Intersectionality of Personal and Professional Identities: Portraits of Perception Management, Sustainable Values and Developmental Relationships

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Dedication

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." —Jeremiah 29:11

Dear God, I give thanks.

To my model for excellence: Mom, you lived a short 39 years, of which we only shared 16, yet you are my life. You continue to give me hope and a future.

For my "other mothers," my loving aunts, Bernice and Katie; for my hero, my baby sister Candy Gail; for my brother Anthony, the voice of power; for my brother Michael, you died living life passionately; and for pop, Scotty, you stood tall until God called you home. For my next generation: my nephew, Nikhil, my MVP; my niece, Victoria, the world is your oyster; and my niece and goddaughter Niyana, I want to be like you when I grow up. For my sister-in-law, Tracey, the voice of reason, and for my brother-in-law, Tyrone, continue to be strong. To Belinda and Ray, this family is yours.

To Bolsa, Penny, and Atta, your unique portraits will always remind me how "privileged" I am to be "me." You don't compare yourselves to anyone else. You just continue to appreciate the maternal influences that have empowered you to be trailblazers and catalysts for "positive social change." Thanks.

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For all of my friends and extended family, thank you. Mackie, thanks for your unconditional friendship. Renell, thanks for every thought and deed. Joan, thanks for being a supportive neighbor for more than 20 years. Queen, thanks for your examples of humility and integrity. And Claudia, you encourage me to embrace adventure, danke.

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For my George Washington University family, Cohort Sweet 16, I thank you for the greatest experience of my life. To Nancy, I thank you for every detail including my youngest supporter. Hayden, your gifts of love encouraged me through my most challenging and lonesome moments. You are a bright star.

To Ralph Stone, I thank you for your memory, your example of servant leadership, and for a higher calling to excellence.

Abstract of Dissertation

Intersectionality: The "Outsider Within" Privilege of Maternal Relationships and the Empowerment of Sustainable Values

Over the last 30 years, intersectionality has been portrayed as a dichotomy of privilege and oppression, positioning people in a "matrix of dominance" or focusing on "differences" between intersecting race, class, and gender categories (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a; Crenshaw, 1995a,b). Intrasectional experiential exploration has been suggested to (1) divulge commonalities and differences within traditional race, class, and gender intersections (McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008); (2) identify identity factors that define individuals and inform personal/professional behavior and choices; and (3) paint portraits of differences with the expectation that inequities will inevitably emerge, be acknowledged, be addressed, and promote positivity, not negativity.

This study's theoretical conversation is grounded by the intersectionality, personal and professional identity (integration), and African American feminist literatures. The empirical dialogue is anchored by explorations of the life histories of three African American women whose professional roles as managing directors in Wall Street banking are integrated into their personal selves. Their "selves" also comprise additional values, factors, and roles that emerged during the study, which was guided by three research questions: How do African American women understand their intersectional identities? How do African American women experience professional identity integration? How do African American women experience simultaneity of intersectional identities? Portraiture methodology (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) was used to distinctively meld

researcher creativity and participants' voices; leverage participant/researcher relationships; frame the portraits using theoretical, historical, and aesthetic context; connect the portraits using patterned themes; and reveal more yet not all of the aspects of the participants not normally seen in their public images. Seidman's (1998) three-interview format was used with each participant supplemented by "shadowing" for data collection, and constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was the primary analytical tool.

The result was (1) a "mapping" of "common but different" "privileges" of effective maternal relationships; (2) an uncovering of life-sustaining values (Hitlin, 2003) and empowered and effective personal and professional identity integration; (3) empathy and awareness of perceived inequities; (4) "positive social change" (Crenshaw, 1995a; Shields, 2008); and (5) a future for additional intracategorical complex intersectionality (McCall, 2005) studies that make a difference.

Prologue

As I entered this study, I never intended to join *great debates* about identity. I never sought to unlock the mysteries of the novel simultaneity, intersectionality and portraiture constructs. I couldn't imagine curing my lifelong reading and writing deficiencies. I only sought to do some simple yet complex things using the tools: simultaneity, intersectionality, portraiture, literature and empirical exploration of real experiences to: unearth the *good* I perceived was missing in some African American literature; learn the truth about how to simultaneously be authentic and fit in; do an excellent work; make a difference; and make my mom proud of me.

