make those connections...and I found myself starting to be more selective about the things that I do.

Nicky's perception of how leadership is different for her at Riverland University is connected not only to the low enrollment numbers of Black students on campus but also related to an oppressive and historically constructed archetype of Black womanhood as

assumed willing caretakers for White people. While her statement implies that she had a familiarity with the Aunt Jemima stereotype², her awareness of how White people in particular at Riverland expected her to take on this role was more strongly projected due to the climate of the campus. In response, she felt she had to be more strategic in how she entered leadership on campus as a means to avoid these expectations. Nicky's experience with negative stereotyping on Black womanhood as a leader along with other instances of oppression was not unique and was shared by all participants.

The next major findings theme offers a detailed overview of the various ways Black women college students had Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression as they lead on campus.

Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression

It's been difficult being a Black person at a predominately White institution. In any capacity that you have to serve or just be in that space is just a challenge.
(Nicky, doctoral student)

As captured by Nicky's statement, being a Black women leader at a predominantly White institution was a shared difficulty among participants. As a primary research question of this study, participants were asked during their individual interviews to talk about not only what it was like to lead as Black women but also what experiences they had with oppression. In the context of this study, the term oppression was intentionally not initially defined to participants as not to limit how they conceptualized its meaning. Participants were also asked about any instances of discrimination,

² Aunt Jemima is a version of the mammy archetype that emerged in the late 19th century that had a commercialized presence in United States society. The image of a large-sized, dark-skinned woman who was depicted as eager to cook and was used to sell flour and other pancake products (Wallace-Sanders, 2008).

prejudice, or times they felt they could not be themselves fully as Black woman leaders as a means to further elaborate on any oppressive encounters. It is important to mention that each question was framed using the phrase “Black women leader” as a way to hold an intersectional framework not to isolate their multiple social identities.

Interview responses to experiences with oppression fell into four major groupings that concerned the following issues: Stereotyping, Microaggressions, Racialized and Gendered Self-Presentation Expectations, and Voicing and Silencing. While these themes will each be discussed as distinct sections, it must be stipulated that there are numerous instances in which these issues overlap or influence each other. For example, participants discuss how choices of presentation (language, hair, clothing, etc.) are connected to stereotypes that are projected onto Black women. In addition, the stereotype of Black women as loud or aggressive also has an influence in how participants described feeling silenced or unable to use their voice in particular situation. What follows is an explanation of each theme and corresponding examples of how these types of oppression impacted Black women college student leaders.

Stereotypes

The first major type of oppression described by Black women college students was the experience of being stereotyped. Stereotypes are the characteristics of beliefs that have been socially constructed and assigned to Black women by others based on historical events, media, or interpersonal interactions. In the interviews, participants were asked about what experiences they had with stereotypes as Black women leaders as well where they learned about these beliefs. It is important to note that all participants readily

identified stereotypes, and all had emotional reactions of frustration and annoyance as they offered responses. While a few participants faced stereotypes associated with sexism and leadership as distinct from racialized sexism toward Black women's leadership, for example, being too emotional or being not as capable as male counterparts, the majority of the stereotypes noted by participants were specific to Black women's collective social location. In other words, stereotypes described by participants had both racialized and gendered connotations.

Angry Black Woman

Historically known as Sapphire, the Angry Black Woman stereotype characterizes Black women being chronically or perpetually angry, even emasculating, loud-talking, confrontational, easily aggravated, and difficult to work with. Alice, a second year master's student described her experience with this stereotype:

I've always gotten that I'm this angry Black woman. And at first, I was always trying to sit down and try to figure out ways how I can come off less angry. And now I think I'm at the point in life where, you know, I'm not apologizing for it. If you perceive me to be angry, so be it. I guess I'm angry... I feel like the women of color in leadership were much more walking on eggshells than, you know, their White counterparts. And I feel like they had to watch every word.

This was often the first stereotype that participants listed as being associated with Black women's leadership as well as the stereotype that was most difficult to address. This was a stereotype participants had learned about prior to attending college through previous interactions with White people, media depictions, and through observations as they watched negotiations of this stereotype from older Black women in their lives. As student leaders, participants mentioned how this projection was placed on them from White peers who they felt often misunderstood or read into their performance as leaders.

As will be discussed in the Voicing and Silencing theme and depicted by Alice, Black women student leaders were often put in a difficult position on how and if they should address this stereotype. While speaking up would call attention to this characterization, women ran the risk of further validating already existing negative assumptions about them. Failing to address the stereotype also kept this pejorative belief and often left women feeling silenced and invisible.

Black Mama

Also rooted in historical archetypes of Black womanhood, the Black Mama is the contemporary label on the Mammy. As described by Nicky in Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership when she commented on her awareness of being viewed as an Aunt Jemima, an expectation of mothering and disciplinarian are stereotypically placed upon Black women campus leaders. Dawn, a graduate student, offered her perspective on the stereotype through her leadership as a Teaching Assistant:

We're always unhappy, every time for any reason ever. Or we're gonna be there to pat you on the head. So you're either a Black momma or a Black momma (laughs), like you're in a position in leadership, you're either scolding somebody, telling them to get out your house, or you're supposed to like tuck them in and make them feel special. And there's no space to just be an academic or to just be in that leadership position and respected as a leader.

Dawn speaks about the conflicts and contradictions that this Black Momma stereotype has on Black women as being viewed as a nurturer while also a person that should be feared, with no room to hold both simultaneously. She later commented on how this expectation exists not only among White students but within Black communities as well.

Dawn, like other participants, indicates that as a leader she must make a choice: either to adopt the role as a Black Mama or to reject it; both choices having negative consequences. Accepting this characterization limits the notion of Black women's leadership. Rejection of this role is often received as hostile by those with this expectation, and in some cases the Angry Black Woman stereotype is the replacement for disappointment in the Black Momma.

Jezebel

Connected largely to physical appearance, assumptions of promiscuity, and sexual objectification, the Jezebel is the third stereotype Black women college student leaders reported confronting. Harmony, an undergraduate student, reflected on her struggle to balance being friendly and approachable with others viewing her a "flirt":

It's kinda hard being a female because, well for me personally, apparently I tend to flirt. And I don't know what that means, because I'm very nice, so I guess when I'm very nice, people think that "Oh, you know, it's [Harmony] just being a flirt." So I have to make sure that, you know, I'm not touching someone too much, or I'm not giving somebody too much attention. I have to make sure I'm focused....I can have my fun, you know, make sure we're off the topic...but at the end of the day, I just have to make sure that I'm not myself, [and] I have to make sure that I'm the person that they want me to be at that pertinent time.

Harmony is not entirely clear why people view her as a flirt yet feels as if she must carefully manage who she is and how she interacts (touching, friendly) to avoid these critical perceptions.

Geidy, also an undergraduate, similarly describes how she has to make negotiations about what types of clothing, make-up, and hair styles she wears to avoid being viewed as the Sexy Latina. There is a constant effort to be mindful of what image

both women are presenting to avoid the Jezebel stereotype, often at the cost of being authentically themselves.

Strong Black Woman

The Strong Black Woman is a slight departure from the Black Mama or Mammy stereotype, as it often refers not only to caretaking of others; it also implies an element of resiliency to overcome challenging situations. While this stereotype may give the impression that Black women have emotional strength, there is a dehumanizing element to this stereotype, as Black women are not viewed as having full lives beyond that of their leadership and that they are impenetrable to personal criticism. Kim, an undergraduate, reflects on her time working for a nonprofit over the summer.

Being strong ...so if I was saying something to somebody in the group, like "I really think you could've done something differently," [they would say] "You're being way too assertive. You're being aggressive. I don't like this. I don't like the way you're doing things." But when they had something to say to me, they could always say whatever they wanted, however they wanted, because they knew I could take it. "But I mean you said you grew up in Providence, right? Providence is really tough....You had to deal with Pablo the other day, and he treated you like crap." Guess what, I didn't like it when Pablo treated me badly either, like come on.

In this instance Kim encountered three stereotypes of Black women simultaneously: Black Mama disciplinarian, the Strong Black Woman, and the Angry Black woman. As one of two Black woman student instructors for a summer camp, Kim's White co-workers first assumed that she should be the disciplinarian of the group and would have no problem correcting the behavior of the student, Pablo, who disrespected her as well. What is interesting from this example is how her perceived aggressiveness is viewed as an asset to her White co-workers to relieve them of having to

discipline children yet a pejorative characteristic still limiting how Kim's leadership is viewed. Her White co-workers also placed an expectation of strength on Kim, making the assumption that she could not only handle the role of disciplinarian but also the mistreatment from Pablo without consideration the emotional impact his actions may have had on her.

Based on previous experiences of speaking up and calling out the behavior of her co-workers, Kim later mentioned that she felt at a loss on how to handle the situation, as she did not want to have a repeat reaction of being viewed as too aggressive.

Exceptional or Educated Black Woman

Lastly, the notion of being viewed as a different or exceptional Black woman is the stereotype Educated Black Woman. As the label suggests, level of education as well as actual or perceived social class influence whether or not participants encountered this stereotype. This label is meant to separate Black women who are viewed as poor, loud, aggressive and uneducated from those who have had exposure to and in some sense adopted White and middle-class values and behaviors. Morgan, a graduate student, explains:

Being exceptional....I'm thinking about being in the mind of a White person...believing all the stereotypes about Black people, they're this, they're that, they're poor, they're in the working-class, they're not articulate, they're angry and inherently inferior. And since I don't display those things like right up-front, since I have two degrees, a bachelor's and a master's degree, I am exceptional. I am a part from that group of Black people. So it's like I'm not the same, almost as if I'm a different race to them, but I'm Black. And I don't think that I'm exceptional. And I think that a lot of White people have an exceptionalist attitude. And I don't think that I am removed from any Black person, regardless of their status or class or education.

The efforts of White people to project this stereotype is understood by Morgan to differentiate two “kinds” of Black women, to the point Morgan feels that there is an attempt to view them as distinct racial group from each other. Tensions of social class and preferential treatment of some Black women from others is rooted in slavery practices where skin color, behavior, and speech impacted what type of work Black women would be subjected to, resulting in a legacy of intraracial and class-generated tensions among Black women. Similar to the Strong Black Woman, this seemingly positive stereotype is still limiting to Black women college student leaders and leads to assumptions about intimidation and superiority/inferior as education serves as a class differentiator for both race and gender. Charlotte, a graduate student, offers her perspective of this stereotype:

When you combine strong Black woman with like strong educated Black woman, I think it’s intimidating. What makes it intimidating, is that this person who you wouldn’t expect to be in a position of power, is proving you wrong. And that makes a lot of people uncomfortable if that’s not what they expect you to be.

The very presence of Black women on campus, let alone as leaders, challenges a historical legacy of negative expectations tied to Black womanhood. These expectations have been persistent, creating stereotypes that contemporary Black women college student leaders are conscious of and cannot escape stereotypes that perhaps are magnified as Black women emerge as campus leaders. These stereotypes often overlap each other and in some instances are precursors to other stereotypes, as noted in Charlotte’s and Kim’s stories. The complexity of these encounters makes it more difficult for Black women to interrupt, and it reinforces the limited scope in which they are able to lead. In some cases, these stereotypes are experienced as microaggressions, that is, as the

everyday comments or interactions that intentionally and unintentionally but cumulatively perpetuate oppression toward minoritized social groups.

Microaggressions

One type of microaggression noted by participants was based on characteristics, such as name and physical appearance. Alice, a graduate student with African and Carribean heritage, had a name (Alice is the chosen pseudonym) that reflect this background. While working at an academic office her first year at Riverland, she recalled an incident in which her White supervisors were inquisitive, yet offensive, as they spoke with her about her name:

When he [her supervisor] first met me, he's like "Your name is what? Oh, that's very interesting. You must not be from here. Where are you from?" like 100 million questions. I'm like, "Whoa, aren't we supposed to talk about my job here?" And again, he was probably well-meaning or something like that.

Alice's supervisor made an offensive and incorrect assumption based upon her name that she must not be American despite the fact that she was born and raised in Boston. This type of comment is often directed at people of color whose names or accents do not reflect U.S. norms, and they reflect a "perpetual foreigner" stereotype, the assumption based on name or physical appearance an individual is an immigrant. This in turn reinforces a White supremacist notion of American nationality. This fascination with her name contributed to an uncomfortable climate for Alice, one she was grateful to leave upon receiving a different assistantship in a different office.

Another microaggression, similarly contributing to a hostile work environment, was questions on gender. Morgan's gender expression as masculine of center also sparked inquiry by people she comes in contact with. She explained:

Some people try and figure me out, if I'm male or female. That also happens, like "Is that a man or a girl?" Like I've heard it said to me, like as I'm walking on campus, or said to their friend, but like staring at me while they're saying it. So if I'm just walking on campus, I don't think they consider me a leader. They see me as a Black question mark, woman or man. So I don't know. I always feel defensive walking around campus.

While questions of name and nationality were directly addressed to Alice, Morgan talks about how these inquiries are indirect and contribute to a sense of excessive visibility as well as invisibility. Her race and gender as a Black woman on campus makes her visible at a predominantly White institution, although she is also rendered invisible as these same identities contradict people's existing notions of what a Black women leader looks like.

Microaggressions also surface through slang. Several participants commented how White peers would speak to them in uncharacteristic slang words, reference rap music, or greeted them with physical gestures emulating what White peers perceived to be Black or hip hop culture (i.e., peace signs, handshakes, snapping fingers, swerving neck movement, etc.). Alice offered an example:

Putting extra "yo's" behind their sentences, something like that, or "what up, man" or a really tough handshake or something. I don't know, they feel like they have to . . . I don't even know what the word is, or what the excuse is, but they always feel like they have to add an extra "yo" to their sentences whenever they're talking to me or something like that.

Nicky further elaborates how these microaggression have showed up in her experience as a leader on campus. To her, these instances are infuriating, insensitive attempts to mimic her or a false projection of who her peers think she is. They are disrespectful and suggest an undeserved familiarity:

I deal with the walking in the hallway and a White classmate saying "Hey, girlfriend." I have never talked to you like that, what would make you think, in any capacity, even for one moment that it's ok for you [to] speak to me that way? I never carried out like that, and even if I did, what gives you the right to mimic me? You are more intelligent than that. We ain't buddy buddy. We ain't pals.

You've never been to my house or called my phone. What makes you think it's ok to snap your fingers and roll your neck and mimic what you think I am? That's a micro oppression.

Beyond being viewed as insulting, frustrating, and annoying, both Nicky and Alice indicate how White peers speak in slang or perform gestures as a way of connecting with them or demonstrated inappropriate familiarity with Blackness. While these moments may not be intended to be offensive or targeting, they are in fact extensions of stereotypes of Black women or of Black culture more generally and demonstrate disrespect for them personally and as leaders.

Disrespect and disruption emerged as microaggressions discussed by the Black women college student leaders. Frequently, these instances happened in the context of work environments or when participants were facilitating student organization meetings and came from White students or peers. Participants reported that rather than direct comments or questions, disrespectful or disruptive incidents would accumulate and foster a hostile climate for leadership. Nicky reflected on her experience as a Teaching Assistant:

I have problems as a Black woman standing in front of a class full of White kids, and they give assignments to me still referring to Blacks as colored people, or they are still referring to Blacks as Negroes that I have to read and I have very visceral reactions to. But if stand up in front of them and call them White honkies, they have a multitude of departments and support services that will come to their aid. But who do I have as a grad student, you know, when they're not respecting me, when they are challenging everything I say, when they are being blatantly disrespectful in my class.

Harmony, an undergraduate has a similar experience as she facilitates meeting for a student organization. She commented that male peers would be allowed to explain an opinion and be fully heard, while she would be interrupted or talked over. Further, in instances when she knew she was correct about a particular subject, male peers would

question her and ask if she is sure she is correct. In both Harmony's and Nicky's experience, their identity as Black women leaders was not fully respected and their positions of leadership were challenged in ways their White or male counterparts did not experience. The frequency of these microaggressions grew frustrating to both women and at times left them feeling powerless and unsupported.

Racialized and Gendered Self-Presentation Expectations

A third grouping of experiences of oppression reported by participants are included under the thematic term, Racialized and Gendered Self-Presentation Expectations. These experiences were shared in response to the interview question that asked if there were any moments in which they as Black woman leaders were unable to express themselves fully as Black women. Participants talked about being aware of and having to negotiate White and middle-class values of physical appearance, mannerisms, and language choice and volume as leaders. Harmony, an undergraduate leader who is conscious that she is one of few women (let alone Black women) in an engineering student organization illustrates the internal conflicts of dress:

At the end of the day, females always wanna look presentable. So when I have my meetings, sometimes when it's pouring out, when it's snowing, I really want to come in some sweatpants, whatever. But when you do that, people look at you like, "What's up, you crazy. You're supposed to wear like a skirt." And that's another thing, somebody told me at a conference, instead of wearing slacks, I'm supposed to wear a skirt because I'm a female. I was so mad, like who are you (laughs)? I was like, "What do you mean I have to wear [a skirt]?" Well in the Bible.... I'm like, "Yeah, but I'm sorry, I'm not gonna get into my religious life with you. I'm comfortable wearing slacks – if I wanna wear a skirt, I'll wear a skirt." So annoying.

From this example Harmony grapples with wanting to be comfortable and at the same time to be taken seriously as a leader within her professional group, where she stands out

as a woman and as a Black woman. She feels pressure not to wear casual clothing in anticipation that she may not get respect from her peers. Also noted in the excerpt is how she has internal conflicts as a Black Christian woman.

Harmony has had past experiences where male leaders have commented about her choice of dress and imposed a patriarchal and Christian expectation of how a woman should dress. Later in the interview she discussed a tension between wanting to honor her Christian beliefs recognizing that the gender inequity limits her personally and as a leader. For now she has settled on making herself dress formally when leading but opts to wear pants despite the critiques.

For some women, decisions of how to present themselves in terms of clothing, make-up, and hair were tied to avoiding pejorative stereotypes. Geidy, an undergraduate and Afro-Latina woman talked about working to avoid the Jezebel stereotype and being depicted as the Sexy Latina. She struggles with how she would like to express her physical appearance with how others might negatively perceive her:

So you have to be like super-conscious of the things that you wear....There's also the fact that when I leave my hair out, some people think, because it's big that I'm intending to look a certain way, to look more sexual in a way, because like big hair is like sexualized, because models have big hair. And to me, it's like, "No, my hair just does that – it's just big, and there's nothing I can do". So you can imagine how if I wake up one day, and I'm just like, "You know what? I'm just gonna wear my hair down. I'm just gonna comb it out, and wear it down, and I'm gonna wear my big earrings. I don't care what anybody says." And people will look at me like I'm dressed for a party, just for that, you know? And it feels so messed up because that's just me.

Geidy described the emotional toll presentation expectations has on her day-to-day decisions from going to class, socializing with peers, and as a campus leader. The solution for Geidy, similar to Harmony, is to compromise how she wants to express herself for the sake of deterring negative comments and microaggression. Rather than

wear large-hoop earring and her hair loose and kinky, she opts to tie her hair back in a ponytail and wear stud earrings. She further explains that physical appearance has been a point of many conversations among the leaders of La Familia Latina, which has an all-woman leadership team. She explained:

And we've talked a lot about the ways in which we dress. Like me, there are other girls in the group who feel like they can't . . . like even if they like it, they can't wear makeup every day, because they'll just look like too much....They'll be way too visible....I would say for the most part, most of us look very, very, very Latina, and then some of us have darker skin tones, and then we look very, very, very, very, like outsiders. And like me, I don't wear makeup on a regular basis because of that, because I feel like I'll just stand out too much, you know?"

As a group, Geidy and her La Familia Latina colleagues have decided to maintain a consciousness of their collective physical appearance to be mindful of what assumptions may be made of the organization as whole. The notion of being "too much," is often a concern of Black women student leaders and connects back to the stereotype of the Angry Black Woman as being too loud, visible, or threatening. This is a particular issue for Geidy and her peers who have darker skin tones and thicker hair texture. Noted earlier, the primary motivation for Geidy and the leaders to start this group was rooted in creating a visible presence that allows them to maintain their integrity. But, from this account, even in this setting, leaders must straddle a delicate line of not being seen stereotypically on their campus.

Morgan, a graduate student working in Residence Life, describes having comparable struggles within her department. She recalled an incident in which supervisors initiated a department-wide conversation about a meeting to encourage staff members to dress more professionally. Morgan described that the conversation felt more like a directive, in that the term professional was not defined yet appeared to be aimed to

the women on staff. She explained how she felt particularly targeted as a Black masculine of center queer woman:

There is always someone trying to police Black women's bodies. How we dress, how our hair is done, how we talk, how we exist. I find it insulting for any leadership to tell their subordinates (on the hierarchy) that we need to dress more professionally, in a way that allows people to take us more seriously without addressing and acknowledging that this is a Western standard. This is an example of how oppression manifest[s]. The thought that if you dress a certain way, you will be seen differently. News flash: I'm a Black masculine of center queer woman. I can pass as a man in some communities, and on any given day depending on how I feel, I'm okay with that. No one is taking me anymore seriously in a suit than in sweat pants.

This incident was a point of tension due to an already hostile environment in regards to Morgan's race, gender expression, and sexuality. As discussed in Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership, she felt invisible and disrespected by her White residents in her building due to her identity as a Black masculine of center woman. From her perspective, she felt the department leaders were subversively promoting a White, class privileged and normatively gendered value of appearance without being explicit about this effort. Given how she was already not taken serious due to how others perceived her, she felt that it was offensive and naive to assume that a different hairstyle or clothing would make a difference in her experience as a Black woman Residence Director. Unlike Harmony and Geidy, Morgan largely ignored the imposition from her department leaders, opting to wear what was comfortable and appropriate to her during work events.

Alice, also a graduate student in Residence Life, shares Morgan's sentiments of feeling stifled in the department. While Morgan is confronted by expectations of dress, Alice described her feelings of double consciousness mentioning W.E.B. DuBois' (1903/1990) *The Souls of Black Folk* where she felt she had to hold two ways of

being: one within Black spaces and one within White spaces. She explained her experience with a White male supervisor and how she has to negotiate predominantly White spaces:

So when I see the director, I have to present myself in a certain way. And overwhelmingly, because this is a PWI....I don't think I dumb myself down enough. Because I interviewed in a certain way with people knowing what they were getting from me from the beginning, so I think that was good for me. But unfortunately, the higher up I go . . . and this is only a graduate assistantship, so when I get into the real world, I do think in some ways I'm gonna have to dumb it down or whatever, or you know, present myself in a more, I guess, whitewashed way.

While Alice feels that she expressed herself fully during the interview process for her current position, she considers the future of her career and how she feels she will have to “whitewash” herself for the sake of the environment and employment advancement. She later explained that this expectation to whitewash was connected to how she spoke slang and tone of her voice. Again to be taken seriously or professionally, she feels she must be mindful of when she can speak in slang and to be caution not to raise her voice as not to be considered loud or intimidating.

While each of the above participants negotiated physical expectations differently, what was common across these interviews was a notion to limit how they could express themselves as Black women or that the very essence of being a Black woman in White spaces must be corrected or minimized.

Voicing and Silencing

Voicing and Silencing emerged as a significant theme of oppression among a majority of the Black women college student leaders I interviewed. This issue of voice centered on whether participants felt they could speak up or express themselves freely in

the context of the groups they were leading. Participants often talked about difficulties in this area when conflict surfaced with colleague, usually White, who viewed their approach to speaking up as loud and confrontational. As a result, participants felt their opinions were being dismissed or not fully understood by those with whom they were communicating. Lorraine, a graduate student working in campus activities reflects on a disagreement she had with her White female supervisor:

Whenever I have a comment or complaint about something at my job, and I tell my boss about it, she just gets really up in angst about it. She'll be like, "I don't think that's the case. You're looking at it wrong."....And my boss is always very combative, so now I'm completely silenced, like whenever I have an issue, I don't talk to anybody about it. I just bottle it up.

This dismissal from her supervisor was frustrating for Lorraine, and she felt that her perspective was not being heard. Based on this negative experience, she learned that she could not bring up certain issues with her supervisor, and it was better to keep the issue to herself rather than to try to address it. Silencing also happened in the classroom throughout her graduate program. She explained:

And so now I've just become this shell of a person. I don't speak out as much as I used to. I've literally taken what my workplace has told me that I am, and I've adapted it to other things. And also just in terms of the classroom, how I've gotten silenced there and how that kind of impacts how I walk through life at [Riverland] is that I'm being told that like, for example, like when I talk about certain like instances where I experience racism in the area, I'm being told, "Oh, you didn't experience that. You read that the wrong way."

The combination of these instances have taken a toll on her to the point that she feels as that she cannot fully express herself as she had prior to these moments. It is important to this participant's strategy to overcome Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership. While on the one hand she feels she must be more outspoken on campus due

to the small Black student population and geographic location of Riverland, she also feels as if she must silence herself to avoid confrontation.

Morgan, a graduate student working in Residence Life, had a similar experience. She too had concerns about speaking up and whether her White colleagues would fully hear her perspective. She observed how her identity as Black woman impedes the receptiveness of what she has to say. She described an instance where this occurred:

And then there's other times in meetings where I don't speak up as much as I would like to. Because I think about the perception of what I'm gonna say. I tell some of my White colleagues, if I would've said that in a meeting, the perception would've been so different. So sometimes I write notes and say, "Can you say this?" I've done that before. I've done it one time. And I mean we made a joke, me and my friend, but it was perceived differently from if I would've said it.

What is interesting about this situation is that rather than relying on her gut instinct, Morgan conducted an experiment to see if her perception of not being heard was accurate. It was validating to see that her instinct of what was happening was correct but still frustrating that she had to go through such lengths to be heard. While she made light of the situation, what Morgan described is an all too common dynamic Black women face as leaders. As discussed in the Microaggressions section, the norm of Black women's authority and opinion as appropriate to challenge or question reinforces a position of inferiority and invisibility.

Perhaps most striking was an account by Alexandra, an undergraduate student and former student athlete. While Lorraine and Morgan had negative responses at times, they spoke up; Alexandra was encouraged to be silent before she even started competing for the team:

There was a stigma with some of the Black girls on the team specifically because I guess the years before that, the years before I came like two or three years before, there were two Black girls on the team, and they were "ghetto" and talked

to the head coach; however, they wanted to and got kicked off, and I was advised not to voice my opinions in certain ways.

What is noteworthy is that Alexandra was being groomed on how to engage with her coach based on prior interactions from Black woman athletes on the team that were stereotyped and classes as “ghetto.” This intersection of class and race misconceptions intersected with the legacy of the Angry Black Woman stereotype, and she was forced to live out the consequences of a White coach’s conflict between two prior Black woman team members. Alexandra described herself as silent and down to earth, which was observed in her interview and through my past relationship with her as her advisor. This advice, from a Black male coach, set the tone of the remainder of her time on the team until she ultimately left the team.

Alexandra’s response of leaving the track and field team was her last strategy out of several previous attempts to address the various instances of oppression impacting her desire and capacity to lead. Deciding how to respond to oppression, if at all, was a common theme shared among participants. While in some instances, participants like Alexandra, decided to leave leadership roles, other participants found ways to persist and resist despite these hostile climates. An overview is provided in the next chapter of multiple ways that Black women college student leaders responded to the oppression they encountered while leading as well as the social influences that offered nourishment during these challenging moments.

CHAPTER 5

BLACK WOMEN COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERS' NEGOTIATIONS WITH OPPRESSION

In this chapter, I present the themes that emerged from the data analysis from the individual interviews in response to the research questions concerning Black women leaders' ways of responding to individual instances of marginalization, stereotyping, and oppression in their leadership contexts and concerning the social factors they identified as nurturing and sustaining them when faced with instances of oppression. Similar to the format in Chapter 4, this chapter consists of sub-sections. The first sub-section offers the responses Black women college student leaders had interactions with oppression discussed in Chapter 4. The second sub-section includes the social factors that nurtured and sustained Black women college student leaders when faced with instances of oppression.

Responses to Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression

In Chapter 4, it was clear that “oppression” is a theme that captures the multiple ways Black women college student leaders addressed demeaning attitudes and behaviors that undermined their leadership, such as stereotyping, microaggressions, racialized and gendered self-presentation expectations, and voicing and silencing. During interviews, participants were asked about the specific challenges they faced with encountering oppression as well as what skills, competencies, or strategies they used to work through these instances. Participants had the following types of responses, which are organized from least to most assertive: non-response, shifting, humor, selectivity of leadership, speaking up, and existing leadership. Response to oppression varied not only across

participants but also among the individual participants themselves and the contexts in which they led. What follows is a presentation of the range of responses among Black women college student leaders.

Non-Response Response

A common response from participants about how they addressed oppression was to take a Non-Response Response. In these instances, participants were aware that an oppressive situation or climate existed but opted not to take a direct action. Often, this decision not to respond was based on acknowledging the prejudice and discriminatory actions were prevalent among some people who took on an “agree to disagree” perspective. Janine, an undergraduate student, described facing stereotypes as angry and aggressive as well as less intelligent and less effective as a leader compared to her White and male counterparts. While aware of these stereotypes, she explained why she does not directly address these stereotypes:

I guess generally you just try not to let it [stereotypes] get to you. You just try and do your thing. And if people are gonna think a certain way, you just let them think that. Like you can't change everybody, so you just keep moving.

Charlotte, a graduate student who is in her first semester at Riverland University indicated a similar opinion. She reflected on her undergraduate career being involved with the Black Student Association and how the Angry Black Woman and Strong Black Woman stereotypes manifested as microaggressions while leading:

It just makes me roll my eyes, like it's so tired, it's so old, like come up with new stereotypes, at least. These are stereotypes that have literally existed since the 1600s when Europeans were traveling to Africa and creating travel narratives about Black women's bodies and Black women's personalities based on their bodies. Like it's just old, I'm tired of hearing about it, but I think that it's the worst one [Angry Black Woman stereotype], it results in measurable

consequences, like Black women being affected differently in the criminal justice system, for example, or Black women not making as much money as their White female counterparts, Black male counterparts, White men. That's when it's the most frustrating. But for the most part, when I hear about stereotypes about Black women, I just shrug it off and keep doing whatever I was doing before.

While Charlotte's and Janine's responses share a common element of "shrugging" oppressive stereotypes off, Charlotte draws attention to the historical legacy of oppression toward Black women and its relevance to the challenges contemporary Black women face today. A recognition of history, as will be discussed at length in *Nurturing Black Women College Student Leadership*, is an important social factor for participants to persist despite hostile climates. As Charlotte implies, knowledge of historical and contemporary challenges among Black woman serves as a tool to help participants identify a systematic and cultural oppression directed toward Black woman rather than internalizing it as an individual critique of their leadership abilities. From this perspective, both Charlotte and Janine feel as if their time and energy could be better spent not directly addressing these stereotypes.

For some participants, such as Lorraine and Alice, a lack of response was an intentional coping strategy. As noted in in Chapter 4, Lorraine, a graduate student and employee at Riverland University, experienced instances of silencing, particularly while working with White colleagues and peers. One situation in particular she spoke of was a time in which she had a disagreement with her supervisor, a White woman who has described her as "loud," confrontational, and difficult to work with. Recognizing that the conversation was not moving forward and that her supervisor commented again that Lorraine was "getting loud with her," she suggested that the disagreement discussion be tabled to a different time. As the supervisor disregarded this suggestion and continued to

press her point, Lorraine offered her perspective on why she opted to take a no response strategy:

I completely walked away....When we were in our huge staff meeting, she tries to bring it up again and ask me for my opinion on that situation. I don't respond, I literally don't say anything in the staff meeting, and I just left it at that. And from what I heard, she's been going around talking to my colleagues, saying, "Well, I need help in supervising her, because it seems like whatever I do, it doesn't really work." And so that's kind of what happens. I don't deal with it. It's just I let it be and just don't say anything about it, and I completely avoid it.

In this particularly difficult, hostile situation, it is important to note that Lorraine, unlike Charlotte and Janine, is managing oppression in the context of a work environment.

While all participants share a struggle in navigating White supremacy and privilege as well as multiple racial patriarchies, graduate students also must navigate supervisor-employee power dynamics. Although not explicit in her account, Lorraine must be mindful of how she responds to negative stereotypes in relationship to her employment on campus. For graduate students, campus employment is a necessity as these positions cover tuition expenses, stipends, health benefits and in some cases, such as that of Alice and Morgan, housing. Due to the supervisor-employee power dynamics, it is not surprising that Lorraine has opted not to respond to the oppression expressed by her supervisor.

Alice, also a graduate student who works on campus in Residence Life, indicated having comparable struggles negotiating how to respond to oppressive incidents with her supervisors and colleagues. She described the dynamics of the department as not only predominantly White but largely of "well-intentioned White women" who believe they are conscious of diversity and social justice but ultimately do not recognize their White

privilege where the impact is the perpetuation of racial microaggressions and inferiority toward her as a Black woman. She explained:

There are a lot of White women, and well-intentioned White women, or what they think they are. And they say really missed up stuff in the moment.... They don't recognize their privilege in the conversation, so when they try to talk down to me, I don't know if they're talking down to me because I'm a grad, and technically on this hierarchy scale, that I'm lower, or because I'm a Black woman. And I think I experience a lot of hostility with White women. And there's some of that with White men, but I think it's definitely with White women, because this department is overwhelmingly White women....I'm like, "Do I react the way I wanna react right now, or do I have to like shake and nod, 'Okay, umhm, right'." And there's White women with some power here, and you give them power, and they don't know how to act, essentially. So you have to learn how to . . . for me, I have to learn how to pick and choose my battles. "Do I want school paid for, or do I react the way I want to react?"

Similar to Lorraine, Alice is conflicted on how to respond in these hostile situations with White supervisors and colleagues as she recognizes a potential risk in her employment. What is particularly noteworthy is how she grapples with the multiple microaggressions relating to race, gender, and her job position in department. Unsure if the hostility is linked to oppression (racism or sexism) or associated with miscommunication between her and her supervisor, Alice has difficulty determining how to respond in these situation. Rather than trying to figure out how to respond to these incidents and due to the context of the department being "overwhelmingly White," Alice has opted to be selective in how or if she addresses the oppression she encounters.

Shifting

A second response to oppression is shifting speech, dress, and behaviors. This response connects significantly to the Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression themes of stereotyping and presentation expectations. Conscious of the negative stereotypes of Black women, participants talked about how they made shifts in how they present

themselves, usually in the context of predominantly White spaces on campus in an attempt to avoid or minimize the impact of oppression. As discussed in Chapter 4, Harmony and Geidy describe decisions they have made to deter any comments of them as being flirty and to be taken seriously as leaders. Harmony made the decision to wear formal clothing rather than casual attire to position herself as a leader in a male-dominated space. Similarly, Geidy opted not to wear form fitting clothes, to wear small earrings, and to pull her hair back ways to prevent any remarks of being the “sexy Latina.”

Shifting also takes place through behavior and speech. Often described as code-switching, this response to oppression requires what Alice described as a double-consciousness or the ability to have knowledge and competency of both White and Black social spaces (Cross, 2012). To successfully code-switch, participants must be aware of when to express their Blackness and when to minimize any demonstrations of behavior or speech that could be perceived to be associated with Black spaces. I intentionally pluralize the term space to recognize that given the scope of this study the term Black is not monolithic. Some participants, such as Geidy who is Afro-Latina as well as Alice, Roxanne, and Harmony who have Caribbean ethnicities, may be negotiating different or conflicting Black spaces. Regardless of which Black spaces participants navigate, code-switching is a recognition that one must construct their identity in a particular way that coincides with White, class privileged, and patriarchal social norms.

Janine, an undergraduate student, indicated that code switching is something that she learned early in life and had practice doing in schools before attending Riverland University. She described how she applies this strategy while leading:

I try and talk really proper (laughs) when I'm in these leadership groups and stuff like that, so I don't come off as uneducated or something like that, which is hard sometimes. And I try and think through everything I say before I say it so that it doesn't come out wrong, but I notice that they [White peers] definitely don't think through what they're saying (laughs), you know, they just say whatever they wanna say, and it might come out really offensive. If I do guarantee get offended by something, I just try not to say anything or cause a problem or something like that.

It is interesting to note the observation of a double standard by Janine. First, she recognizes how much effort she puts into speaking "proper" and her consciousness as to not being perceived as "uneducated." She also recognizes that her White peers not only do not have to go through such efforts but can say whatever they want even if considered offensive. While she laughed through this account, Janine commented that code-switching is difficult and does not fully prevent oppression from impacting her experience as a leader. Similar to Lorraine, she opts for a non-response response in the event her peers make offensive comments.

Humor

Also in the context of responding to offensive remarks is Humor. In these situations, participants are aware of the oppression directed toward them and rather than ignoring these comments, they spoke of how they make jokes to deflect any feelings of anger or frustration. Dawn, a graduate student, has a part-time job off-campus within a staff of almost exclusively White colleagues. She shared how she is viewed as the "resident expert Black person" or a microaggression where her White colleagues find her familiar enough to ask invasive questions about her identity as a Black woman or to express racial viewpoints to gauge her reaction to their beliefs. She commented on how she negotiates this situation:

Yes, that's something I get more so when I engage with [White] graduate students outside of my department, or at [my off-campus job]. Because it's definitely like "You're Black, let me ask you this question about Kanye West's new album."....How I negotiate is I either poke fun at it, and you know, there are enough people around me in either space I'm in academically, or socially, to know when I'm speaking with my tongue in cheek (laughs). And so if there's somebody there to observe it, it becomes a kind of inside joke between the two of us, and this person. And so I'll entertain their questions to a point where, you know, eventually they know that I'm not taking them seriously (laughs). And then the person aside is like, "Oh, my gosh, yes," and it becomes like a whiskey conversation (laughs) like a week later.

It is important to say that I have known Dawn socially for the last four years and, while I recognized that her overall demeanor is humorous and sarcastic, her response to these candid and probing questions is quite sophisticated. First, these situations in which others position her as the expert Black person have been frequent enough that she has a planned, effective response. Second, her strategy ideally requires peer support where her friends and colleagues also have an awareness of this microaggression and assist her by participating in her joke. Rather than directly calling out the oppressive elements of the question or remark, she uses her humorous personality to illustrate to the White person that their question was not going to be taken seriously. Lastly, she is able to work through any feelings of frustration she had in those conversations by later laughing and commenting with her peer who also observed the microaggression.

Throughout the interviews, as noted in some of the previous quotes shared in this study, participants often reflect on interactions with oppression by laughing as they described some of these instances. However, Dawn was the only participant to mention humor as a direct and intentional response to oppression. I believe this is largely based on the ways she draws upon her own personality as well as her awareness of the personal effectiveness this strategy has in her maintaining a leadership role.

Selectivity of Leadership

Another strategy Dawn and a few other participants used to address oppressive climates was Selectivity of Leadership. Connecting to the themes Community as Motivation to Lead and Challenges upon Entry into College Leadership, participants indicated that they made intentional decisions to lead in specific context or organizations as a way to control the degree to which oppression might be directed toward them.

In Chapter 4, Nicky, a graduate student who also works as a Teaching Assistant, talked about how she had to negotiate her leadership strategically within her academic department. Her perception of being viewed as an “Aunt Jemima” or caretaker to her White students and colleagues along with the small population of Black students at Riverland forced her to think critically about when and how she would lead on campus. She discussed reaching a breaking point that influenced her decision to decrease or avoid oppressive situations and feels it is a means for self-preservation not to readily accept expectations of leadership in her department. While Nicky’s selectivity was concentrated on how she would be involved academically and as an instructor, Janine and Dawn made choices about the racial contexts of their leadership.

Janine, an undergraduate, spoke of having previous experience leading at predominately White schools before college and commented that she was “kind of used to” oppression as a Black woman leader. She is also the participant who previously described her use of code-switching as a way to deal with stereotypes. As a way to mitigate oppression, Janine made an intentional decision not to take on leadership within Black-specific student organizations. She explained her rationale for not doing so:

Actually I try really hard not to be in leadership roles that like a stereotypical Black person would be in. I try and have leadership roles that could be filled by

anybody of any race, because I think that it is just more important for people to see that....I mean I don't think it's as powerful if I was like the president of Black Engineers Association....I think it's important to try and be a leader that's visible to people, that's not in your race because if you're a leader in your race... I mean, it has an impact obviously....I don't think it has as big of an impact. I think that when you take positions that might have been for White people, it's just more powerful.

As mentioned by Charlotte who led the Black Student Association at her undergraduate institution and Geidy who leads La Familia Latina at Riverland, Black women leaders who opt to lead racially or ethnically focused organizations also encounter stereotypes about of these groups. While Janine recognizes the importance of these organizations, she also observes that there are additional stereotypes if not pejorative views that these leaders face, and this is something she does not want to negotiate alongside specific stereotypes of Black women leaders. There is also an element of resistance to social expectations of leadership in her response. She recognizes that leadership is racialized and that some organizations and positions tend to be occupied by White people. Rather than being the Black leader of the Black organization, she makes an intentional decision to lead in spaces where those White peers do not expect her to lead. Taking on these largely White spaces and roles is an important and necessary step not only to view her as an individual beyond her race and gender but also to debunk any bias White peers may have about Black leadership. As a result, the decision to lead in predominantly White student organization is both a means of personal preservation as a leader and a way to challenge White supremacist notions of who can be a leader.

Dawn also has made strategic decisions about leadership, although she has decided to focus exclusively on groups for people of color. While she had previous experience at a predominantly White institution from her undergraduate career, she found

Riverland's campus to be more isolating racially and had some initial discomfort interacting with White peers. As she decided to take steps to get involved in organizations and lead, she explained why she at first decided to work exclusively in people of color spaces:

I kind of restricted myself to circles of people of color for the most part. I expected it to be like easier, because I didn't have to negotiate these two different worlds. However, it was not (laughs), because you have to negotiate personalities, genders, just ideological differences, and all that stuff. So what I thought would be a cakewalk, turned out to be something I had not anticipated.

A negotiation of two worlds connects to the notion of code-switching as a response to oppression. Unlike Janine, Dawn is unwilling to juggle both White and Black spaces and had the perception that groups specific to people of color would have fewer oppressive challenges to navigate. As she indicates in her excerpt, while she was able to address some issues with racial oppression, she faced some unforeseeable challenges in the context of gender, personalities, and ideologies. Dawn's experience highlights the multiple social identities that Black women leaders consciously and unconsciously have to negotiate when leading. It is my observation that Dawn had a saliency of her racial identity upon beginning her leadership as a graduate student. This was due in part to a disproportionately smaller population of Black students on campus compared to her undergraduate institutions and due to the geographic location of Riverland in a rural, predominantly White surrounding town. Also, as mentioned in the Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership section in Chapter 4, Dawn's early interactions with Black students at Riverland helped her to realize that her preconceived notions of Blackness as synonymous with African American was limited. As Dawn aimed to address the isolating racial climate she faced, her efforts to lead in largely student of color spaces shifted her

saliency to other identities, such as her gender and ethnicity. As a result, her attempts to negotiate racism became complicated as her consciousness of ethnic and gender oppression emerged.

Speaking Up

Perhaps an opposite strategy to Non-Response Response is Speaking Up or the strategy of confronting oppressive instances directly. Speaking up is often connected to the theme of Voicing and Silencing where participants mention an internal struggle of how to respond to ongoing encounters with stereotypes, microaggressions, or hostile environments. After a period of feeling frustrated and attempting other response strategies, women indicated that they had no choice but to speak up to address the oppression directly in the hopes that it would resolve the issue. What is key about this response is how it is motivated in resistance and often associated with the notion of self-preservation. Alice, a graduate student who works in Residence Life, explained why it is important for her to speak up:

So in my role now, strategies to resist, I think for me, I'm intentional about speaking on what's happening in the moment. My head supervisor she's a White woman, but I mean she listens pretty well, so if something is ever wrong, I'll tell her, and she'll address it, or we can talk about it right away. So for me, I'm intentional and not like doing it in front of everybody but pulling her aside, like, "Hey, this is what I'm feeling."

As noted earlier in this section, Alice was overwhelmed and at times felt isolated in her department of predominantly White women. A way for her to manage this dynamic was to find a supervisor she felt comfortable talking to and having these conversations about her experiences with oppression in a one-on-one situation and immediately after these incidents take place. What is also noteworthy in this account is how she describes

her supervisor as “listening pretty well,” meaning she finds that her opinions and perceptions, in contrast to Lorraine’s experience, are acknowledged and considered.

Morgan, also a graduate student who works in Residence Life, find herself in a slightly different position from Alice, as she does not feel that she can trust her supervisor or the department’s leadership team. She commented:

[Speaking up] is hard to do when you don’t trust your supervisors, or you don’t trust this “leadership team,” because who do you go to? Do you go over their heads and go to the dean or vice chancellor, who you don’t really know well either. And then you’re working in an environment where . . . or at least I feel like I’m working in an environment where I feel like anything on paper can be used against me. So my views about this department, I wanna say it’s a hostile environment. You’re so worried that speaking out is gonna get you fired, which is what, to me, the system wants you to feel, so that you don’t speak up, so that nothing ever changes, and then it’s never documented.

She continued:

I think challenging myself more every day.....speaking and making sure that I’m using my voice. Because it’s already assumed that sometimes maybe I won’t use my voice in certain settings at work, or just in society. Or that if I am gonna use my voice, that it’s gonna be some type of violence or hostile things coming out of my mouth. And I guess just not being afraid of that, not being afraid to say like, “This is not right, we need to have a better way to do it.” And I think I just always think about the sacrifices that those people, my ancestors and many more people have made. And it’s almost doing them a disservice to not . . . because I don’t know that I’ll ever be able to be on that level, but I can at least try.

Speaking up is a bit harder for Morgan to negotiate but is something she tries to do despite these challenging circumstances. As indicated in her second excerpt, her speaking up is a necessity not only to resist stereotypes of Black women, namely the Angry Black woman, as being perceived as loud or aggressive; her speaking up is also a means to honor the historical resistance efforts of Black women.

As will be discussed at length in the next section, Nurturing Black Women College Student Leadership, participants indicated recognizing and appreciating Black

women leaders before them as a means to conceptualize their struggles on campus as not unique and something they can persist through.

While speaking up as a response to oppression was reported by undergraduate participants, it is important to highlight how speaking up was more challenging for them in comparison to the graduate student counterparts. Alexandra and Kim described hostile incidents from peers having to negotiate how and what to say in those moments.

Alexandra, a former track team captain at her institution prior to attending Riverland, recalled an experience with sexual harassment she had with some male athletes:

I was a captain there. It was the guys who would make fun of us...They would literally just make fun of us out loud, like, "Oh you don't know what you are doing." Or they would make sexual references even though the girls were winning more things, and were more disciplined than they were. The things they would just say, like, Oh, watch her ass bounce as she runs," and the girls would play into that, trying to get them back in focus, just ignorant stuff that, I don't know. I kept going back and forth with myself like do I care, or do I not care? Or do I just keep it moving?

In this situation, Alexandra was in a difficult situation of negotiating if and how she should respond for herself and her teammates, particularly given how some of the female athletes on her team would play into the comments by the men. These remarks were noted disruptions and made her uncomfortable, but she was at a loss on whether it was worth it to directly address this hostility. Kim, also an undergraduate, described a similar struggle while living in her residence hall:

So I had to have that conversation with someone. "You're the coolest Black person I know. I've never met a Black girl around here that actually thought she was Black, and she wasn't trying to be White." I wasn't even totally sure what that meant when she said it. I'm like, "What? I don't understand." So I didn't know how to deal with that. I kinda still don't, I mean I had to tell her, "Okay, that was racist, just in case you're wondering, like that was a dumb thing to say."

Kim was faced with a racial microaggression connected to the Educated Black Woman stereotype as her peer was attempting to delineate her as a different type of Black woman from those this peer had met previously. Microaggressions, as described by Alice's experience earlier, are difficult to confront as they can connect multiple types of oppressions at once and are often delivered subversively. While it is implied that Kim was caught off guard by this comment and did not know how to address her peer, she could still identify the inherent racism and at minimum name this oppression that was directed even if her response was unsophisticated.

Exiting Leadership

The last response to oppression from participants was Exiting Leadership. Leaving their leadership role was the final response for several of the participants to ongoing instances of oppression after coping and resistance strategies did not address feelings of marginalization and powerlessness. Morgan, currently a graduate student, explained her experience as being one of three Black women players on her undergraduate softball team. She recounted a situation while traveling to an away game where a White player made the comment to the team, "I'm so a White person. I'm so ashy, I need some lotion....Do you think Morgan has some lotion? But Black people don't get ashy, right?" Upon hearing this, Morgan becomes angry and recalls the conversation she had with her coach when she decided to leave the team:

And I went to my coach, and I said, "I'm sick of this." That was like a tipping point. There were things that were done before as far as our training. And they would say, "Morgan is only more fit than us because she's Black, and Black people have certain things in their blood, and she's not really working," and all this stuff. It was always an attack on my credibility and my work ethic, which I always took personal, because like you don't know me. So I think that happened

for two years, and it was also around academics and stuff. I hated missing class for games, and that was part of the reason I quit....I just picked what was more important to me.

Alexandra, an undergraduate transfer student, described a similar experience to Morgan's and her rationale to end her involvement with the track and field team at Riverland University. While Morgan discussed racial hostility coming from teammates, Alexandra's tensions came from her head coach, a White woman who according to Alexandra had past negative confrontations with Black women athletes resulting in their dismissal from the team. Upon joining the team Alexandra described how a Black male coach and teammates informed her of this history and advised her to be cautious in how she spoke to the head coach. Despite attempts to stay silent and to speak cautiously, Alexandra still experienced hostility from the coach. While a low grade point average and injury contributed to her eligibility to participate as a competitive athlete, she recalled the moment that influenced her decision to end all team participation:

When I found out I couldn't even be on the team, I was completely crushed. The Black coach who was on the team was like, "You have to tell her [White woman head coach]." He wasn't necessarily saying like tell her in a certain way, but he was like, "Regardless of the fact, you're still here, and you're still passionate about the team and you still want to run," and so I finally got over that, and I told her, "You know this is happening, and I won't be able to run in a couple of weeks," or whatever it may be and I also went to pull her to the side because this was happening in front of a lot of people, and she was just like, "No, I don't care, tell me right here." And I told her and I mentioned it was the GPA, and she was just like, "Oh, ok," like loud, in front of everybody, and at that point I was, "Okay, you don't have to be so loud about it but I just wanted to let you know," and I just walked away, and I just wished I could have.. because it took so much out of me to admit that to myself that that was going on, and for her to just be so dismissive about it, I just wish I could have gotten into that angry Black girl, and been like, "No, you listen. You are rude."

Morgan and Alexandra's response to leaving their sports teams was the last strategy of a continuum of responses these women used to address the oppression they

experienced as leaders. On the one hand, you have Non-response Response or the decision to ignore how stereotypes, microaggressions, and hostility that may surface in their lives. For some participants a lack of response has to do with not feeling that it is in their best interest of time and energy as they recognize the systematic and longevity of oppression. Other participants, particularly graduate students whose leadership is connected to campus employment may chose not to respond due to feelings of powerlessness or worries of job security. Humor, Shifting, and Selectivity of Leadership are types of responses that are located in the middle of this continuum. These strategies illustrate the complexity of how responses can range from coping to resistance that allow women to persist as leaders despite the oppression they encounter.

Lastly, the other end of the continuum is Speaking Up and Exiting Leadership. In both of these responses, participations are making direct and conscious choices to end the oppression that they have encountered. In many instances, Speaking Up is a precursor to Exiting Leadership, such as in the examples of Morgan and Alexandra. For these two participants, leaving leadership roles was a decision toward self-preservation, and leaving created a final boundary of how much oppression they were willing to endure. As indicated by Charlotte and Morgan, a resistance response to oppression and a decision to persist as leaders was rooted in an awareness of a historical legacy of Black women leaders who nourished their own leadership. What follows in the next section is a collection of social influences that nurtured Black women college students' leadership.

Nurturing Black Women College Student Leadership

The concluding theme that emerged from the individual interviews was Nurturing Black Women College Student Leadership. During the interviews, participants were asked: What are some social factors that nurture your leadership as a Black women college student leader? This question was based upon literature reviewed that indicated historical social factors, such as women-centered networks, (other)mothering, religion, teaching, and community organizing as important contexts that nourished Black women's leadership within the United States from slavery to just before World War II. So as not to lead responses, participants were first asked what early and current influences nourished their experiences as college leaders and how these influences shifted over time. In the instances in which participants asked for examples or clarity, they were asked to speak on how parents, peers, campus resources, organizations, or the classroom that informed their leadership. Toward this end, I asked my research participants to describe their understanding of historical Black women's leadership and how these traditions may have influenced them as college student leaders. In an attempt to gather insights on what additional factors nourished their leadership, participants were also asked about how contemporary Black women leaders and mentorship relationships were contexts of nourishment. What follows are the thematic responses participants indicated as being pivotal to nurturing their leadership despite interactions with oppression.

Mothering

One of the first major sources of nourishment of Black women college student leadership is the role of mothers and mothering. When asked about who their leadership role models were, all participants except one mentioned drawing from their families first, and many specifically named their mothers or maternal figures as being pivotal people in their leadership. Alice, a graduate student, explained how she views her mother as an influential leader:

I wanna say my mom is a leader – definitely she’s a leader. And I don’t know what other words to use to describe her, but I think there’s something about will power that she has that makes, for me, I consider her a leader. It’s just something about strength and courage. Like she supports not only her family here in the States, but she supports her family in Haiti. And literally every year, she flies there to support and pay school fees and things like that. So she’s definitely a leader in our family, for both people here in the US and abroad.

Alice’s mother’s characteristics of strength, courage, and willpower are impactful as she recognizes her mother’s dedication and perseverance to care for her family across multiple regions in the world.

This description of strength and perhaps self-sacrifice connects to notions of the Strong Black Woman stereotype as she observes her mother confront emotional, financial, and physical challenges for the sake of her family’s well-being. This source of inspiration has been beneficial to Alice as she takes on oppressive circumstances of being a campus leader. Alexandra shares Alice’s sentiments; she commented about her grandmother. What is noteworthy in her account is how Alexandra admires the resiliency of her grandmother overcoming difficult economic hardships to better her own life as well as those of her children:

I want to say my grandmother. She's definitely a leader to me, because she raised 5 kids, all on her own, and went from being literally on welfare, check to check, to living in a two-family house, and she's just awesome, like she's definitely an example, and I'll just leave it at that.

Alice and Alexandra have used their mother's and grandmother's strength and resiliency sources of nourishment in their own leadership. Both participants carry this sense of determination and willingness to move past challenges in the work they do on campus.

Nicky also has considerable admiration for her mother but takes her learning a step further as she tries to emulate her mother's leadership style. A graduate student and teaching instructor, she spoke at length about how she observed and has tried to replicate her mother's leadership style:

My style is very much, I get it from my mother, all or nothing. It's kind of hard for me to be a co- anything for me or to share, because I'm kind of one of those people who just step up to the plate, and I can't wait for someone to do something, for someone to fulfill their obligations. It's like, "You've agreed upon it. We've talked about it. We've accepted this, so you need to be here at this time. You need to be there to do that," and I'm one of those people that take over. Like, "Well, he's not here, she's not here, you know. Let me just take care of it." So I'm very much a domineering leader. I find myself to be kind of bossy but very nurturing, you know? I'm still very polite. I still do things with a wink and a smile, but it's very much all consuming. I'm one of those leaders probably is not based on some definitions is the most efficient because, you know, most definitions of leadership suggest that good leaders are those who instead of taking up the delegate to others, and the others are able to do the job for them. I'm just more hands-on.

Nicky has learned from her mother to be an autonomous leader where she prefers to take on responsibilities individually. She prefers to rely on herself to accomplish tasks, and although not explicit about race, she expresses having past difficulty sharing these roles with both men and women. Self-reliance along with describing herself as "domineering" and "bossy" connects back to the stereotypes of the Angry Black woman and the Strong Black woman. Nicky acknowledges how her type of leadership style

might be perceived by others as negative and tries to balance this by being “polite” and “nurturing.”

It is also important to note how she views her leadership style of being “hands on” as different from dominant ideologies of leadership that favor hierarchy and delegation to others. As noted in the literature review of Chapter 2, Nicky’s style of leadership, which she learned from her mother is not unique, rooted in historical traditions of Black women’s leadership, and as will be discussed in the next section, is a source of motivation to lead authentically despite these dominant narratives of leadership.

Beyond role modeling of leadership characteristics, mothers were crucial in encouraging participants to take on leadership roles as children. Janine, an undergraduate student, credits her mother in viewing her as a leader at a young age:

This is funny, but when I was about 4, my mother told me ... “You have leadership qualities. You’re just a leader. That’s just what you are. Some people are leaders, some people are followers, and you’re a leader.” And I think ever since I’ve kind of just done my own thing, and people have just decided to follow me.

Charlotte, a graduate student, had a similar experience with her mother and her sisters while growing up. When asked about what early influences that nurtured her leadership, she responded:

Well, my mother always used to say to the 3 of us, “I’m raising leaders, not followers.” She would always say that to us. So if we ever tried to just go with the flow and not like really be strong individuals on our own, she would put us in check really quick. That’s not who she wanted her daughters to be. She didn’t want the three of us to just go and run along and do what everyone else was doing. She wanted us to make sure that we were strong on our own. She wanted to make sure that she was raising leaders. So it’s definitely something my mother tried to do. It was a very active concern for her.

Charlotte’s and Janine’s mothers were significantly influential in identifying their leadership potential at a young age. As Charlotte noted, both mothers were intentional

and direct about their messages to their daughters about what it meant to be a leader and how these were roles they were expected to fulfill as they grew up. As discussed in Chapter 4, there is a pervasiveness of social messages promoting Black women's inferiority that participants internalized both during and prior to their college leadership experiences. Encouragement of young Black girls to be leaders is a type of resistance that counters these messages and has been a source of motivation for participants to persist despite oppressive circumstances.

As campus leaders, mothers were also reported as sources of advice through difficult situations. This was particularly the case for undergraduate Black women leaders, such as Janine and Kim. When faced with challenges with peers or transitions into college campus leadership, participants indicated calling their mothers to gather insights or viewing them as a safe space to vent their frustrations. Janine explained:

Well, usually if I get really upset about something, I'll probably call my mom (laughs) and talk to her. And really what it comes down to is, I realize that it's better for me than it was for her. I mean, she won't say that. But in the back of my mind, the way that I get through things, I always just remember like well, you know, no one is telling me straight to my face that I can't do something. And I'm not scared that like when I go to school, it's like a not-safe environment. So I just think that it's better for me than it was for her. And if she can get through it, then I should be able to.

Kim also talks with her mother to help her perspective about the challenges she faces on campus compared to what her mother went through at her age. She reflects on the multiple lessons her mother teaches her as they discussed her campus leadership difficulties:

I guess it was sort of like a combination of things. Advice from my mom, always, because whenever anything was going on, "Momma, save me!" She's like, "Okay, I can't save you, but I can help you out." So my mom giving me priceless advice....My mom always taught me like the more you know, the better off you are, so if you are gonna lead a group, you can't go in knowing the same amount

that everybody else does, because you're not really gonna be any use to them unless you have the knowledge and the skills to go find out what needs to be found out, and then you can help. And she taught me that patience is key always. And that you can be mad and flipping out when you go home, and like just crying and the whole nine yards, but once you're in that leadership position, you have to lead, stand up straight, eyes forward. You can't forget whatever it is, whatever that goal is, you can't leave it behind getting caught up in everybody else's stuff. So you just have to remember to constantly be moving forward, even if it's just a little bit every day. Always make sure you're moving, and don't get stuck.

Talks with their mothers help both Janine and Kim to persevere on campus despite their interactions with oppression. Kim's mother, in particular, gives her detailed strategies to use while leading, which connect to the stereotype and coping strategy of the Strong Black woman. As a means of survival, she is encouraged not to express her anger publicly and to be mindful to always move forward as she leads.

It is important to note that appreciation of mothering was not limited to biological ties for participants. Othermothering, a common historical practice, refers to Black women who take on caretaking responsibilities for others within Black families and communities. Besides her own mother, Alice credits her leadership role modeling to a retired professor in the Riverland area:

Well, her daughter is in [my graduate] program, and she was very intentional about, you know, gathering the women of color on campus as well, and you know, trying to do something just for us, and having that space for us. And I met her mother when I went to the house or whatever, and I guess the mother took a liking on me or something. For me, I was being honest about what I was experiencing, because there's a lot of frustration me not having my citizenship, and trying to figure out how I was gonna pay for school. I didn't want the additional loans and things like that. So I guess she took a liking on it, I don't know what it was (laughs). But you know, she reached out to me, like personally emailed me, and always was sure to follow up. She would send food for me and things like that. And I have no relation to this woman, and I barely knew her for like 2 months. But she went out of her way to see if I was okay. She was intentional about including me in things that she thought may have been supportive for, you know, healthy for me or whatever.

The role of othermothering within educational contexts dates back to post-slavery and was a vital leadership function within segregated Black communities as a means of support for students' educational, social, and emotional needs. Often familiar with hostile environments and struggles from their own educational experiences, these women went beyond the expectations of teaching to foster a positive sense of self among their students as well as to train them with the necessary skills to survive oppression in future academic or career aspirations. As noted by Alice, this retired professor offered her personal nourishment to feel less isolated as a graduate student while modeling how to lead and create community as a Black woman leader at a predominantly White institution.

Teachers and Educational Leaders

As noted in the previous section, participants reported teachers as a second major source of nourishment for their leadership. Eight out of 12 participants described teachers as being positive influences through role modeling or as individuals who encouraged them to pursue leadership opportunities.

There was a difference in response between a few of the undergraduate descriptions of the role of teachers. Roxanne, an undergraduate Haitian woman and Resident Assistant who describes herself as shy, spoke about her classroom experience at Riverland. For her, course discussions and group projects were helpful as a leader, as they allowed her opportunities to practice communication skills, as English is her third language. Harmony also described overcoming shyness and credited her elementary school teacher, Mrs. Henry, who she was in contact with through middle school, as one who encouraged her to use her voice and express herself through writing poetry.

While both of these undergraduate women mentioned how the classroom and teachers helped them to learn how to use their voice and express their opinions, the remaining 6 graduate students' responses and one undergraduate student were distinct in discussing how Black women college faculty and course work on historical Black women leaders were influential on individual leadership. Alice, a graduate student, reflected on her undergraduate experience and her interaction with a professor:

But this one professor, she came, she grew up in New Jersey, and she grew up very poor and things like that. So when she came to campus— she's tenured track, which is, you know, really amazing because we only have one other Black woman who is tenured track. She was just really intentional about, she wanted to do stuff for Black women – that's what her research is about, everything. So she wanted to have dinners with Black women, she wanted her classes, she would personally email like, "Hey, you should really take this class." You know, if you needed help with something outside of school, like a goal or something, she was there to support you. And this woman went above and beyond. And I think she really inspires me, like you know, she wants everybody to have what she has, or be able to at least achieve. She wants you to believe that you can do it. And I think she inspires me. And I think for me, those are the people that I'm grateful for.

Similar to her account of the retired professor at Riverland, Alice notes how this particular faculty member again went beyond the expectations of her teaching responsibilities to reach out to her and her peers. Alice observed the racial and gender dynamics of this faculty member as being one of few Black women in this leadership role on campus and comments about her high level of investment toward her and other Black students on campus despite demands of tenure. The ability to have a mindfulness beyond her own success and a desire to have her students succeed was an inspiration that Alice that has applied as a leader at Riverland. Like this professor, Alice has been intentional about seeking out mentoring opportunities for undergraduate Black women on campus and strives to create a sense of community to support students she works with.

Geidy, an undergraduate Resident Assistant, shares similar sentiments as Alice with her experience taking Women, Gender and Sexuality courses at Riverland. These courses had a significant positive impact on not only her developing identity as an Afro-Latina woman but also as a leader. When asked about what contemporary Black women leaders had an influence on her leadership, she responded:

It's much harder to find contemporary Black women leaders. I would say that my contemporary Black woman leaders are my professors and the people immediately around me, you know, Black women I encounter in the social justice department and the women's studies department. So I resorted to using my professors and the people around me as Black female leaders I can look up to. The same thing like with Latina female leaders on campus, which there are even less of, you know?It's definitely really, really sad that there aren't more....It's not that I have to resort to just these few, but in a way I do. I mean like I have no problem whatsoever – I feel blessed – but it's not like I can pick and choose, you know, I don't have the option to pick and choose. I have these women specifically, and that's it. And I'm not saying that my mentors can't be, you know, professors from other departments, or you know, male professors or whatever – they can be. But for me, it just feels much more . . . I can get more to a personal level with somebody that I can identify with, or that I have things in common with.

Having Black women faculty has been a valuable asset for Geidy to learn about her racial and ethnic identity as an Afro-Latina woman as well as an inspiration as a leader on campus. While Geidy recognizes that she has been fortunate to have classes with Black women faculty at Riverland, her excerpt also acknowledges the rarity of having contact with these women at a predominantly White institution. As an Afro-Latina woman, attempting to connect with faculty of this identity has been more challenging as the numbers of Latina faculty are less present. As Geidy mentions, unlike her White peer counterparts, she does not feel that she has as many choices in who she can look up to as a mentor or seek for support.

Several participants also expressed an appreciation for Black women faculty but have had to look beyond Riverland's campus. A particular intersecting finding in this study in comparison to my literature review on Black women's historical leadership traditions is the prevalence of Black women celebrities as sources of positive leadership. One such celebrity is scholar, professor, and talk show host Melissa Harris-Perry. While she has published texts and currently teaches at Tulane University, Harris-Perry has developed a national classroom through her television show on MSNBC, affectionately called #nerdland. Her shows regularly focus on the socio-political experiences of Black women within the United States and has noteworthy impacts on the leadership of this study's participants. Lorraine explained how Harris-Perry and Johnnetta Cole, first Black woman "Sister President" at Spelman College, have influenced her leadership:

I haven't really met them, but their career paths are really interesting, and I kinda wanna mirror it in a sense. And I like that they've had the flexibility. And the two people that I'm thinking of are doctors Johnnetta Cole and Melissa Harris-Perry. I like that they've both had influence and public discourse and in academia. In terms of Johnnetta Cole's leadership, what I've admired about her is that I've never really heard anything negative about her, which is really interesting, especially given the many roles in academia that she's held. And now she's working for the Smithsonian, which I think is really awesome. And then with Melissa Harris Perry in terms of her . . . I don't know if this is a leadership style or more of a communication style. I watch her show every Sunday, and what I like about her is that she's able to talk across boundaries, but still get the same message across. Because I, like with some people in their communication style, when they're talking in academic-ese, like it doesn't translate well to the public, and so it feels like sometimes they're watering down what they would say to academia to the public. But with her, I feel like she could say the same exact thing, and everyone picks up what she's saying, as opposed to piece-mealing it. So it's not really leadership, but it's like women who are in leadership roles, like the traits and characteristics that they hold that I admire.

The high profile of these Black women educational leaders is significant to Lorraine as she takes on campus leadership at Riverland. As noted in her excerpt above and previously in this chapter, Lorraine describes herself as one who struggles to voice

her opinion, is often misunderstood by White colleagues, and has difficulty responding to the oppression. Through the visibility of Harris-Perry and Cole in the media, these women serve as models on how to speak up on aspects of racism, sexism, and other social issues and offers Lorraine an example that this type of resistance is possible. Leaders, like Cole and Harris-Perry, have also been crucial in adding Black women's experiences and leadership with in the U.S. public discourse as well as through specific academic courses on predominantly White campuses, such as Riverland. As will be discussed in the next section, such inclusion of current and historical legacy of Black women's leadership and resistance efforts is also an important source of nourishment for participants to persist as campus leaders.

History Traditions of Black Women Leaders

Recognition of the historical contributions of Black women leaders was a significant nurturing social factors for Black women college student leaders. During the interviews, participants were asked if they had an awareness of Black women's historical traditions of leadership. All participants mentioned having awareness about this legacy and went on to explain how they came to learn about this history and how it impacted their leadership personally. Some women spoke of history as impactful broadly and made connections of how they admired how historical leaders overcame significantly oppressive circumstances. Alexandra, an undergraduate student explained:

I just think about adversity, I think about specifically because Black women have beside the stereotype, Black women have, females have the stereotype of, lower class, just a whole bunch of intersections, I just feel like they have the whole list, just the subjective inner strength of those women have besides being a leader on the outside. It takes so much to break through all that, to do whatever against the grain you have to have that inner strength, inner leadership within yourself, to be

a leader for other people, or to lead a new idea, or to lead past fear, all that other stuff and security.

Morgan, a graduate student also has an appreciation and uses this understanding to fuel her efforts to persist despite interactions with oppression:

I think it goes back to like the root of it all, like the roots for me, my ancestors.... I think of the livelihood of Black people in my family. Like not being able to vote, not being able to even get a license, like not being able to be counted as a full human being. And in many cases, I still don't think that Black people are considered full human beings in America. But I think it goes back to that – like it's not just about me. Because if it was just about me, it might not be as draining.... I think it's for them, and then it's for whoever is next, and I think that's what keeps me going.

History is a mixture of personal appreciation of the struggle by family but also recognition of how Morgan's family ties to a larger legacy of Black people's plight within the United States. A remembrance of her ancestors helps her to reconceptualize the struggles she faces on campus as possible to overcome in moments when it feels hopeless or emotionally exhausting. Morgan's response also connects to her motivations of being community-focused where history reminds her that her leadership is about impacting the lives of others on campus.

It is important to note that while all participants made a reference to historical understandings of Black women's leadership as influential to their leadership, the role models of Black women leaders were not exclusive to the context of the United States. Roxanne, an undergraduate leader who recently immigrated to the United States from Haiti (four years ago) could not readily relate to the experiences of historical African American women leaders. She explained that she had a familiarity with American and some Haitian leaders but could not recall names or specific contributions:

I believe that the U.S. has lots of strong leaders, Black women that are leaders. But in my country, I'm still getting to . . . I still don't know much about Black

women and leadership in the U.S....I don't remember the names, but if I see a picture I'll be like I've heard people talk about that person. In Haiti, we do have amazing women leadership as well. I remember faces, but I'm bad with names. These are people sometimes I say I wouldn't mind if my mom was like that, or those are good qualities that I can cultivate in myself to be as amazing as they are.

Participants also commented about Black women historical leaders in response to questions about role models that influenced their leadership. While three women made comments about male leaders, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, Malcolm X, and Stockley Carmichael, the Black women leaders who came to mind for them were Rosa Parks and Harriett Tubman. Particularly among graduate student participants, there was a significant awareness of specific Black women leadership styles and efforts prior to the Civil Rights Movement and beyond, represented by iconic leaders, such as Harriett Tubman and Rosa Parks. This knowledge was due in part to their academic course-based learning about Black women leaders as well as their own personal interest in this topic. Dawn, a graduate student pursuing a doctorate in Afro American Studies, explained how leader Anna Julia Cooper has a motivating inspiration on why she continues to lead:

Anna Julia Cooper, because she's just...she understood, like a lot of women of her era. But not only did she understand but she vocalized the kind of layered experience of Black women, and you know, her whole statement, "when and where I enter" you know, she carries the weight of her race....Not only do you carry that – you carry where you're from, your gender, you know, like all these various components that make you who you are....That's something that I carry with me everywhere I go, and you know, shamelessly so. Because I know from just talking to people, eventually, you know, what I represent to them, and I know what I represent to myself and my family. I know what I represent to my friends, other women of color specifically. In those roles, I don't find it as a burden/ I find it as something that I could use to further educate, which is my life's purpose.

Dawn specifically noted Ida B. Wells, citing what she admires and has learned from their examples of Black female leadership:

Wishfully, I wanna say Ida B. Wells....I appreciate her gangster. And by that, I mean like her willingness to, you know, really fight for what she knew she

deserved, whether it was, you know, a seat on the train or the right to not be harassed walking down the street, or the right to not see bodies hanging freely in the street. She fought really hard. Or even like the right to be a member of a self-acclaimed civil rights organization. And leadership, you know, it's either make me a leader, or I'm not joining you. Thereby the NAACP was hatched. She was just, you know, like kind of a force to be reckoned with. I have not a social need to be a force, but you know, I definitely have a need to be taken seriously. And that's one thing I appreciate about her.

Similarly, Dawn explained what it was about the Black woman leader who had the most significant impact on her as a leader, Fannie Lou Hamer:

Fannie Lou Hamer. That's my girl! Because a lot of the hang-ups that I think academics have are that, you know, and this is across racial lines – if you don't have this particular life experience or education, how dare you attempt to speak on it. And sometimes it doesn't matter, the level of education that you have. It matters, you know, like that experience is key, but also your developed perspective in consciousness on your situation. And I think that she was one of the foremost like philosophers of her historical moment that we have, even though she didn't have like credentials or what-have-you. Because some of her speeches were just like entirely insightful. And even like I would say for what she was discussing, you know, along the lines of politics, and she has one speech on sexism that are very . . . It might not be specifically on sexism, but gender relations. I think it's akin to like kind of the self-taught philosophies of Malcolm X. But definitely underappreciated.

While interviewing Dawn, I was struck by the excitement in her voice when she, like other participants, specifically described the contributions of historical Black women leaders. This was a subject participants enjoyed talking about and expressed a sincere and vigorous appreciation for learning about the efforts of these women. For example, Charlotte, also a graduate student, explained how her past course work in 19th century Black feminism has helped her to reconceptualize leadership:

So my understanding of historical Black women's leadership, I think that there are a lot of different ways that Black women were leaders, especially when you look at the Civil Rights Movement. And those are a lot of untold stories that are there. Understanding women's work, or women's domestic work as something that is important for the development of the race, for the development of the country. And just reimagining the contributions that Black women have made over time, are all important to how I understand Black women's leadership. And I

think a lot of time, when people hear about like racial leadership, they're thinking of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King up on podiums giving speeches. That's not the only kind of leadership that exists. And I think Black women were occupying a lot of those behind the scenes positions and making sure that there was some sort of fight going on for Black civil rights....It has helped to redefine what I think constitutes leadership. I think that there are informal ways of being a leader, and there are formal ways of being a leader. And I think that both are equally important. So it just has helped me to value different kinds of leadership more than I otherwise would have.

What was also shared in these responses by Dawn and Charlotte is a disappointment and frustration that the experiences of women like Julius Cooper, Wells and Hamer are underappreciated, rarely focused on in mainstream media or academic coursework, and took additional effort on their part to find. Geidy, an undergraduate student concentrating her academic work in Women, Gender and Sexuality studies as well as social justice explains how learning about historical Black women leaders has had a positive impact on her identity as an Afro-Latina woman:

Critical Race Feminisms. I just wish that class was like two extra hours longer, because I just like walk out of the class, and I'm like, "But I have so much to say!" (laughs), you know? So it's like I've been exposed to a lot of history and sort of ways in which Black female leaders have come to sort of like change things around for this generation, for us here now. So I have to be grateful, I have to be really grateful. And that is why I consider myself an Afro-Latina female, because I don't think it was White women or White feminism that paved the way for me to be where I am. Latina and Black women were seen in very similar ways historically in the United States. And then there's also our immigrant attachment to that.

Like other participants, Geidy is genuinely excited and appreciative to have learned about this history and also how this history connects to her own identity as Black and Latina. It has been an important and empowering step in her leadership development to connect to this complex legacy of race, gender, class, and socioeconomic status in ways she had not previously conceptualized before. Geidy continues to explain how,

despite her gratitude, she has frustration about how it took her until nearly the end of her undergraduate career to learn about the contributions of Black women leaders:

We have to like wait until, I don't know, junior year in college – like it had to be something I had to wait until junior year in college to learn about people that I have to be grateful to, you know, that I feel like I have to be grateful to – it took that long. And that to me, it's crazy because had it been earlier, maybe I would've had more motivation, or maybe my peers would've had more motivation, because there have been Black female leaders who have struggled more the way that we have, and pushed for the laws to change, like literally laws to change. And not all people know this, like I didn't know, this until I was a junior year in college. And I feel like that took too long, like that took way too long.

It is particularly noteworthy that Geidy wished she had learned about this history earlier. While already highly motivated to lead and persistent despite interactions with oppression, she feels that if she had this foundation earlier in her leadership experience, her motivation would have been increased and perhaps useful in previous challenges.

Alexandra, an undergraduate student, agrees and eloquently explained how knowledge of historical contributions of Black women leaders, such as Harriett Tubman and Sojourner Truth, is useful. After leaving her track team due to hostile interactions with a White woman head coach, she attempts to create a group supporting Black women desiring to have natural hair. She explained how she uses historical knowledge to continue her efforts

It makes me want to make my own toolbox for times when I host the group and only one girl showed up, and thinking back to when I spoke to that head track coach and how I felt after that, it makes me want to build that toolbox of tools that, can help me to remind myself of that like the powerfulness of being a quiet leader.

Women- and People of Color-Centered Networks

In addition to the recognition and admiration shared by the Black woman leaders I interviewed concerning the personal significance and historical contributions of Black women leaders, 5 out of 12 participants responded that women and/or people of color networks were necessary and supportive contemporary spaces for sustaining their campus leadership. For women, such as Harmony and Charlotte, connecting with women of color groups began as children through their families, specifically their mothers and sisters. These early experiences instilled an understanding of what it meant to be a leader as well as taught them how to rely on the support and encouragement of other Black women to persist during oppressive challenges, Charlotte explained:

Just being surrounded by other strong Black women. Growing up with two older sisters and my mother – my dad was in the house too, but I'd say that the other 3 Black women who were in my house really helped to nurture my understanding of myself as a leader. My dad too, but more so the role models who I had as Black women leaders.

Charlotte's sisters and mother served as early role models for her on how to be a leader. As discussed in the Mothering section, Charlotte's mother was influential in communicating messages to her and her sisters about the necessity of not only being a leader as they grew up but to be exceptional in how they lead. Again, Charlotte also learned at a relatively young age that she would have to have a sense of strength as she moved forward as a leader. Morgan also had a positive experience at a young age with women of color networking. She spoke on how her teachers in middle school facilitated a group and its impact on her as a graduate student leader today:

I think I was in middle school, and I was in this Black women's leadership, that one of my middle school teachers made, and it was like a writing club (laughs). And we did poetry and went on field trips together. But that would've been the

first time, I think it was 5th or 6th grade. Because it was like a group of Black women, and we validated each other, but we challenged each other, and we shared our stories, which I think was powerful at that age. I mean people writing about their little boyfriends in 6th grade, or their struggles at home, or just their day, like writing a poem about the day that they had. I think that was the beginning of like speaking out at a young age, I mean, you know, 11 or 12. And be able to validate another Black woman and say, “Yeah, I understand that.” So kind of like building community amongst us at a young age.

Morgan’s description of this event again illustrates the pivotal role teachers have on Black women college student leadership development. As noted in the previous chapter, Morgan has experienced numerous microaggressions and hostility as a Black masculine of center woman and yet has taken considerable efforts to resist and speak up against the oppression she has faced. From her account, this writing group and the leadership of her teacher was key in encouraging her to recognize that her voice was important and should be used by learning to validate others.

The remaining participants who spoke of the important of networks on their leadership focused their discussions on connecting with women or people of color at Riverland University. Alice, a graduate student who had a particular challenging experience at a predominately White institution as an undergraduate, spoke about the urgency for her to find a network of women of color to support her as a graduate student leader:

Well, it kinda goes back to my undergraduate career. It was a lot of middle-class White folks there, and the sense of community, it was urgent for me to be involved in undergrad, and it’s kinda like the same thing here [at Riverland]. So in [my graduate program] it’s pretty tight knit, but there’s a very small community of women of color. So that community for me, I needed that community, and it helps. I think we motivate and empower each other. You know, I’m not the most confident writer, but when I’m around these women, they say, “You’re amazing, you’re great.” And that’s not necessarily something that I get outside of that community, so I think that sense of community was . . . it’s still urgent for me. Yeah, just that support system. And I think they have helped me make it this far my second year. Because although I got here last year, I didn’t have an

assistantship or anything like that. So little things like that that I was struggling with. And it was those women who really supported me in my endeavors. And now I have one [assistantship], so things are lot better, but again, there's little things that I still struggle with, and they are definitely like my support system.

Just as Alexandra talked about using historical Black women leaders as a toolbox for her persistence as a leader, Alice expands this notion by connecting with other women of color on campus. This network helps Alice to feel less isolated both in her academic department and the campus and local area of Riverland. Women who share her experiences and struggles resisting microaggressions and negative stereotypes of Black women offer her positive countermessages that help her to succeed academically and have been influential in helping her secure leadership and work positions on campus. This network has been so vital to Alice's development and persistence as a leader, she is considering joining a historically Black sorority upon completing her master's degree and as she pursues full-time employment in higher education:

I think it was especially, even now, what I think it is needed for survival. I think about higher education specifically because it's crucial for survival.... Like historically Black sororities and why they came to fruition....So I'm not Greek, but I'm at a point . . . (laughs) again, at my undergrad, we didn't have any historically Black fraternities and sororities. But so I'm thinking about, I'm graduating, I'm going into the real world, you know, how am I gonna get a real big-person job? And now I'm thinking about sororities now, and I never thought about them before, but I'm thinking about them now because I need the networking device....So I think that [sororities] offer, for me, a realm of opening opportunities, you know, whatever chapter or whatever I join, there's some well-established Black women helping each other get to different places. And I think about, do I need that in my life?

While Alice's leadership has been nourished specifically by women of color on campus, Morgan and Kim has found value in connecting with people of color groups in general. Kim, an undergraduate student who felt racially isolated in her residence hall as a first-year student, made a concentrated effort to join a people of color spoken word

student organization. She speaks on how this group helped her to reconceptualize her individual struggles to those that were shared by others:

Joining Lift E'vry Voice, I think up until I joined, you know, I knew of my experience as a Black woman, I knew of my mother's experience. But your family, that's your family, like you're gonna know about that. But I think often times people think they're alone in their experiences, you know, like, "Of course my mom went through that, like we're the same person." But once I got to school and I joined this group – and I joined pretty late in the year actually. But to see that there were other young women, they might've been seniors in college and to hear their work, even though their experiences were different than mine, at the same time it was like, "Oh my God, like it's the same thing!" Maybe it didn't happen on a bus, it happened outside your house, or whatever. So to know that there was somebody there that could identify with you was just like this is great.

As Kim is still trying to find herself as a leader at Riverland, this group had an important function not only to show her what type of leadership was possible on campus; it motivated her to take steps to start her own dialogue group for her Black peers on campus. Morgan, a graduate student, also benefited from connections with people of color on campus. As a new employee working in Residence Life, she commented how a colleague in a different department helped to facilitate an informal network of professionals of color to connect with:

When I first got to Riverland, I've only been here not even a year-and-a-half yet, I was feeling really isolated, and I reached out to the multicultural office, and I got in touch with a colleague who works over there. And then he sent out an email with a handful of people of color on it, and said "Hey, Morgan just started working here, we should all get together" type of thing. Which was great, because then I met some other people of color who work here – similarly sharing the same experience, or very similar experiences. So I think finding a network, even if it's small, of people of color on campus.

While several participants commented on the necessity and value of connecting with peers as a means to support their leadership, Janine had a slightly different perspective:

In terms of affecting my identity of Black women: I know who I am and what I represent. I don't think that having more Black women around me would change that nor do I think that it would. I'm not saying that it wouldn't be nice to feel like there are more Black women in leadership positions; I think it is natural to feel more comfortable amongst people who look like you. For this reason most of my friends and the people I hang out with outside of school are Black. We just seem to have more in common: tastes of movies, music, pop culture opinions, TV shows, etc. I guess I just keep my academic life and personal life very separate so the lack of Black women in leadership roles with me doesn't affect my identity. It just makes me sad that more Black women don't feel comfortable enough to assert themselves into a White community.

As mentioned in the Response to Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression section, Janine is an undergraduate who described herself as preferring to take non-stereotypical Black leadership roles. Noting her struggles code-switching and being one of few Black students in the organizations she is involved in, I asked her in a follow-up email conversation to talk about her thoughts about seeking support from other students of color and specifically women of color on campus. Noted in her response, Janine understood and even appreciated why her peers might join these networks but did not find a need for them herself as a leader. Similar to how she code-switches her language and behavior while leading, she has opted to delineate her social, personal spaces from her leadership.

White Allyship

A unique finding of nourishment among 3 of the 6 graduate student participants is allyship from White colleagues and supervisors. It is my speculation that this type of nourishment was noted exclusively among graduate students due to their previous experience navigating predominantly White institutions and the unique demographic population of Riverland University. As several of the graduate students commented in

Chapter 4, the racial demographics of Riverland University and the surrounding town are more disproportionately White as was each of their previous attended undergraduate institutions. Further, Dawn and Lorraine described the dynamics among graduate students as being isolated within their academic departments and there being a lack of organized spaces for graduate students of color on and off campus. Due to these dynamics, it is not surprising that Black women graduate student leaders must seek support beyond racial, ethnic, and gender identities.

As discussed in the Response to Interactions with Oppression section, graduate students also reported having complex negotiations interrupting stereotypes, microaggressions, and silencing within their leadership as campus employees due to fears of losing their position or repercussions from supervisors. One strategy to address feelings of isolation and to speak out on the hostility they experience is by identifying White colleagues and supervisors as allies to support them in these moments. Alice, who works in Residence Life, explained how her supervisor, a White woman, has been influential to her leadership during these difficult moments:

I think in order to survive as a Black woman leader, you need...so I talked about how my supervisor, I'm able to, you know, just pull her aside and talk about what's happening. I think you need that venting or... not even a venting – and I don't know if ally is the right word, but someone who's like aspiring or, you know, constantly working and showing to you that they are an ally. You need that, some type of person in your work environment to be able to go to and let them know like, "Hey, this is not okay. This is what I'm feeling," or whatever. I think that's a very important survival mechanism.

Alice finds her supervisor to be a safe person in her predominantly White department who she can speak to who not only listens to her experiences without silencing her but also finds it cathartic to "vent" her feelings of frustration as a way of dealing with oppression. Her supervisor, in Alice's opinion, is described as someone who

is aware of racism and willing to address these instances within the department on her behalf. Morgan, who also works in Residence Life, does not have the same relationship with her supervisor but does value the allyship she has from her White co-workers. As mentioned in the Voicing and Silencing section in Chapter 4, Morgan described several incidents in which comments she has made in meetings were ignored by her departments leadership. As a strategy, she frustratingly joked that she has given her White colleague notes and asked them to speak on her behalf. While working with allies has had some positive impacts on her experience as a leader, she still has challenges with this strategy:

So I think finding a network, even if it's small, of people of color on campus, that was one thing. And then so having a network outside of the department. And then finding a network within the department of other RDs who are feeling this, regardless if they're a person of color or not. Which I think is also very telling....And that's hard to do when you don't trust your supervisors, or you don't trust this "leadership team," because who do you go to? Do you go over their heads and go to the dean or vice chancellor, who you don't really know well either. And then you're working in an environment where . . . or at least I feel like I'm working in an environment where I feel like anything on paper can be used against me. So my views about this department, I wanna say it's a hostile environment. You're so worried that speaking out is gonna get you fired, which is what, to me, the system wants you to feel, so that you don't speak up, so that nothing ever changes, and then it's never documented. So I think finding foundations outside of the department, and then finding some within, and a group of people are okay with speaking up. But even then, like the speaking up has gotten us nowhere. It really hasn't.

Morgan has created a sophisticated and multilayered network of support of colleagues of color and White people within and outside her department as a way to negotiate the hostility she faces as a Black woman leader. While she is not alone in calling out the hostility she faces as a leader, she still feels a sense of distrust from supervisors and feels as if her efforts with her network to speak out have not always been that successful.

Mentoring

The last social factor that Black women college student leaders described as an important source of nurturing for them as leaders was the mentoring they felt fortunate to receive. Interviews asked participants what relationships they had with mentors as well as if they had been mentors to others. Every one of these Black woman leader research participants indicated some aspect of mentoring within their leadership experiences, although with some differences between the undergraduate and graduate student experiences.

Undergraduate women generally spoke of mentoring in a general sense, but without personally-felt experiences, describing how there were individuals they looked up to who had leadership qualities they admired. One such example was Kim who spoke about a Black male educational leader of a nonprofit she volunteered for, and later he employed her in a summer intern position. Describing him as a “father figure,” she appreciated his commitment and interactions with youth of color from urban, working-class families. Geidy, also appreciated a former teacher, a White male to whom she felt she could relate based on his having been raised within a working-class background and taking to heart his success despite these challenges. Lastly, Lorraine, a graduate student, described her mentorships with men as valuable due to their work in her desired career field of the performing arts. What is noteworthy from these accounts is that these women were able to develop meaningful relationships with male educational leaders who shared their socioeconomic class despite racial and gender identity differences.

In contrast, 5 out of 6 graduate student participants indicated being personally and individually involved in mentorship relationships directly related their identities as Black

women. Graduate students talked about developing these mentorships with Black women faculty and administrators through campus interactions as undergraduates and continued to be in contact with as they lead at Riverland. Alice shared how she came to acquire mentors as an undergraduate:

Honestly, and I can't speak for them [mentors], but I feel like they in some ways in their leadership roles had the same need of, you know, that Black woman counter space. So I don't know if it was intentional on their half, but for me I know like it is important for me to have that space. So I think we gravitated toward each other. So I don't know, my [mentorships] really happened organically. Like I didn't come in saying I want to come to college with mentors. That idea, or even the word for me, like I knew it, but I wasn't using it. I didn't come into college saying I wanted mentors...It came to fruition on its own.

While Alice did not think to look for mentors, she is clear about her impression that there was an intentional effort on her mentors' part to support her as a leader. There appeared to be a mutual interest between these mentors and her as a mentor to create a women-centered network of support on a racially isolated institution. She continues to explain how these mentors had a positive impact on her leadership development by highlighting her leadership qualities and potential to lead that Alice had not known about herself:

I think my mentors at undergrad, again not realizing any potential in myself, they always found different platforms for me to I share my talents or whatever that may have been. But at my undergrad, they have the annual Martin Luther King Leadership Summit. And so the first year I went as a summitter as, you know, I think I did it my sophomore year, and they asked me to come back and be a facilitator. And I'm like, "I can't do that." I don't wanna do that, not interested in doing it. And I did it, and it was so powerful. So, I mean, I am so grateful for the mentors that I had.

What is key in this excerpt is how these mentors, similar to Charlotte's and Janine's mothers envisioned Alice as a leader before she conceptualized this identity herself. Through encouragement to get involved with this Leadership Summit, Alice was able not only to realize that she was capable of being a facilitator but supported her on a

trajectory toward other leadership opportunities on campus. While Alice was able to connect with faculty and campus administrators, key mentors for Morgan were supervisors and advisors. Holding leadership positions as a woman of color in Residence Life and Athletics, she was able to observe and learn from these women how to later supervise her own staffs as well as how to navigate a hostile work environment. She explained:

I think it happened organically, like I didn't know that that was what was happening until later on. My first supervisor when I was an undergrad, and I definitely consider her a mentor.... she was someone I looked up to and someone that I tried to . . . My supervision style is similar to hers. I learned a lot from her. And then there was another woman of color. When I worked in athletics my freshman year in college, she worked in the academic advising center for athletes. And she was one of the people who experienced so much racism that she had to leave because it was literally killing her. Her physical health diminished, and she had to quit. And I still talk to her to this day. I wrote about her in my college essay. I would consider her a mentor for sure. And I think that mentorship, if we are gonna use that word, I think it's really valuable and important for students of color to find that, or for a mentor to find them. I don't actually think it's just on the student because some students don't know how to navigate higher education. But it is valuable to experience, it makes you feel less isolated, and it's encouraging and inspiring to learn about their experiences and how they got through it. Because my experience sometimes seems to be very similar to other women of color.

Noting how she, too, entered these mentorships organically, Morgan specifically comments on the importance of women of color educational leaders seeking out students to mentor. She is clear that these mentoring relationships were significant in helping her feel less isolated at a predominantly White institution. From a woman of color advisor in athletics, Morgan also learned how to establish boundaries on how much oppression she was willing to endure:

I learned how to be resistant. And when you're like down in the dumps, like thinking about something encouraging that they said, like thinking about an experience that they had, that they got through, so it's like something that gets

you through. Which seems kinda messed up, that it's like you have to think about like a worst-case scenario, you have to think about how bad it was for someone else for you to get through. And it's like yeah, I don't know, I'm conflicted by that now more that I think about it because it's like a reaction of like someone else's pain, is like getting you through. And I know that happens for me sometimes, which is . . . I don't know, that's mindboggling.

While Morgan was able to learn a great deal on how to navigate institutional systems and oppression, she has a moment of empathy and internal conflict as she recognizes how she has benefited from the pain and struggles of her mentors. Similar to how participants recognized the pathways of hardships that Black women historical leaders faced for them to be able to lead today, Morgan acknowledges the difficulties her mentors had to endure to develop her as a leader. While this is hard for her to conceptualize, she also realizes that she too has faced emotional challenges that will ultimately benefit those she mentors.

Like Morgan, graduate students also spoke of the value of being mentors to others. Alice who values women of color networks and has had positive mentor experiences commented on why she found it necessary to be a mentor to students of color at Riverland University:

As far as me being a mentor to others, I'm a part of the multicultural office mentor program where I mentor one person throughout the year. And for me, that was intentional. After kinda establishing those relationships that I had in the past, and knowing what they meant to me and my success, or where I am at least right now, I know that I have to do the same for others. And sometimes I feel like it's not even a choice. It's like you have to help others, especially others who kinda share, you know, [your identities].

Alice notes a sense of an obligation to support students on her campus through membership. This lack of a choice connects back to the social expectation and stereotypes on Black women as being maternal figures and Strong Black women who must self-sacrifice for the sake of others. Despite feeling as she does not have a choice, she continues to explain how being a mentor has nurtured her as a leader:

For me personally, I think I learned that I don't give myself enough credit, but you know, I do a lot of good things. And I need to sit down and acknowledge those things and give myself credit for those things. But also, you know, for me, there's a greater joy in being able to support each other, rather than everyone just looking out for themselves.

Nicky, a Teaching Assistant, shares Alice's feelings of wanting to give back to women of color in particular:

When I'm able to help young ladies that look like myself, when I am able to see how what I do in some capacity, and helps in a meaningful way, not just being the help, but actually substantively, helping....Because I don't want anyone to have to go through life and go through what I have and experience the things I've had to experience. The missed opportunities to call shit out, I just wish I knew enough young enough to say something to step up so that I won't feel the need at 30 years old to break this habit, that's what keeps pushing me. When I see the few times, this particular semester was amazing to me. I had like 5 or 6 women of color, 5 Black girls in my class, and to see them look at me in awe, to be able to be in a position to say at a White institution I had a Black woman teach me, you know? So many of them who can't say that, and it's for those reasons that I continue to do what I do. When they ask me, "Ms. Nicky, would you please sit on a panel, or would you please come give a few words to my club or organization?" that keeps me doing it. When I can call out, not just racism, but sexism too and call out those intersections of oppression, that's what makes it worth doing and worth keeping on.

Recognizing the struggles she went through as an undergraduate and graduate student, Nicky feels a sense of responsibility to speak up on behalf of her students and if possible create less difficult pathways navigating oppression. As she eloquently captures in this description, Black women college student leaders must learn to negotiate the hostile campus environments at predominantly White institutions for their own livelihood through a variety of response strategies. As participants draw upon multiple sources of nourishment to help them persist through oppressive conditions, in some instances these women were nurturing influences to other Black women leaders they interacted with on campus.

In the next chapter, I offer my analyses of the Black women college student leaders' experiences with oppression as well as my analyses of the sources of nourishment to sustain their leadership on campus.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the specific leadership experiences of Black women undergraduate and graduate students at a predominantly White institution. Qualitative methods and a partially phenomenological approach (open-ended interview questions) were used to generate interviews that would address the two research questions guiding the study. I first explored interactions with oppression that Black women college student leaders described experiencing while exercising their leadership. Second, I explored the social factors that offered nourishment and support, enabling Black women college students to sustain their leadership when faced with instances of oppression. This chapter explores their answers to these two guiding research questions as well as offer insights for future research and implications for student affairs practice.

Research Questions

Experiences with Oppressions While Leading

Three broad themes were identified from the individual interviews in response to the first guiding research question: In what ways do Black women college student leaders experience oppression when exercising their leadership. These overall themes are: 1) Community as a Motivation to Lead (Enhancing, Creating and Sustaining), 2) Challenges upon Entry into College Student Leadership (Navigating Campus, Racial Climate, Questions on Diversity Quota), and 3) Interactions with Interpersonal Oppression

(Stereotypes, Microaggressions, Racialized and Gendered Self-Presentation Expectations, Voicing and Silencing).

Community as Motivation to Lead

The first theme identified concerning oppression for Black women college students as they exercise their leadership on campus is Community as Motivation to Lead. Participants collectively commented on the racial and ethnic climate of predominantly White institutions that they felt contributed to a sense of isolation and heightened awareness of their position as one of few Black women campus. While women referenced familiarity with Black student organizations, some found these groups to have a limited student audience scope or did not meet an aspect of their multiple identities as Black women. To address these challenges, participants described a desire to enhance, create, or sustain community among Black students on campus.

Community work among Black women has historically operated in various structures and contexts. Combining practices of kinship, social responsibility, and resistance, community work is considered to be any tasks or strategies that aim to strengthen the political, social, and economic institutions among Black communities as well as to overcome racial oppression that has limited social participation within American societies (Gilkes, 2001). Emerging as a response to slavery, economic difficulties, lack of civil rights, and violence, Black women established a number of informal networks and formal organizations to pool resources to provide social welfare services as well as organize activist efforts to address social injustices. These groups were particularly vital during the Reconstruction period in forming Black institutions, such as churches,

businesses, and schools, given the lack of support from the federal government to help transition those enslaved by inadequate employment, living accommodations, health care, and education (Shaw, 1991). Given this legacy of Black women's response to cultural and systematic oppression and the isolating, if not hostile, climate of predominantly White colleges and universities, it is not surprising that Black women participants link their campus leadership to community work.

Challenges upon Entry into College Student Leadership

Challenges upon Entry into College Student Leadership was the second major experience with oppression for participants. After deciding to take steps to lead on campus, women indicated that they were met with challenges, often unanticipated when exercising their leadership. While citing difficulty navigating the racial and ethnic climate of Riverland, there were some notable distinctions in responses between undergraduate and graduate women. , Riverland University was the first experience attending a predominantly White educational institution and living in area with such disproportionately low number of Black people for some undergraduate participants. For those who did have experience at predominantly White schools, the large size of Riverland, combined with the vast number of leadership opportunities, was a challenge. Lastly, comments from White peers suggesting tokenism was a new experience for these Black undergraduate women. These instances caused them to question whether selection into a position was based on their qualifications or based on a need to meet a presumed diversity quota.

Graduate students had some commonalities with undergraduate student participants, although for them, previous experiences at predominantly White institutions fostered a different set of transitional challenges during this, their second experience—and at a graduate level—of a predominantly White institution at Riverland University. First, graduate students' transition experiences ranged from being familiar with these campus demographics to culture shock. Those who felt culture shock found the institution and the surrounding area to be more disproportionately White compared to their undergraduate schools, which were located in more racially diverse urban areas. Further, some graduate women reported having challenges navigating Black communities at Riverland due to diversity of ethnic identity and enclaves among Black students that did not exist at their previous institutions. Also distinct from undergraduate experience is how graduate women's leadership became intersected and complicated by their campus employment positions.

While students in general have challenges making the initial transition from high school to college or undergraduate to graduate education, these difficulties are exacerbated for Black women leaders in predominantly White institutions as they begin to confront issues both of race and gender, including the intersection of these two sets of issues, as students exercising leadership. Black women's difficulties at predominantly White institutions have historical roots in the legacies of legal discriminatory admission policies and segregation on these campuses (Benjamin, 1997; Evans, 2007). While Black women have gained some access to higher education since the days of chattel slavery and Jim Crow laws, these women still face a number of contemporary challenges on college and university campuses. Despite campus attempts to increase the racial diversity at these

universities, these interviews with Black women indicated that they are still an underrepresented group within higher education in general and at predominantly White institutions (Constantine & Greer, 2003).

Riverland University's total Black/African American student population is 4.1% for undergraduates and 5.4% for graduate students ([Riverland University], 2012).

Further, studies show that diversifying enrollment at predominantly White institutions without addressing racial and ethnic climates contributes to challenges for students of color on these campuses (Hurtado et al., 1999).

It is not surprising that Black women college students at predominantly White institutions experience the campus culture and climate as isolating (Banks, 2009; Winkle-Wagner, 2009). These feelings are due in part to the disproportionately low numbers of Black women on campus as well as hostile, stereotyped, or misunderstood interactions from peers, faculty, and staff. These interactions occur among their White peers in leadership as well as from advising faculty and supervising staff. These women in some cases face personal difficulty adjusting on campus in regards to creating a social support network, physical and mental wellness, family obligations, employment, and navigating extracurricular activities (Rosales & Person, 2003). Those women who do have leadership responsibilities and positions on campus may experience subtle and overt discrimination by being denied opportunities in obtaining positions, having to combat stereotypes based on race and/or gender, needing to negotiate a variety diversity of perspectives of leadership approaches, or having difficulty in working with others of different social identities than themselves (Byrd, 2009). While a number of academic and student affairs resources exist on campus to support all students and in some cases

specific social identities of these students, some women may be hesitant to seek these services due to fears of conscious and unconscious oppressive interactions or may have perceptions that staff are inadequately prepared to meet their needs (Constantine & Greer, 2003).

Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression

The last major theme descriptive of Black women college students' experience with oppression as they exercise their leadership on campus is characterized as Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression. These interpersonal interactions played out both for undergraduate and graduate participants as stereotypes, microaggressions, presentation expectations, and voicing and silencing.

Black women college student leaders discussed stereotypes as the most visible type of interpersonal interaction with oppression. In particular, participants named the following stereotypes as common descriptors of their experiences: Angry Black Woman, Black Mama, Jezebel, Strong Black Woman, and Exceptional or Educated Black Woman. These women readily described how these negative assumptions were directed toward them and expressed how they created challenges for them while leading.

The Angry Black Woman, with associating characteristics of being loud, confrontational, bossy, or difficult to work with was the most named and most difficult to work against. Another challenging stereotype was the Strong Black Woman where participants recalled how there was an expectation for Black women to struggle and where others viewed them being willing to self-sacrifice their needs for the sake of

leading others. Regardless of the stereotype projected toward them, participants expressed feeling frustrated with these limiting and negative depictions.

Participants also commented on how stereotypes were the root of other interpersonal interactions with oppression, such as microaggressions. Black women college student leaders reflected on how White peers, faculty, and staff made inquiries about their citizenship and place of birth due to their names or spoken to then in exaggerated racialized slang words that they did not use ordinarily with their White peers. Unique to graduate students were microaggressions within work contexts. While one woman with a masculine gender expression spoke about how White students posed indirect questions about her being female, others commented on how their authority as staff members were questioned or challenged.

The racialized and gendered expectations for self-presentation experienced by Black women student leaders served as a third area in which these student leaders experienced oppression within interpersonal interactions. In these cases, participants described facing an internal conflict between wanting to express themselves authentically as Black women and at the same time feeling pressured to suppress some aspects of themselves as a means of avoiding negative stereotypes. Black women college student leaders felt they had to negotiate stereotypical associations with physical appearance (clothing, hair, make-up, etc.) as well as behavior and verbal communication when they were presenting themselves in leadership roles.

Lastly, the contradictions between voicing and silencing within interpersonal interactions emerged as a challenge between the degree to which Black women college students felt they could verbally express themselves and the degree to which they felt

their opinions were validated or acknowledged by others. Conscious of the above mentioned stereotypes, participants struggled with deciding when to use their voice or to remain silent and worried of how White people might perceive them as angry, confrontational, or loud if they used their voices in authentic self-expression. In the instances in which they did use their voice, some participants commented on how their opinions or contributions would be ignored in their own cases and then acknowledged if a similar sentiment was shared by a White peer. Lastly, some Black women college student leaders shared how they were offered explicit advice not to expression their opinions or comment on how White people would blatantly dismiss their experiences with oppression.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the historical legacy of slavery created a particular social location for Black women as subordinate within the contexts of White supremacy as well as within both White and Black patriarchies. One consequence of this positioning was the social construction of pejorative stereotypes of Black womanhood within the United States, most notably the Jezebel, Mammy, and Sapphire—stereotypes that played out both as racism (coming from White communities) and also as sexism (coming from within both White and Black patriarchies) (Davis, 1983; hooks, 1981). Despite attempts to challenge these images and beliefs about Black women through social movement efforts during the Jim Crow, these stereotypes have not only persisted but have become more complicated as they gather additional negative characteristics. Contemporary stereotypes directed toward Black women include the Angry Black Woman, Exceptional or Educated Black Woman (also referred to as Bourgie or “Acting Too White”), and the Strong Black Woman (Harris-Perry, 2011). It is important to note that despite these new

labels, these stereotypes are still connected to a historical legacy of Black (un)womanhood, contributing to specific and intersecting interactions with racial and gender oppressions.

Stereotypes directed against Black women are particularly noticeable at predominantly White higher education institutions (Banks, 2009; Winkle-Wagner, 2009). The pervasive dynamic of whiteness along with unchecked, pejorative assumptions and limited interpersonal interactions contribute to a hostile and isolating climate for Black women. This, coupled with dynamics of being a numerical minority on these campuses, makes the task of challenging these stereotypes especially difficult for Black women.

Stereotypes also impact Black women as they navigate their racial identity development. Depending on where a woman is situated on this journey, her response to these depictions as well as the degree to which she may internalize these messages may vary (Jackson, 2012; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Without countermessages challenging these stereotypes, the pervasiveness of oppression, as described by many participants, may result in Black women questioning their ability to lead, minimize their contributions, or in some cases not pursue leadership opportunities (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003).

As discussed previously, stereotypes often serve as the foundation of additional interactions with oppression, such as microaggressions. First coined in the 1970s and initially focused on racism, microaggression are day-to-day insults, condescending messages, and ill-informed assumptions projected toward minoritized groups by members of dominant social identity groups, the accumulation of which creates an injury that is greater than the sum of its parts (DeAngelis, 2009). Often these interpersonal exchanges

are unconscious and unintentional, yet these interactions still perpetuate cultural and systematic oppressions. Microaggressions contribute to a hostile, isolating environment for Black women on predominantly White campuses and, as articulated eloquently by Nicky in Chapter 5, result in a hesitation to take on leadership roles on campus (DeAngelis, 2009).

Racialized and Gendered Self-Presentation Expectations and Voicing and Silencing coincide with two theoretical concepts Black peoples may use to negotiate hostile climates: 1) enactments of race, 2) code-switching, 3) bridging, 4) attachment-bonding, 5) within-group bonding, 6) within-group code-switching, and 7) within-group bridging. Drawing from research on Black social identity development, the Black Enactment-Transaction Model (Cross, 2012) identifies several approaches Black individuals might employ to address the racism they encounter. Two of the Black Enactment-Transaction approaches noted by Cross that fit transaction modes described by my participants, are *buffering* and *code-switching*. *Buffering* refers to strategies Black people may use to protect themselves from racial microaggressions through behaviors, such as avoidance, passivity, or passive-aggression (Cross, 2012). Also in the scope of protection or survival, *code-switching* describes the process by which a person suppressing aspects of their Black identity, while performing White cultural norms in White contexts, only to re-enter Black identity spaces with Black identity performance (Cross, 2012).

In Chapter 5, Janine is quoted in descriptions of her attempts both to buffer and to code-switch while leading within an engineering organization. She made conscious choices not to lead in Black student organizations and only to lead in predominantly

White student organizations to avoid being associated with racial stereotypes and commented how she alters how she speaks around her White peers. It is important to note that these approaches toward oppression are not always successful strategies for these situations or as a permanent solution. As Janine recalled in her attempt to code-switch when working with her White peers, Black women may still face instances of stereotypes and microaggressions despite code-switching.

Another phrase for code-switching, shifting as noted by Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) describes “a sort of subterfuge that African Americans have long practiced to ensure their survival in our society” where one alters their thinking, voice, physical appearance, or demeanor as a way to cope negotiate oppression (p. 6). Geidy and Harmony in Chapter 4 explained their struggle negotiating these identities as they discussed clothing choices and attempts to deter hypersexual stereotypes of Black women. While Geidy made the choice to alter her physical appearance to avoid being called the “sexy Latina,” Harmony conformed to feminine, professional clothing choices and was cautious not to let her friendly demeanor be perceived as flirtatious.

There is a considerable burden on Black women college students not only to acquire competency in White, male, and class-privilege culture but to know when to perform these norms and when to attempt to reclaim their full identities as Black women. Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) comment, “Shifting is often internal, invisible. It’s the chipping away at her sense of self, at her feelings of wholeness and centeredness--often a consequence of living amidst racial and gender bias” (p. 7). A price of shifting for some Black women is being misunderstood or alienated. If a woman performs a shifted identity in the wrong context, she may be viewed as “acting White” or “not Black enough” by her

Black peer or family while being viewed as “too Black” or “ghetto” in White spaces (Winkle-Wagner, 2009).

Sources of Nourishment Through Oppression

Six sub-themes emerged from the individual interviews with Black women undergraduate and graduate student leaders in response to social factors that nurtured their leadership. These themes are: 1) Mothering, 2) Teacher and Educational Leaders, 3) Historical Recognition of Black Women Leaders, 4) Women and People of Color-Centered Networks, 5) Mentoring, and 6) White Allyship.

Black Women’s Historical Traditions of Leadership as Nourishment

Two central source of nourishment for Black women college student leaders was through Black woman mothering and educational leaders. All participants except one commented on how their mother was herself influential by serving as a role model who demonstrated strength and effective leadership styles. Mothers were also key in offering early encouragement for the women I interviewed to lead as children and as a resource of support when they continued leading on college campuses. Black women faculty were also described as a significant source of nourishment. Participants talked about how these women took on caretaking roles beyond the scope of their teaching and campus responsibilities. Like mothers, Black faculty women were viewed as role models on a campus and at a national level that encouraged them to lead, demonstrated effective leadership skills, and helped them to learn about their identities as Black women and how to persist despite interactions with oppression (Guiffrida, 2005, Hill-Brisbane, 2005).

Often through courses taught by Black women faculty, participants reported that learning about the historical traditions of Black women's leadership and activism was influential to their leadership. Recognition of the history of Black women's leadership helped women reconceptualize their struggles as leaders on campus as being possible to overcome in comparison to the struggles of those leaders before them. Specifically, historical leaders, like Fannie Lou Hamer, Ida B. Wells, and Anna Julius Cooper served as role models where participants strived to develop the leadership skills and characteristics these women embodied. Lastly, history was also important for participants as it helped them view their current leadership as bigger than themselves and their campus (Brown, 1989; hooks, 2000; Omolade, 1987). Recognition of traditions of Black women's leadership connected women to a historical legacy and contributed toward an investment to other Black women leaders on campus.

A fourth social factor that nourished Black women's college student leaders was women-and people of color-centered networks (Collins, 2000; Henry & Glenn, 2009). These spaces began during childhood, for some participants, through their mothers and sisters or through efforts from Black teachers in primary and secondary schools. These networks offered positive messages about their leadership capabilities that influenced them to pursue leadership while at college. Women-centered networks also taught them to encourage other Black women, striving to help them to feel less isolated while at predominantly white institutions. A few participants commented on positive experiences within people of color-centered networks that were diverse in gender, racial, and ethnic identities. Again these networks addressed feelings of isolation and helped women to see

that their individual oppression was actually connected to cultural and systematic oppression.

Lastly, mentoring was nourishing of Black women college student leadership (Gallien & Peterson, 2005; Green & King, 2001). Undergraduate students talked about mentoring, commenting on how they benefited from individuals who had admirable leadership qualities in professions they strived for or who shared similar social class backgrounds. Graduate students specifically discussed having mentors with Black women, often in leadership roles within higher education institutions (Patton & Harper, 2003; Schwartz, Bower, Rice, & Washington, 2003). These women again served as role models of how to navigate the oppression as Black women leaders in work contexts by offering words of encouragement and response strategies. Graduate students also described how being mentors themselves nurtured their leadership. Connecting back to recognition of historical legacies and networks, participants wanted to give back and help Black women leaders navigate the challenges they faced while leading at predominantly White institutions.

Mothering, educational leaders, history recognition, networks, and mentoring as social factors of nourishment stem from a legacy of kinship as well as strategies of survival and resistance among Black women. The pervasive importance of this form of Black women's support and nourishment needs to be understood through an exploration of its traditional cultural roots and US historical legacies. Influenced from West African cultural traditions, early Black peoples within the United States conceptualized family beyond blood lineage to include relatives outside the nuclear family construct and those non-related individuals living in their communities (Hine & Thompson, 1998). While the

conditions of who makes up a family changed, what remained consistent in kinship practices were patriarchal gender roles. In other words, Black women were still considered to be subordinate to men and primarily responsible for domestic tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare (Hallam, 2004). This extended notion of family persisted during slavery and become vital to Black people's survival as it was a common practice for White owners to separate families, arrange marriages, and force procreation for financial profit and human labor (Collins, 2000).

Slavery living and work conditions for Black women were harsh and demanding, requiring strategic and collective means of survival. Slave women were expected to take on domestic work in their White owners' homes and agricultural work alongside slave men in addition to the childrearing and household responsibilities within their own families. Slave women were subjected to physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse by White owners and slave men as a method of control and dominance of their lives (hooks, 1981). As a response to the need for survival, slave women created spaces for themselves to address high labor demands, to gain emotional support through instances of oppression, and to share resistance strategies (Collins, 2000; White, 1985). These female slave networks, along with practices of kinship, fostered a specific type of leadership role for Black women: mothering. In addition to caring for their own families, slave women took on responsibilities of caretaking members of their communities, such as children, the elderly, or ill (Collins, 2000; White, 1985). While mothering can be viewed as a tool of multiple systems of oppression and in a sense a forced role for Black slave women, it was also an opportunity for these women to take agency within their lives as well as the lives of their families and communities.

Upon the conclusion of slavery, mothering as leadership along with kinship and women-centered networks continued as Black communities developed their own social institutions, such as business, churches, and schools (Gilkes, 1980). The role of mothering was particularly prolific in educational contexts. Educational attainment was a high priority for Black communities after slavery, as it was viewed as a means for social mobility (Anderson, 1988). Further, Black women were specifically recruited to pursue education to acquire positions as teachers, and this was one of the few employment opportunities available to them beyond domestic work (Giddings, 1996). Mothering within teaching existed both inside and outside the walls of schools through three main contexts: the classroom, mentorship of novice teachers, and the general community in which they worked.

Black teacher mothering within the classroom stemmed from a legacy of Black mothers' encouragement of educational attainment within the family (Fairclough, 2007). Freedom from slavery and the increased participation within formal school systems was not only a dream that many Black mothers held for their children but also an opportunity for which they were willing to make sacrifices for the chance at a better life for their children. Through storytelling, Black mothers would informally teach about experiences of struggle, resistance, and racial pride as a way to keep children committed to educational pursuits (Fairclough, 2007). This practice of offering a collective cultural memory of Blackness and positive esteem was sustained through Black motherhood as well as through Black women who entered the teaching profession. The classroom was also an opportunity to reinforce lessons on morality held by Black churches and

preparation for the realities of social injustices that children would face beyond the classroom or school (Ramsey, 2008).

In addition to their work within the classroom, Black women teachers demonstrated mothering within their faculties. Comparable to the structure of formal leadership within Black churches, the dominance of Black men in administrative and leadership positions in Black segregated schools contributed to the formation of a dual-sex system. Teaching staffs of Black women resembled the mutual cooperative networks formed during slavery and within Black churches as a way not only to pool resources to meet their needs but also to create support systems to handle the emotional toll of their work climates (Ramsey, 2008). It was common for women most senior in age or in teaching experience to offer guidance and mentorship in such areas as curriculum and handling behavior issues among students. Teachers who were highly respected were also looked upon for leadership when dealing with school administrations and activism. The increasing emergence of Black women's clubs and sororities during the early 20th century further supported women's networks and acted as the foundational organizing spaces that would become Black teachers associations. In these spaces, Black women would strategize activist efforts for higher salaries, better working conditions and resources for Black schools and ultimately a push toward desegregation of educational systems (Fairclough, 2007).

Lastly, Black women teachers exhibited mothering through their work as community mothers. Viewing the classroom as an extension of the community, Black women teachers maintained a social responsibility of care for the general well-being of youth. Due to the inadequate and disproportionate funding for schools, Black women

teachers created relationships with churches, business, and farmers as a means to get land, furniture, food, and other supplies otherwise not available (Fairclough, 2007). It was also common for teachers to supplement school expenses from their personal salaries despite any economic challenges this might impose upon them (Ramsey, 2008). Teachers also canvassed their communities to recruit students. Often Black women would visit homes where they would speak at length with parents to persuade them to send their children to schools or to strategize ways to meet financial expenses if this were an obstacle to school attendance.

Given this historical legacy of Black women's leadership in traditional African cultures, within oppressive US social systems historically, and within educational and religious contexts, it is not surprising that participants commented on how mothering, teachers, recognition of Black women's history, women-centered networks, and mentoring were named as sources of nourishment. While the opportunities for Black women's leadership within higher education have become more accessible and the conditions of contemporary campus are a far improvement from slavery and Jim Crow segregation, there is still a need for Black women to draw upon these historical traditions.

White Allyship as Nourishment

White Allyship is the final source of nourishment reported exclusively by graduate student participants. Identifying and creating relationships with White colleagues and supervisors who acknowledged racism and White privilege was pivotal as these women navigated interpersonal interactions with oppression while leading. White allies served as "safe spaces" for Black women graduate leaders to expression their

frustration to and in some instances interrupted incidences of oppression. White allyship has many positive benefits on Black women's college student leadership. First, allies help Black women college student leader with challenging internalization of racism by either offering countermessages to the stereotypes and microaggression projected toward them or by reminding women of how these comments connect to cultural and systematic oppression (Love, 2013). Further, White allies interrupt feelings of isolation among Black women college student leaders. As discussed throughout this study, participants reported feeling as if they were a numerical minority and described Riverland as unwelcoming. White allies are valuable to addressing these feelings by expressing empathy and validating that oppressive interactions are occurring when other White people of campus silence these perspectives (Love, 2013). White allyship also relieves the burden of responding to oppression solely from Black women college student leaders. Using their position of power and privilege, these individuals can influence opinions and behaviors of other White people they come in contact with (Brodio, 2000).

Making the Connection: A Proposed Model of Black Women College Student Leadership Experiences with Oppression

Upon completion of my inductive and deductive coding process, I placed the codes in various relationships to each other to explore what relationships, if any, they may have had with each other. Through mapping, I was able to group codes together, ultimately creating overarching themes and sub-themes. These overarching themes were labeled and defined, while corresponding sub-themes describe nuances among the grouped sub-themes: 1) Community as a Motivation to Lead (Enhancing, Creating, and Sustaining), 2) Challenges upon Entry into College Student Leadership (Navigating

Campus, Racial Climate, Questions on Diversity Quota), 3) Interactions with Interpersonal Oppression (Stereotypes, Microaggressions, Racialized and Gendered Self-Presentation Expectations, Voicing and Silencing), 4) Responding to Oppression (Non-Response, Shifting, Humor, Selectivity of Leadership, Speaking up, and Exiting Leadership), and 5) Nurturing Oppression (Mothering, Teacher and Educational Leaders, Historical Recognition of Black Women Leaders, Women and People of Color-Centered Networks, Mentoring, and White Allyship).

Analysis of these themes resulted in a visually representative model that helps me describe a sequence of experiences that characterized how these participants encountered the challenges of Black women's leadership on predominantly White college campuses.

In what follows, I present one-to-one thematic relationships and describe how these themes and their corresponding sub-themes relate to each other before putting the thematic relationships into an overall representative model.

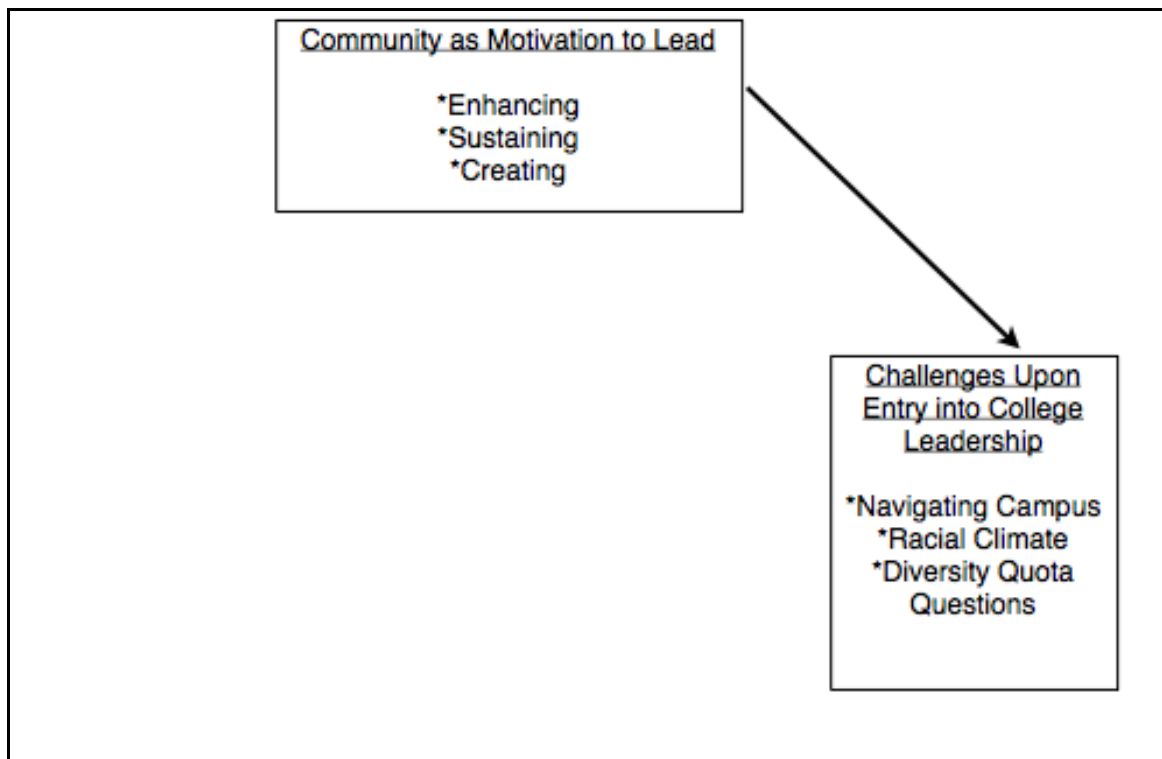


Figure 1. Community as Motivation to Lead Relationship to Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership

Community as Motivation to Lead and Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership

Upon observing the campus and student organization dynamics at Riverland University, participants discussed a shared motivation to lead to create, to enhance, and to sustain community for Black people on campus. Upon entering these leadership roles, Black women college student described often unanticipated challenges. Some women struggled by navigating a larger campus size and more student organization options than their high school offered. Many participants had feelings of racial or ethnic isolation at a predominantly White campus. Lastly, a few women mentioned racial microaggression from White peers who viewed their leadership as being associated with filling diversity

quotas. Despite these initial challenges, women maintained their motivation to lead for community.

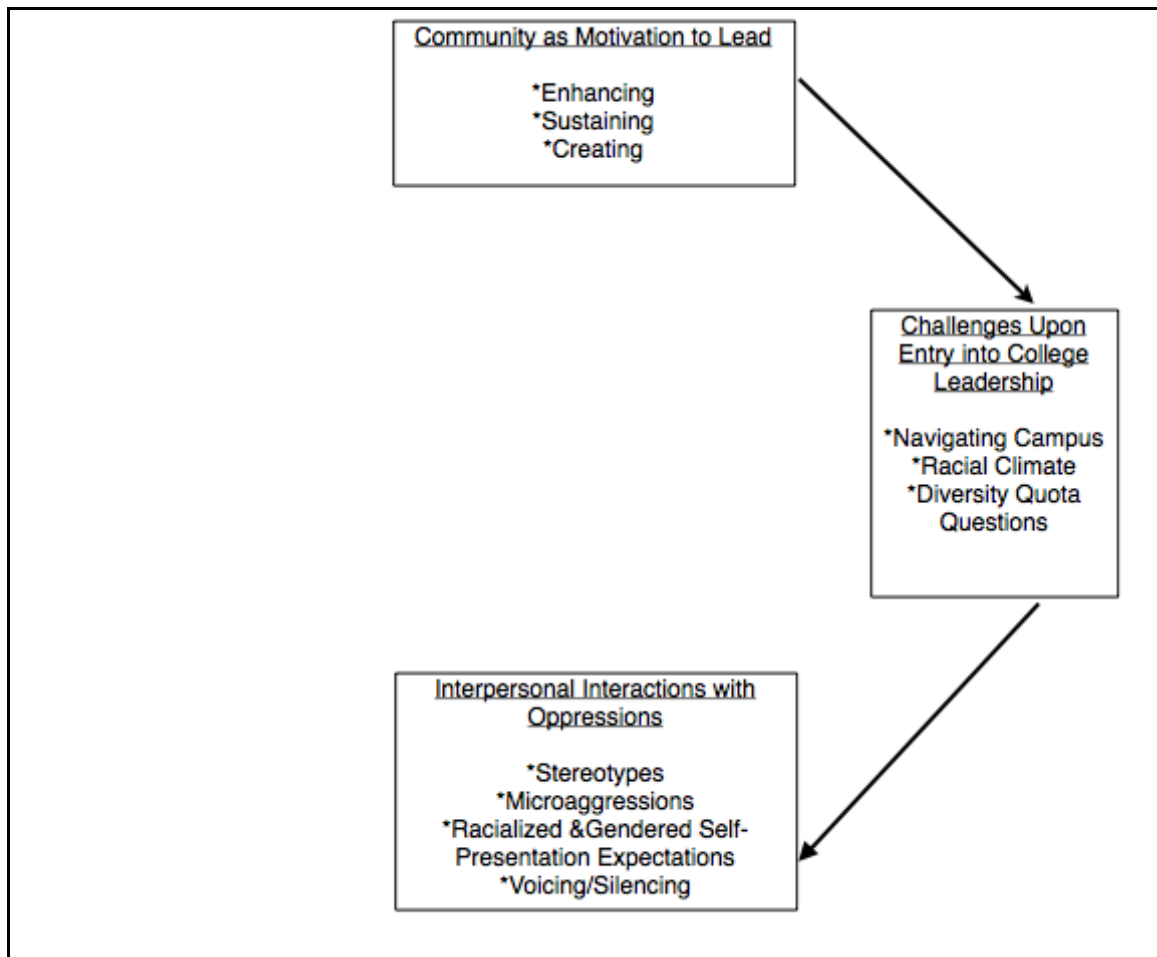


Figure 2. Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership and Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression

Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership and Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression

As discussed in Chapter 4, Black women college students persisted through leadership entry challenges and soon encountered additional instances of hostility and isolation. Specifically, participants were highly aware of the negative stereotypes directed toward them and how they imposed difficulty exercising their leadership.

Microaggressions that they experienced as they entered leadership also continued,

manifesting as questioning of their ability to lead and also as comments about their physical presentation and communication style. Voicing and silencing was another struggle women had to work through after entering positions. Recognizing they were one of few Black women in White leadership spaces or one of few women in male-dominated organizations, participants described their opinions as being dismissed or labeled as confrontational.

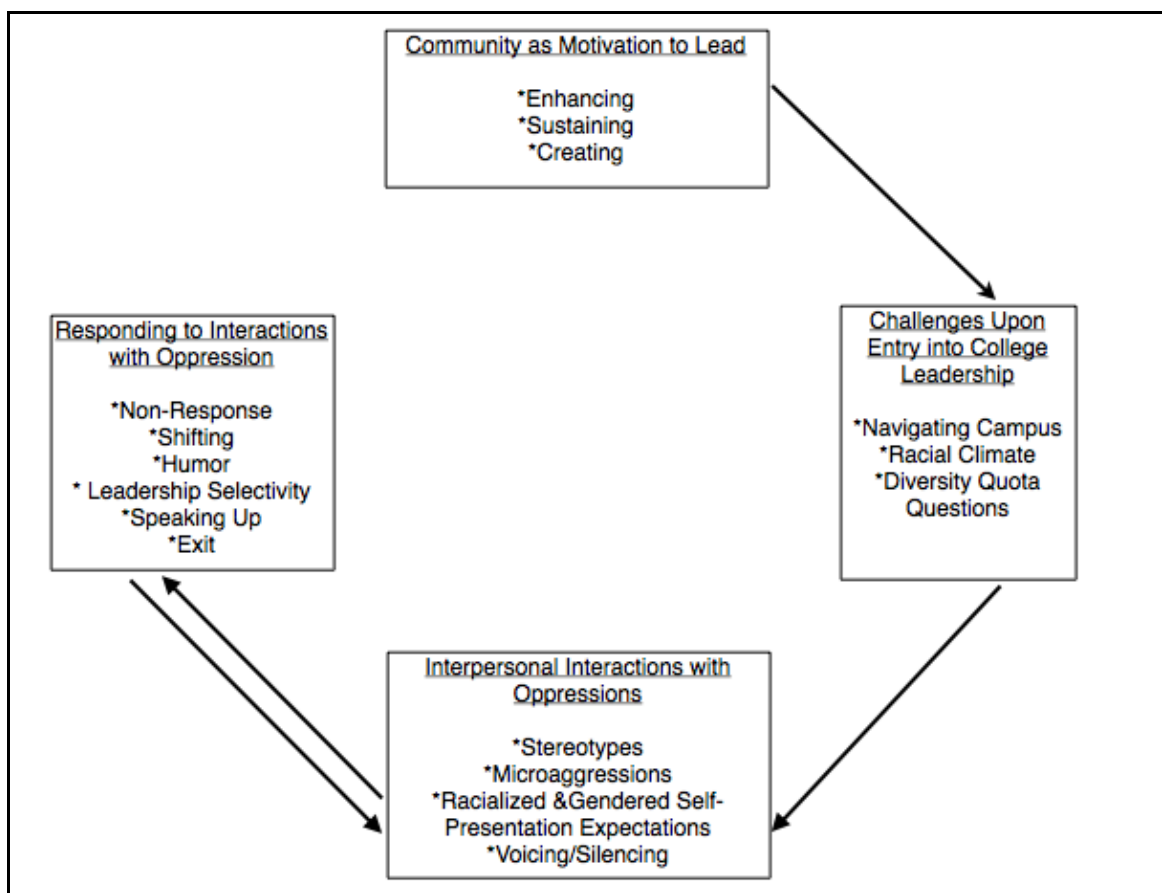


Figure 3. Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression Relationship to Responding to Oppression

Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression and Response to Oppression

After facing stereotyping, microaggressions, presentation expectations, and voicing challenges, Black women college student leaders had to make decisions on how to respond to these instances of oppression. These responses ranged from not addressing oppression to using coping strategies (shifting, humor, selectivity of leadership) to acts of resistance (speaking up). Each woman mentioned using a mixture of these responses as a way of persisting to lead despite the hostility they faced. In some instances, such as with Morgan and Alexandra, the accumulation of stereotyping, microaggressions, and failed previous responses influenced their decision to exit a leadership role as a way to end the oppression interactions.

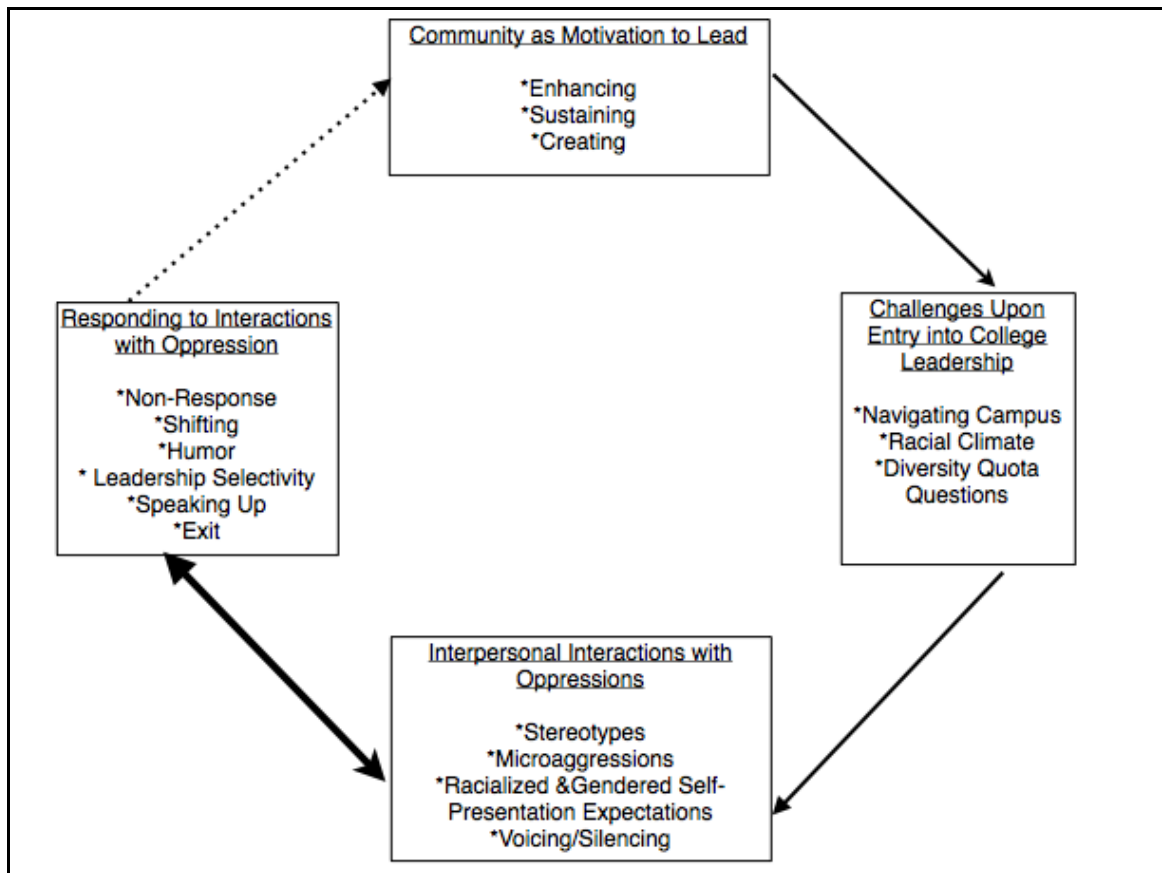


Figure 4. Responding to Oppression and Community as Motivation to Lead

Response to Oppression and Community as Motivation to Lead

As Black women college student leaders respond to instances of oppression, they reflect and evaluate the effectiveness of their coping strategies or acts of resistance. The perception participants have on whether a response strategy was effective or ineffective as well as how others react to these strategies has some influence on Black women college students' motivation to continue leading within community spaces. For example, Dawn, who uses humor to address microaggressions from White peers, finds this strategy as impactful and allows her to maintain her leadership. This is also the case for Morgan, who speaks up as a way to interrupt moments in which she is silenced. However, in those instances in which a response strategy is ineffective and interactions of oppression persist, participants' motivation to lead is negatively impacted. Nicky's use of selective leadership as a response to the Black Mama stereotype and microaggressions she faces in the classroom illustrate this consequence. Once open to lead in a variety of capacities, her motivation to lead within her academic department has diminished and now is reserved for the support of Black women college students on campus. Alexandra, who exited her leadership role on the track and field team after being silenced, had an impact on her desire to lead in other spaces on campus. After several years of navigating the hostile racial climate, she is attempting to rekindle her confidence and motivation to lead by creating a natural hair group for Black women students at Riverland University.

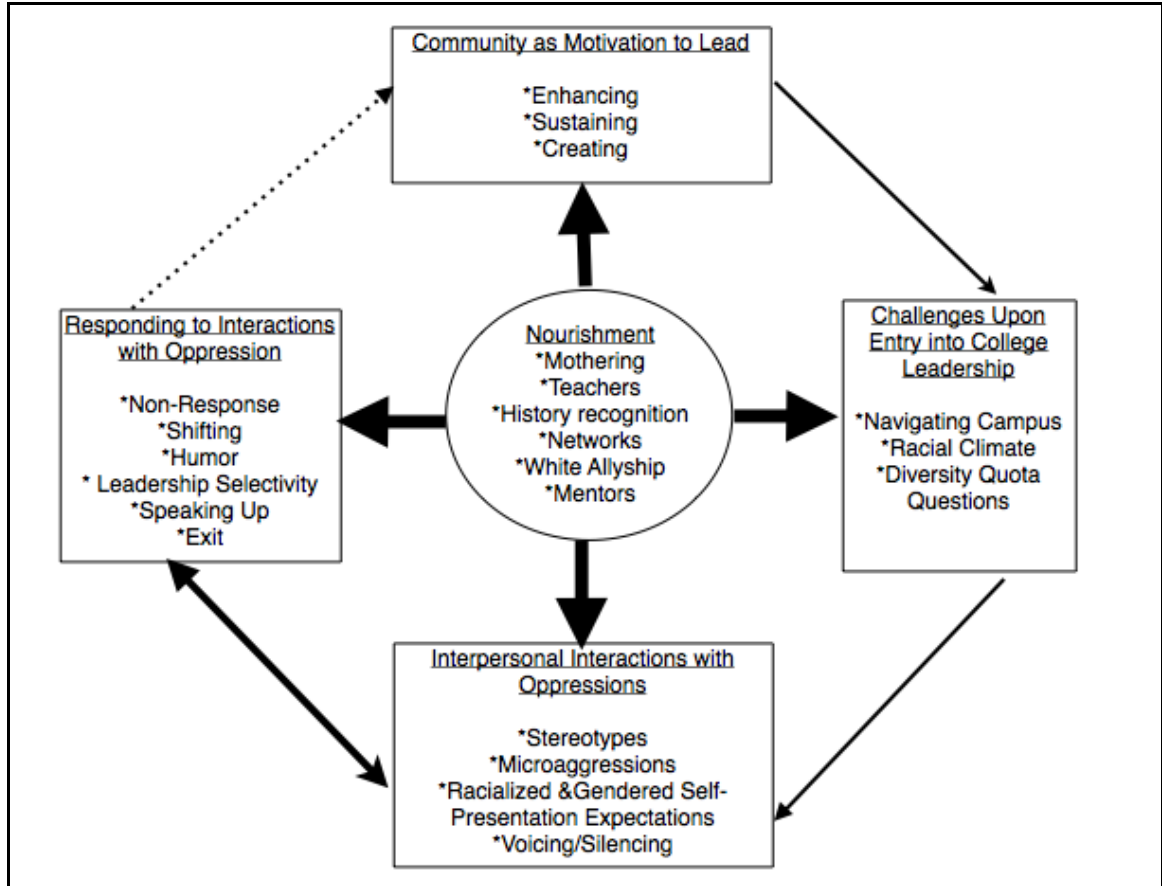


Figure 5. Relationship of Nourishment Sources to Community Motivation, Challenges upon Entry to College Leadership, Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression, and Responding to Oppression

Nurturing Leadership

The last overarching theme, Nurturing Leadership is placed at the center of the model. It is my position that social factors, such as mothering, teachers, history recognition, networks, mentoring, and White allyship all have impacts on the surrounding overarching themes. What follows are a few examples of these impacts.

Nurturing Leadership relates to Community as Motivation to Lead as several participants commented that mothers and teachers were role models who lead within their

families and communities and also encouraged them to take on leadership roles. This theme connects to Challenges upon Entry into College Leadership through the example of Morgan and Alice who described how finding White allies and women- and people of color-centered networks supported them through initial challenges as graduate leaders working within Residence Life. Interpersonal Interactions with Oppression has several relationships with Nurturing Leadership. Specifically, recognition of historical contributions of Black women leaders and their struggles helps women to conceptualize their personal challenges with a larger cultural and systematic oppression. Lastly, mothers, mentors, and teachers as nourishment have been influential in how participants learned to respond to the oppression they encountered. Lorraine learned from celebrity faculty, Melissa Harris-Perry, how to address hostile climates in an effective and accessible manner.

As a means to get feedback on this model while I was in the process of developing it, I asked one of my last participants, Alexandra, for her thoughts on whether or how this model represented her own experience leading at predominantly White institutions. Alexandra was interview 11 of 12, and I had developed the model based upon the first 10 interviews. At the conclusion of Alexandra's interview, I showed her a visual of the model and explained the meaning of each theme and sub-themes. I also offered my interpretation of the relationships between these themes.

After concluding the formal part of overview, Alexandra examined the model and commented that she felt it reflected her experience with oppression while leading at predominantly White institutions. She also described how this model helped her make sense about why she faced some difficulties at Riverland University and her first

undergraduate institution. Given that only one person was able to offer input, this model cannot yet be generalized to other participants or Black women college student leaders broadly. As will be discussed in the next section, further research is needed on this model and Black women college student leadership experiences in general.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

This dissertation study found that there are various experiences with oppression for Black women college students while exercising their leadership and investigated the social factors that nurtured them while leading. This chapter first discusses the study's implication on future research implications and then offers recommendations for campus practices.

Implications for Future Research

First, the study offers an important contribution to existing literature on college student leadership. As mentioned in Chapter 2, college student leadership research falls into one three major themes: 1) student leadership and gender, 2) comparative studies between Black and White students' leadership, and 3) Black student leadership. Each of these themes fails to consider the specific experiences of Black women. Existing research on Black women's leadership within higher education focuses on faculty and senior level administrative positions in student affairs, generalizing or omitting the college student experience (Henry, 2010). This study, framed through intersectional and Black feminist lenses, centered on Black women college students and offered findings on their experiences with oppression while leading as well as social factors that nourished them to persist despite oppression.

While the study offered some insights on what experiences Black women college student leaders had with oppression and their sources of nourishment, this subject needs further exploration. First, the theme of Responding to Interpersonal Interactions with

Oppression was an interesting finding from this dissertation study that was related yet did not directly answer the two guiding research questions. Participants discussed using various methods to address the oppression they experienced while leading that included not responding, humor, shifting, making strategic decisions in which leadership they would pursue, speaking up, and exiting leadership. While the study offered some insights on how women responded to oppression, this area needs further exploration. Specific research questions to consider: How did Black women college students learn these response strategies? What additional strategies do they use to respond to oppression? What impact do these strategies have on the oppression they encounter while leading?

Additional research is needed on the proposed diagram on Black women's college student leadership experiences. I had an opportunity to get feedback on this diagram from one participant, Alexandra, who confirmed that it reflected her experience as a Black women college student leader. This diagram will be explored further in an upcoming research project in which I will invite women from this dissertation study to participate in focus groups. It is anticipated that two focus groups will take place, one for undergraduate students and one for graduate students, where I will provide an overview of this diagram and have participants discuss how the diagram does or does not reflect their experience exercising leadership, identify additional relationships between overarching themes and offer new insights that did not emerge from the interviews.

A third research implication would be a need for longitudinal studies and the incorporation of additional qualitative methodology on Black women college student leadership. Many women commented in the study how some of questions posed were the first time they reflected on their leadership in relationship to oppression. The use of focus

groups as a methodology would allow for a deeper conversation about Black women college leadership in an environment that is more familiar and conducive to the subject: in groups (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Northouse, 2009). Focus groups also support various features of Black feminist thoughts, a significant analytical framework within my study. Collins (2000) argues that Black feminist thought operates in a dialogical relationship in which perspectives on the experiences of Black women can incite actions toward resistance that in turn incites a revised perspective on experiences. She also argues that it is vital for Black women intellectuals to serve as facilitators in this dialogical relationship. Focus groups can serve as an opportunity for participants not only to reflect upon their own and their peers' leadership experiences but also motivate them to interrupt the exact instances of oppression they may be discussing. It is my plan for future research projects to follow-up with participants through focus groups. My role as a researcher who facilitates these conversations creates a dynamic and cyclical relationship that offers an exchange of knowledge about the subject of leadership, race, and/or gender (Collins, 2000).

A fourth research implication would be in regards to Black women's college student leadership and religious or spiritual contexts. Both during and at the conclusion of slavery, the Black Church served as a vital space to foster Black women's leadership. A commonly used umbrella term, the Black Church is said to describe the various Christian denominations established by and consisting of a predominantly African American congregation within the United States (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Black Christian churches emerged as an important institution of cohesion and community after Emancipation by providing not only a place of worship but a foundation in which

educational systems and community groups developed; ultimately becoming a pivotal location for political organizing in the Civil Rights Movements (Gilkes, 2001). Despite patriarchal limitations to formal and organizational leadership positions, Black women historically held key leadership roles and Black Churches were a source of nourishment of their leadership. While the role of the “church mother” was the most visible and highly respected role for Black women, participation for women in the Black Church mostly operated in what is called the women's department. In these independently organized spaces, women took on leadership roles and established structures and decisions with little intervention from male religious leaders. With little to no financial support from the larger church structure, women's departments were largely funded by the contributions of Black women's wages and supported women's leadership involvement at regional and national conventions—crucial in creating pathways for career and economic mobility opportunities for Black women (Gilkes, 2001).

Ten of the 12 women in the study reported being religious or spiritual. Of these women, 4 made direct comments of facing institutional and geographical challenges practicing their religion while attending Riverland University. Specifically, participants described existing religious spaces as predominantly unwelcoming or exhibiting different types of worship than the more racially diverse church spaces located in their hometowns. Given the historical legacy of religious contexts, namely Black Churches, have had on Black women's leadership development and nourishment, it is suggested that further research on this subject should be explored.

Fifth, this study intentionally brings together issues of racism (Black women on White campuses) and sexism (Black women within Black communities and among White

men) as a single construct. It also includes participants from Afro-Caribbean as well as African American legacies and women of various sexualities and gender identity expressions (e.g., heterosexual, queer, masculine of center, etc.). The growing literature on intersectionality as well as the literature already cited on Transactional Identity (Cross, 2012) suggests the potential for taking each of the intersecting identities as a facet on a prism for separate attention within leadership contexts, before putting them back together holistically.

One such example of this specific attention from this study is the difference of leadership experiences of Roxanne who immigrated from Haiti. When interviewing Roxanne about her interactions with oppression on campus as a leader, she often responded that she did not experience oppression, discrimination, or prejudice. She also went on to explain how she views race and racism in the United States compared to Haiti:

It's really different. In my country, people were racist, but it's not that obvious because the majority of the population is dark-skinned. Here [United States], it's different, the majority is Caucasian – I don't like the term Black and White because, I mean, I am dark-skinned, but I'm Haitian. I mean culturally, it's really different. There are racist people in Haiti, but I think being racist is really dumb. Because you're depriving yourself of knowing someone who could potentially be amazing and great, simply because of the color of their skin. It's less obvious in Haiti than here.

While I made attempts to include as much of Roxanne's experience as possible through the data analysis process, her voice was often not included, as her social location with race, ethnicity, and nationality did not align with the overarching themes that emerged from the study. It is recommended that nuances of ethnicity and nationality within the Diaspora of Black identity be taken into consideration in future research studies.

Lastly, the findings from this study can inform future research on Black women college student leadership for different institutional settings. Existing literature on historically Black colleges and universities and women's colleges suggest that these campuses may offer more welcoming campus climates for Black women and encourage leadership development (Hurtado et al., 1999; Perkins, 1997). However, literature also reports that Black women might experience a heightened sense of gender discrimination at historically Black institutions, while interactions with racism and classism may surface at women's colleges (Zamani, 2003). Given the potentially different climates of these institutions, it begs the questions: What types of oppression do Black women student leaders experience at these campus, and how is that experience shaped or affected by different collegiate contexts? How might these experiences compare or differ from experiences of Black women who attend predominantly White institutions? What social factors nurture Black women college student leadership at these institutions? The findings in this study lead to the need for additional research into how institutional type impacts Black women college student leaderships interactions with oppression.

As discussed in Chapter 1, this study is not exclusively about the experiences of Black women college student leaders; it is a critique on how leadership theory has been generating and sustained by individuals in positions of privilege. Leadership theory should not be limited to being developed through the study of individuals in privileged positions. It is my recommendation that micro-level theories of leadership should be explored rather than focusing on macro-level theories that, at best, are the lowest common denominator and, at worst, are hegemonic mechanisms for protecting oppressive, paternalistic stereotypes of what it means to lead and be a leader.

Implications for Future Academic and Student Affairs Practice

The study's findings also have important implications for academic and student affair practitioners. The first implication for campus practice is the intentional development of programmatic efforts centering on the experiences of Black women's leadership. Among the various social factors that participants reported as nurturing Black women college student leadership was recognition of historical contributions of Black women's leadership. Participants often commented on how knowledge of these contributions was minimized in their collegiate coursework, difficult to find, yet highly valuable in conceptualizing the legacy of Black women's leadership and resistance. Practitioners working with Black women will need to develop a range of explicit educational program that create awareness and provide inspirational information about Black women historical leaders beyond the canons of Rosa Parks and Harriet Tubman. This information would benefit Black women students and their peers of different identities to expand their existing social constructions of leadership and what social identities are able to lead. Examples of programming might include bulletin boards, social media campaigns, film series, or guest speakers knowledgeable on these leaders.

A second major finding is the impact of Black women faculty positively impact Black women college student leadership. Student affairs practitioners and academic leaders should make efforts to collaborate with Black women faculty and administrators by creating opportunities for students to network with these local campus leaders. Informal meet-and-greet events and publicity of these faculty members' courses and research could prove to be valuable resources and role modeling for Black women

leaders at predominantly White institutions. It is strongly encouraged for residence life practitioners to recruit Black women faculty for faculty-in-residence programs.

Mentoring is another source of nourishment that was important for participants' leadership. Establishment of a campus mentoring program could serve as a vital resource for undergraduate Black women, especially those who have transitional challenges navigating predominantly White institutions upon leaving high school. These programs could also help graduate student leaders by creating networks of support for them—and also for them to offer undergraduates—as they negotiate leadership as campus employees. As reported by a few graduate students, a mentoring program might also bridge a connection between undergraduate and graduate Black women leaders. Graduate leaders often have past experiences at predominantly White institutions and could offer invaluable insights to undergraduates on how to lead on these campuses. Further, as reported by a few graduate participants, there is a willingness and desire among graduate students to support undergraduate women on their leadership journey, and this opportunity would foster the development of women-centered networks.

It is also suggested that practitioners develop specific leadership programs for Black women. These programs would not only offer Black women college student leadership a chance to develop leadership skills to respond to oppression they face but also offer an opportunity for women to connect with other Black women college student leaders on campus, possibly creating mutual support networks.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, student affairs practitioners must take steps to bring awareness and to address oppression dynamics within their approaches to and models of student leadership development. As the findings indicated, Black women

college student leaders had multiple and ongoing experiences with stereotypes, microaggressions, biased presentation expectations, and felt silenced or had opinions misunderstood. Practitioners must incorporate a social justice framework in their development of student leaders.

It is suggested that critical consciousness activities be used to help students as well as their advisors and supervisors reflect on aspects of their social identities and how these identities relate to access to power and privilege. Awareness must also be made about stereotypes and microaggressions that often manifest in interpersonal interactions and how these instances connect to a larger system of oppression. To this end, practitioners should establish learning environments for students to engage in productive dialogues about social differences; recognizing the importance of interpersonal relationship building, reality of conflict and possibility of authentic allyship.

Overall, more studies are needed to examine how the instructional strategies in EDUC 210 make an impact on students' readiness for social action engagement. The 12 Black women college student leaders participating in this study offered numerous insights about their interactions with oppression and the social factors that nourished them that allowed them to persist as leaders. However, more research needs to be conducted, and intentional strategies and campus practices must be developed to support Black women college student leadership development as well as to inform existing hegemonic leadership theories.

APPENDIX A
PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Call for Participants!

**LOOKING FOR BLACK WOMEN COLLEGE STUDENTS TO SHARE THEIR
EXPERIENCES WITH LEADERSHIP**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

This study will explore the perspectives that Black women college student leaders hold about leadership in general as well as their own understanding of themselves as leaders.

This study also explores: (1) the sources that nurture Black women college students' leadership, (2) the challenges they experience in expressing leadership, and (3) sources that have nourished and continue to support their ways of navigating challenges in exercising their leadership.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

I am inviting participants who meet the following criteria (other criteria may apply):

- Identify as Black, are seen as Black, and think of themselves as persons of African descent, regardless of various ethnic identifiers
- Identify as a woman
- Identify as an undergraduate no older than age 22 OR graduate student age 22 or older

- Have attended a predominantly White college or university for at least one semester prior to the study
- Are currently matriculated for the full 2013-2014 academic year
- Are currently engaged as leaders on or off campus
- Speak English

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

- You will be asked to respond to an online demographic questionnaire that will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.
- You will be asked to participate in an initial personal interview ranging from 60-90 minutes. I am likely to contact you for follow-up to these interviews by email or Skype.
- You will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion of Black women's leadership, for a period of 90-120 minutes.
- You will be asked to keep me informed of any emerging thoughts or reflections as you participate in the study.
- You will be asked to maintain confidentiality in your participation in the study as well as confidentiality of other participants in the study. This is a single campus study and there is a likelihood that there may be participants that you know or have contact with outside of the study. Within the focus groups, you will be asked to make an effort to ensure what is shared in focus groups is not discussed outside of the study.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT OF ME?

- I will call or email you to answer any questions you may have about the study and to set up a date, time, and location for the interview.
- I will explain the steps I will take to maintain your confidentiality.
- I will travel to you to conduct the interview.
- I may contact you for a follow-up about your interview to clarify or gather additional information.
- I will contact you through an online scheduling tool (e.g., Doodle) to schedule a time for this focus group.
- I will contact you by email or phone to confirm the date, time, and location of the focus group and answer any questions.
- I will make every effort to maintain confidentiality of your identity and participation in the study. In the focus groups, I will share broad themes that emerged from the interviews with identifying information removed. You are free to share your responses from the interviews but it is not an expectation for you to do so.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

I am glad to answer any questions about this study. If you have any further questions or if you have a research-related problem please feel free to contact me, Andrea D. Domingue, at andread@educ.umass.edu or by calling me at 917-428-9080. You may also address your questions to my faculty supervisor, Dr. Maurianne Adams

(adams@educ.umass.edu). If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact either of us or the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Office (HRPO) at 413-545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Yes, you can withdraw from the study at any time. There are no consequences of any kind if you decide that you no longer wish to participate.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me, Andrea Dre Domingue at andread@educ.umass.edu or by phone 917-428-9080

Please feel free to pass this information along:

To friends at your school who might be interested in participating, and who fit the criteria listed above!

To professors or staff who may know students at your school who would be interested in participating!

APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORM

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

Student Researcher: Andrea D. Domingue
Study Title: “‘Our Leaders are just We Ourselves’: Black College
 Women's Leadership Experiences at Predominantly
 White Institutions
Faculty Sponsor/ P.I.: Dr. Maurianne Adams

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?

This is a consent form that provides you with information about the study so you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. This form will help you understand why this study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It describes what you will be asked to do as a participant and what the potential risks are for participating in this study. Please take some time to review this information and ask any questions that you may have. If you decide to participate, please sign this form for my records; you will also be given a copy for your own record.

2. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

This study will explore the perspectives that Black women college student leaders hold about leadership in general as well as their own understanding of themselves as leaders. This study also explores: (1) the sources that nurture Black women college students' leadership, (2) the challenges they experience in expressing leadership, and (3) sources that have nourished and continue to support their ways of navigating challenges in exercising their leadership.

3. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

I am inviting participants who meet the following criteria (other criteria may apply):

- Identify as Black, are seen as Black, and think of themselves as persons of African descent, regardless of various ethnic identifiers
- Identify as a woman

- Identify as an undergraduate no older than age 22 OR graduate student age 22 or older
- Have attended a predominantly White college or university for at least one semester prior to the study
- Are currently matriculated for the full 2013-2014 academic year
- Are currently engaged as leaders on or off campus
- Speak English

4. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

- You will be asked to respond to an online demographic questionnaire that will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.
- You will be asked to participate in an initial personal interview ranging from 60-90 minutes. I am likely to contact you for follow-up to these interviews by email or Skype.
- You will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion of Black women's leadership, for a period of 90-120 minutes.
- You will be asked to keep me informed of any emerging thoughts or reflections as you participate in the study.
- You will be asked to maintain confidentiality in your participation in the study as well as confidentiality of other participants in the study. This is a single campus study and there is a likelihood that there may be participants that you know or have contact with outside of the study. Within the focus groups, you

will be asked to make a effort to ensure what is shared in focus groups is not discussed outside of the study.

5. WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT OF ME?

- I will call or email you to answer any questions you may have about the study and to set up a date, time and location for the interview.
- I will explain the steps I will take to maintain your confidentiality.
- I will travel to you to conduct the interview.
- I may contact you for a follow-up about your interview to clarify or gather additional information.
- I will contact you through an online scheduling tool (e.g., Doodle) to schedule a time for this focus group.
- I will contact you by email or phone to confirm the date, time and location of the focus group and answer any questions.
- I will make every effort to maintain confidentiality of your identity and participation in the study. In the focus groups, I will share broad themes that emerged from the interviews with identifying information removed. You are free to share your responses from the interviews but it is not an expectation for you to do so.

6. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

By participating in this study, you will have the opportunity to share your college experience, as a Black woman student leader at a predominantly White university. The

information you share could potentially assist predominantly White institutions with making institutional changes to better support Black woman college students. Further, you will be able to share your own recommendations about how your college can better assist Black woman college students.

7. WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY?

As a participant, you may experience discomfort from sharing personal information about your social identities, your leadership background, or your experiences as a Black woman student leader. Similarly, sharing your experiences may bring up emotionally difficult events in your life leading to some distress.

8. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

I will do all that I can to protect your confidentiality. Here are the ways I will protect your confidentiality:

1. I will keep all records and data in a secure and private location.
2. I will use a password lock to protect data stored on a computer and will delete all identifying files (e.g., paper files, audio files, and electronic files) at the conclusion of the study.
3. When you complete the Informed Consent form before the interviews begin, you will be able to choose your own pseudonym (fake name).
4. All data will use your pseudonym, and your real name will not appear in the data or anything I write based on the data.

5. Any specific or personally identifying information about your college/university will use vague descriptors, such as “a large public Research I institution in the Northeast.”
6. Your email address and personal demographic information will never be shared with any other individual.
7. At the conclusion of the study, if I publish any findings, I will again protect your identity by using your pseudonym and vague descriptors of your college.

It is important to note again that this is a single-campus study, and I will not be identifying the name of the campus. In addition, it is likely that you will know other participants who will be participating in this study who you will meet face-to-face in one of the two focus groups. You will be asked to protect the confidentiality of those participants and discussions during the focus groups. For my part, I will be asking broad thematic questions that do not identify specific experiences. However, you are free to share anything of your own experience if you so choose.

Although I will do everything I can to ensure your confidentiality, I cannot absolutely guarantee complete confidentiality in cases of computer theft, tape recorder theft, or a related incident. I will do my best to minimize this possibility.

9. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

I am glad to answer any questions about this study. If you have any further questions or if you have a research-related problem please feel free to contact me, Andrea D. Domingue, at andread@educ.umass.edu or by calling me at 917-428-9080. You may also address

your questions to my faculty supervisor, Dr. Maurianne Adams (adams@educ.umass.edu). If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact either of us or the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Office (HRPO) at 413-545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

10. WILL I RECEIVE ANY PAYMENT FOR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

You will receive a gift card of \$25.00 for participating in the study at the completion of the focus group.

11. CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Yes, you can withdraw from the study at any time. There are no consequences of any kind if you decide that you no longer wish to participate.

12. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the study described above. The general purposes and particulars of the study as well as possible risks have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time.

Participant Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Participant's Chosen Pseudonym (Fake Name)

By signing below I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

Signature of Person
Obtaining Consent

Print Name:

Date:

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please provide the following information.

- Name: _____
- Email address: _____
- Phone number: _____
- Age: _____

Educational Background:

- Name of your current college: _____
- How many years have you spent at this institution: _____
- What is your area of study? _____
- Your academic classification:
 - ___ Undergraduate - Sophomore
 - ___ Undergraduate - Junior
 - ___ Undergraduate - Senior
 - ___ Graduate Student - Master's
 - ___ Graduate Student - Doctorate
 - ___ Graduate Student - Certificate
 - ___ Other (Please specify: _____)
- Do you anticipate being in attendance at this institution for the full 2013-2014 academic year:
 - ___ Yes ___ No

- Please list any other colleges or universities that you have attended prior to your current institution. Please specify:

college name: _____, length of time at institution (years):

college name: _____, length of time at institution (years):

- Are you a transfer student? (Check One):

☐ Yes ☐ No

- What type of high school did you attend (Check all that apply)?

☐ Public school ☐ Private School

☐ Religious School ☐ Other (Specify other: _____)

Social Identity Background

- What is your gender identity: _____
- What is your racial identity: _____
- What is your ethnicity: _____
- How would you describe your family's socioeconomic background prior to attending college?
- Please mark the statement(s) below that best describe your family (Mark all that apply)?

☐ I was raised in a two-parent household

☐ I was raised in a single-parent household

☐ My mother was the primary single parent raising me

☐ My father was the primary single parent raising me

☐ I was raised in another household (e.g., sibling, grandparents, extended family, foster family, etc.) (Please Specify: _____)

- What is the primary occupation of the person most responsible for raising you?

Please Specify: _____

What is the highest level of education of the person most responsible for raising you has attained (Check One)?

☐ Less than a high school graduate

☐ High school graduate

☐ Some college/vocational school

☐ Bachelor's degree

☐ Some graduate school

☐ Graduate or professional degree

☐ Other (Please specify): _____

- What is the primary occupation of an additional person most responsible for raising you?

Please Specify: _____

What is the highest level of education of an additional person responsible for raising you?

(Check One)?

- ☐ Less than a high school graduate
- ☐ High school graduate
- ☐ Some college/vocational school
 - ☐ Bachelor's degree
 - ☐ Some graduate school
 - ☐ Graduate or professional degree
 - ☐ Other (Please specify): _____
- ☐ Not Applicable

Were you born in the United States?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, how long have you resided within the United States: _____)

What geographic location did you spend the majority of your childhood (please include location and duration of time):

Please describe any other salient social identities not mentioned above: _____

Leadership Background

Describe what leadership opportunities (on and/or off campus) you are currently involved in:

Please be as descriptive as possible by including aspects such as organizations, roles, projects, location, duration, goals, etc.

Describe what leadership opportunities (on and/or off campus) you were involved in prior to attending your current college.

Please be as descriptive as possible by including aspects such as organizations, roles, projects, location, duration, goals, etc.

Please describe any additional leadership experience not mention above:

Additional Information

How did you hear about this dissertation study?

Why are you interested in participating in this study?

What hopes or personal goals do you have about participating in the study?

What worries or concerns do you have about participating in the study?

Approximately how long did it take you to complete this questionnaire?

Please use the space below to include any additional information not covered previously
in this questionnaire.

APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Defining Personal Leadership

- What types of leadership are you currently involved in?
- Why you have gravitated toward these types of leadership opportunities?
- How have these current leadership opportunities positively impacted your leadership?
- How have these current leadership opportunities created challenges in your leadership?
- How would you describe yourself as a leader (approach, skills, strengths, etc.)?

Defining Leadership in General

- How would you define the term leader?
- How would you define the term leading?
- What distinctions, if any, are there between these two terms?
- What relationships do these terms have with each other?
- Name three examples of leaders who you would describe as exemplars or roles models of leadership?
- How did you learn about these role models?
- How have these role models influenced your personal leadership?

Leading at Predominantly White Institutions

- What has your experience been as a leader at a predominantly White institution as a Black woman?
- How has your leadership at this institution influenced consciousness as a Black woman?
- What experiences have you had with oppression?
- What types of oppression have you experienced as a Black woman leader?
 - in the classroom?
 - through work?
 - within organizations?
 - activism?
 - off campus?
- In what ways have you worked through these instances?
- What experiences have you had with prejudice or discrimination as a Black woman leader?
- What are some stereotypes that exist about Black women leaders?
- How did you learn about these stereotypes?
- In what ways have you encountered stereotypes of Black woman as a leader?
- In what ways have you worked through these instances of stereotypes?
- Describe any circumstances in which you felt you could not be yourself fully as a Black women leader?
- What skills or competencies did you develop as a result of these instances?

Nurturing Black College Women's Leadership

- When did you first realize that you were a leader?
- What early experiences nourished your development as a leader?
- What influences (parents, conferences, peers, events, organizations, etc.) do you feel have nourished your college leadership as a Black woman?
 - campus resources?
 - classroom?
 - off campus?
- How have these influences changed over time?
- What strategies, resources or sources of support help sustain your leadership involvement over time?
- Describe your understanding of historical traditions of Black women's leadership?
- In what ways have these historical traditions influenced your leadership?
- Which historical Black women leaders have had an influence in your leadership?
- Which contemporary Black women leaders have had an influence in your leadership?
- What experiences have you had with mentoring, as a mentor or a mentee?
- How did these relationships develop?
- What have you learned as a result of these relationships?

Closing

- If you could offer any insights to other Black women leaders, what would you say to them?
- What questions/topics you would want to discuss with them?
- What would you want non-Black women leaders to know about your experiences?
- Any additional comments you would like to share?

APPENDIX E

NOT ELIGIBLE FOR PARTICIPATION EMAIL

(Participant does not meet initial selection criteria)

Dear (Participant's Name),

Thank you for contacting me with your interest to participate within my research on Black women college leaders. After review of your Demographic Questionnaire, I realized that you did not meet my initial selection criteria for the following reason: (insert reason here).

While you do not meet the criteria for selection in this study, I would like to request the ability to maintain your contact information for future research that I may do. Please contact me if you would be interested in future contact from me regarding my research on Black women college students' experiences.

Thank you again for your interest. I hope to be able to have your participation in future research.

Regards,

Andrea D. Domingue

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Social Justice Education Doctoral

Candidate

REFERENCES

- Anderson, J. D. (1988). *The education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*. Chapel Hill,
- Arminio, J. L., Carter, S., Jones, S. E., Kruger, K., Lucas, N., Washington, J., Young, N. & Scott, A. (2000). Leadership experiences of students of color. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 37(3), 184–198.
- Astin, A. W., & Astin, H. S. (2000). *Leadership reconsidered: Engaging higher education in social change*. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED444437>
- Astin, H. S., Astin, A. W., & Higher Education Research Institute (1996). *A social change model of leadership development : Guidebook. Version III*. Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Banks, C. A. (2009). *Black women undergraduates, cultural capital and college success*. New York, NY: Lang.
- Benjamin, L. (Ed.). (1997). *Black women in the academy: Promises and perils*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.
- Bensimon, E. M., Neumann, A., Birnbaum, R., & ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. (1989). Making sense of administrative leadership: The "L" word in higher education. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education.
- Bowleg, L. (2008). When Black + lesbian + woman \neq Black lesbian woman: The methodological challenges of qualitative and quantitative intersectionality research. *Sex Roles*, 59, 312-325.
- Bower, B. L., & Wolverton, M. (2009). *Answering the call: African American women in higher education leadership*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Brazzell, J. C. (1996). Diversification of postsecondary institutions. In S. R. Komives, D. B. Woodard, Jr., & Associates (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (3rd ed., pp. 43–63). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Broido, E. M. (2000). The development of social justice allies during college: A phenomenological investigation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41(1), 3-18.
- Brown, E. B. (1989). African-American women's quilting: a framework for conceptualizing and teaching African-American women's history. *Signs*, 14(4), 921-929.
- Butler, J. (2006). *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Byrd, M. (2009). Theorizing African American women's leadership experiences: Socio-cultural theoretical alternatives. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 29, Retrieved from http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/awl_wordpress/?page_id=400&preview=true
- Carry, A. (2003). Left behind: Student leadership programs in higher education. [Online]. *Net Results*.
- Chambers, T., & Phelps, C. E. (1993). Student activism as a form of leadership and student development. *NASPA Journal*, 31(1), 19–29.
- Clark, G. (2001). Student leadership and higher education: A review of the literature. Retrieved from <http://www.unco.edu/AE-Extra/2001/2/Student.html>
- Collier-Thomas, B., & Franklin, V. P. (Eds.). (2001). *Sisters in the struggle : African-American women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Constantine, M. G., & Greer, T. M. (2003). Personal, academic, and career counseling of African American women in a college setting. *New Directions for Student Services*, 104, 41-51.
- Crenshaw, K. (2006). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics and violence against women of color. In E. Hackett & S. Haslanger (Eds), *Theorizing feminisms* (pp. 159-173). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Cross, W. E. (2012). The enactment of race and other social identities during everyday interactions. In C. L. Wijeyesinghe and B. W. Jackson (Eds.), *New perspectives on racial identity development: integrating emerging frameworks* (2nd ed., pp. 192-215). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Davis, A. Y. (1983). *Women, race, & class*. New York, NY: Vintage.
- DeAngelis, T. (2009). Unmasking “racial microaggressions.” *Monitor on Psychology*, 40(2), 42-26.
- Devault, M. L. (2004). Talking and listening from women's standpoint: Feminist strategies for interviewing and analysis. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & M. L. Yaiser (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on social research* (pp. 227-250). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- DuBois, W. E. B. (1903/1990). *The souls of Black folk*. New York, NY: Vintage.

- Edwards, A. E. (2000). Community mothering: The relationship between mothering and the community work of Black women. *Journal of Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement*, 2(2), 87–100.
- Ely, R. J., & Rhode, D. L. (2010). Women and leadership: Defining the challenges. In N. Nohria & R. Khurana (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership theory and practice* (pp. 377–410). Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Evans, S. Y. (2007). *Black women in the ivory tower, 1850-1954: An intellectual history*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.
- Fairclough, A. (2007). *A class of their own: Black teachers in the segregated South*. Boston, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Freeman, J. P., & Goldin, A. M. (2008). The increasing importance of student leadership development programs in higher education. [Online]. *NetResults*.
- Gallien, L. B., & Peterson, M. S. (2005). *Instructing and mentoring the African American college student: Strategies for success in higher education*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Giddings, P. J. (1996). *When and where I enter: The impact of black women on race and sex in America* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: William Morrow Paperbacks.
- Gilkes, C. T. (1980). "Holding back the ocean with a broom": Black women and community work. In, L. Rodgers-Rose (Ed.), *The Black woman* (pp. 217–232). London, England: Sage.
- Gilkes, C. T. (2001). *If it wasn't for the women...: Black women's experience and womanist culture in church and community*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Green, C. E., & King, V. G. (2001). Sisters mentoring sisters: Africentric leadership development for Black women in the academy. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 70(3), 156-165.
- Gregory, S. T. (2001). Black faculty women in the academy: History, status, and future. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 70(3), 124-138.
- Grimes, M. L. (2005). Re-Constructing the leadership model of social justice for African-American women in education. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 19. [online]. Retrieved from http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/fall2005/19_7.html
- Guiffrida, D. (2005). Othermothering as a framework for understanding African American students' definitions of student-centered faculty. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76(6), 701-723.

- Gutiérrez, L. M., & Lewis, E. A. (1999). *Empowering women of color*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Hallam, J. (2004). Slavery and the making of America. *The slave experience: The family PBS*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/family/history.html>
- Harding, S. (2004). Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is “strong objectivity”? In S. N. Hesse-Biber & M. L. Yaiser (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on social research* (pp. 39-64). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Harley, S. (1993). The middle class. In D. C. Hine, E. B. Brown, & R. Terborg-Penn (Eds.), *Black women in America: An historical encyclopedia* (Vol. 2, M-Z, pp. 786–789). Brooklyn, NY: Carlson.
- Harris-Perry, M. V. (2011). *Sister citizen: Shame, stereotypes and black women in America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Henry, W. J. (2010). African American women in student affairs: Best practices for winning the game. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 30(2). [Online]. Retrieved from http://advancingwomen.com/awl/awl_wordpress/
- Henry, W., & Glenn, N. (2009). Black women employed in the ivory tower: Connecting for success. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 29(2). [Online]. Retrieved from http://advancingwomen.com/awl/awl_wordpress/.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., Leavy, P., & Yaiser, M. L. (2004). Feminist approaches to research as a process: Reconceptualizing epistemology, methodology, and method. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & M. L. Yaiser (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on social research* (pp. 3-26). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Higginbotham, E. B. (1993). *Righteous discontent: The women's movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hill-Brisbane, D. A. (2005). Black women teacher educators, race uplift, and the academic other-mother identity. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 19 [Online]. Retrieved from http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/fall2005/19_5.html
- Hine, D. C., & Thompson, K. (1998). *A shining thread of hope*. New York, NY: Broadway.
- hooks, b. (1981). *Ain't I a woman? Black women and feminism*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- hooks, b. (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

- Hrabowski, F. A. (2002). *Overcoming the odds: raising academically successful African American young women*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hull, G. T., Bell-Scott, P., & Smith, B. (1982). *All the women are White, all the Blacks are men, but some of us are brave: Black women's studies*. Old Westbury, N.Y: Feminist Press.
- Hurtado, S., Milem, J., Clayton-Pedersen, A., & Allen, W. (1999). Enacting diverse learning environments: Improving the climate for racial/ethnic diversity in higher education. *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report*, 26(8). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Jackson, B. W. (2012). Black identity development: Influences of culture and social oppression. In C. L. Wijeyesinghe & B. W. Jackson (Eds.), *New perspectives on racial identity development: Integrating emerging frameworks* (2nd ed., pp. 33-50). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Jean-Marie, G. (2006). Welcoming the unwelcomed: a social justice imperative of African-American female leaders at historically Black colleges and universities. *Educational Foundations*, 20(1), 85–104.
- Jones, C., & Shorter-Gooden, K. (2003). *Shifting: The double lives of Black women in America*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Kezar, A., Carducci, R., & Contreras-McGavin, M. (2006). *Rethinking the “L” word in higher education: The revolution of research on leadership: ASHE Higher Education Report*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kezar, A., & Moriarty, D. (2000). Expanding our understanding of student leadership development: A study exploring gender and ethnic identity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41(1), 55–69.
- Komives, S. R. (1994). Women student leaders: Self-perceptions of empowering leadership and achieving style. *NASPA Journal*, 31, 102-112.
- Komives, S. R. (2011). Advancing leadership education. In S. R. Komives, J. P Dugan, J. E. Owen, C. Slack, & W. Wagner (Eds.), *The handbook for student leadership development* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Komives, S. R., Dugan, J. P., & Owen, J. E. (Eds.). (2011). *The handbook for student leadership development*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Komives, S. R., Lucas, N., & McMahon, T. R. (1998). *Exploring leadership : For college students who want to make a difference*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Komives, S. R., Owen, J. E., Longerbeam, S. D., Mainella, F. C., & Osteen, L. (2005). Developing a leadership identity: A grounded theory. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(6), 593–611.

- Komives, S. R., & Wagner, W. (2009). *Leadership for a better world: Understanding the social change model of leadership development* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lincoln, C. E., & Mamiya, L. H. (1990). *The Black Church in the African American experience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books.
- Littlefield, M. B. (2007). Black women, mothering, and protest in 19th century American society. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 2(1), 53–61.
- Love, B. J. (2013). Developing a liberatory consciousness. In M. Adams, W. J. Blumenfeld, C. Castañeda, H. W. Hackman, M. L. Peters, & X. Zúñiga (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice* (3rd ed., pp. 601-605). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lucas, C. J. (1994). *American higher education: A history*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2011). *Designing qualitative research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs*, 30(3), 1771-1800.
- McKenzie, A. (2005). In the beginning: The early history of the divine nine. In T. L. Brown, G. S. Parks, & C. M. Phillips (Eds.), *African American fraternities and sororities: The legacy and the vision* (pp. 183–211). Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mills, C. W. (2007). Intersecting contracts. In C. Pateman & C. W. Mills (Eds.), *Contract and domination* (pp. 165-199). Cambridge, England: Polity Press.
- Mitchell, S. L., & Dell, D. M. (1992). The relationship between Black students' racial identity attitude and participation in campus organizations. *Journal of College Student Development*, 33, 39-43
- Mohanty, C. T. (1991). Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. In C. T. Mohanty, A. Russo, & L. Torres (Eds.), *Third world women and the politics of feminism* (p. 333-358). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Moore, J., Lovell, C. D., McGann, T., & Wyrick, J. (1998). Why involvement matters: A review of research on student involvement in the collegiate setting. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 17(2), 4–17.

- National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education (2008). *Digest of Education Statistics*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Northouse, P. G. (2009). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Nuss, E. M. (1996). The development of student affairs. In S. R. Komives, D. B. Woodard, Jr., & Associates (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (3rd ed., pp. 22–42). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- O'Reilly, A. (2004). *Toni Morrison and motherhood: A politics of the heart*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Office of Institutional Research, [Riverland University] (2012). Student race/ethnicity (U.S. citizens) by gender and degree program level. *In factbook 2012-2013: [Riverland University]*. [Online database]. Retrieved from the [World Wide Web].
- Omolade, B. (1987). A Black feminist pedagogy. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 15(3/4), 32-39.
- Parker, P. S. (2005). *Race, gender, and leadership: Re-envisioning organizational leadership from the perspectives of African American women executives*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Patitu, C. L., & Hinton, K. G. (2003). The experiences of African American women faculty and administrators in higher education: Has anything changed? *New Directions for Student Services*, (104), 79-93.
- Patton, L. D., & Harper, S. R. (2003). Mentoring relationships among African American women in graduate and professional schools. In M. F. Howard-Hamilton (Ed.), *Meeting the needs of African American women. New Directions for Student Services* (No. 104, pp. 67-78). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Perkins, L. M. (1997). The African American female elite: The early history of African American women in the seven sister colleges, 1880–1960. *Harvard Educational Review*, 67(4), 718–756.
- Posner, B. A. (2008). Longitudinal study examining changes in students' leadership behavior. *Journal of College Student Development*, 50(5), 551-563.
- Preskill, S., & Brookfield, S. D. (2009). *Learning as a way of leading: Lessons from the struggle for social justice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ramsey, S. (2008). *Reading, writing, and segregation: A century of Black women teachers in Nashville*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.

- Renn, K. A., & Bilodeau, B. L. (2005). Leadership identity development among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender student leaders. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 42(3), 604–629.
- Rhoads, R. A. (2000). *Freedom's web: Student activism in an age of cultural diversity*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Roberts, D. C. (2011). Forward. In S. R. Komives, J. P. Dugan, J. E. Owen, C. Slack, & W. Wagner (Eds.) *The handbook for student leadership development* (2nd ed., pp. xi-xiv). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Roberts, D., & Ullom, C. (1989). Student leadership program model. *NASPA Journal*, 27(1), 67–74.
- Robnett, B. (1997). *How long? How long? African –American women in the struggle for civil rights*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Romano, R. C. (1996). A qualitative study of women student leaders. *Journal of College Student Development*, 37, 676–683.
- Rosales, A. M., & Persons, D. R. (2003). Programming needs and student services for African American women. *New Directions for Student Services*, 104, 53–65.
- Ross, R. E. (2003). *Witnessing and testifying*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2003). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rost, J. (1991). *Leadership for the twenty-first century*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Rost, J. C., & Barker, R. A. (2000). Leadership education in colleges: Toward a 21st century paradigm. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 7(1), 3–12.
- Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Vintage.
- Schneider, C. G. (2000). Educational missions and civic engagement: Toward the engaged academy. In T. Ehrlich (Ed.), *Civic responsibility and higher education* (pp. 98–123). Westport, CT: The Oryx Press.
- Schwartz, R. A., Bower, B. L., Rice, D. C., & Washington, C. M. (2003). "Ain't I a woman, too?" Tracing the experiences of African American women in graduate school. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 72(3), 252–268.
- Schön, D. A. (1983) *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. London, England: Temple Smith.
- Shaw, S. J. (1991). Black club women and the creation of the national association of colored women. *Journal of Women's History*, 3(2), 10–25.

- Simpson, B. (2001, February). *Can't you lighten up a bit? Black women administrators in the academy*. Paper presented at the Annual National Conference of the National Association of the African American Studies and the National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies. Houston, TX.
- Springer, K. (2005). *Living for the revolution: Black feminist organizations, 1968–1980*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books.
- Thelin, J. R. (1996). Historical overview of American higher education. In S. R. Komives, D. B. Woodard, Jr., & Associates (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (3rd ed., pp. 3–21). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Turner, C. S. V. (2008). Women of color in academe: Experiences of the often invisible. In J. Glazer-Raymo (Ed.). *Unfinished agendas: New and continuing gender challenges in higher education* (pp. 230-252). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University.
- United States & Moynihan, D. P. (1965). *The Negro family. The case for national action*. Washington, DC: U.S.
- White, D. G. (1985). *Ar'n't I a woman? Female slaves in the plantation south* (Revised ed.). New York, NY: Norton.
- Whitt, E. J. (1994). "I can do anything!" Student leadership in three women's colleges. *Journal of College Student Development*, 35, 198-207.
- Williams, D., Berger, J., & McClendon, S. (2005). *Towards a model of inclusive excellence and change in higher education*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Winkle-Wagner, R. (2009). *The unchosen me: Race, gender, and identity among Black women in college*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Zamani, E. M. (2003). African American women in higher education. *New Directions for Student Services*, 104, 5-18.