While reflecting on my life during this dissertation process and my self portrait exercise, first of all, I remembered mama. She died some 30 plus years prior to this research. She was only 39 and I was 16. My mother was excellent in all that she did and she only expected me to be honest, be prepared and to continuously strive for excellence. So, for the last 30 plus years, I've tried on everything I could find or buy just trying to be excellent and also trying to fit in. One thing mama didn't do or it was just that negligible that I don't remember it is she never spoke about race and class differences, discrimination or inequities. But, she wanted me to be a lady and when she died, she was still praying for this "tomboy" to be transformed. I remember I was privileged to have my mother even for such a short time. I had and still have everything I need because she prepared me for what was to come.

One thing I didn't have nor did I want was knowledge of African American history. I thought it was depressing. I got a "D" in African American literature during my first year in college and my excuse was, "Life Ain't No Crystal Stair" and other literature

like it were depressing. So I avoided it and I avoided reading period, because it was false and depressing. The stories didn't depict reality. They were merely perceptions. I could watch the news and see the strife in the third world countries and be empathetic. But not fiction and not history, they seemed to evoke pity and stir up pain. These were perceptions I had to manage prior and during this study. I just wanted the truth first but like Sara Lawrence Lightfoot (1983), I wanted to search for the "good" knowing the truth would set me free and the "imperfect" would be identified by those with critical eyes. I had to ensure that I did not present only rainbows in this study if there were a few clouds in the sky.

As I read the literature and delved into the "his" and "her" stories, I unearthed some works that must be mentioned. Thus in chapter 2, I discuss the six "s", slavery, struggle, suffering, survival, success and self-fulfillment. I report not just depressing stories but "shining threads of hope" (Hine & Thompson, 1998). Hines & Thompson's book of portraits of Black Women in America is one of many books that illustrated the *good* and the imperfect lives Black women have experienced since the 1700's. They were oppressed and relative to us today, they had every reason to be embittered victims but they were empowered with resilience and they managed their visibility and the perceptions about them. They didn't fit in perfectly, so they made their own boxes, beds and professional identities. Each owned their African heritage and their blackness and they blazed trails for us all, White and "of color" because their values were boundary-less. Though our breadcrumbs lead to a similar "positive social change" (Shields, 2008), the footprints in the sand are different and the portraits are authentic stories of our own personal and contextual history.

This paradoxical review of the African American feminist literature and history helped *clean my closet* and prepare me for the *good* and the *imperfect* clothes in the current day experiences of my study participants. As I listened to their stories and painted their portraits, I realized these gems were reminiscent of the gems hundreds of years ago but these new gems like the older ones had been obscured by terms like intersectionality. We have taken intersectionality, which conceptually is a tool to identify, highlight and resolve the multiple inequities associated with race, class, gender and other complex identities and we have allowed the negative to outshine this powerful and positive tool. Our perceptions have immediately become obscured with skewed history of Black women being oppressed and Whites being privileged. In this study, intersectionality was the framework that helped cull out the privileges the Black women participants carved out of their lives creating authentic sculptures. The participants' values, at times, resonated with them and others more than their race, class and gender identities. Though developmental experiences polished their identities, their values continued to sparkle in their personal and professional lives which appeared to be uncannily *wedded*. These women, like me, had mothers who didn't socialize them by 'protecting' them and putting them on the defense throughout life. Their mothers encouraged them and charged them to live "outside their boxes". Their mothers empowered them with tools to be confident, be independent, be themselves and be excellent. '*We*' were groomed to break the vicious cycles of being vulnerable and victims in our personal and professional lives by being agents for personal and social change.

I also pursued this research to understand how this marriage of personal and professional identities was planned and executed because I've been led to believe African

American women do not experience the wedded bliss in many professional leadership roles. *'We'* don't even get the *'blind dates'* and the opportunity to *'shack up'* in roles like Managing Directors in Wall Street banking. This was my perception from reading statistics cited later in this dissertation. So, although the *race and gender cards* were the furthest tools from my mind, I needed to put aside those hints of bias and discrimination and just seek the truth. The truth was, these women in the study created their own marriages of the century. They were not tokens, nor just faces or images in the façade of nontraditional professions. They were princesses revered by all who stand on their shoulders. They were married to and they had become unified with their roles as Managing Directors on Wall Street. This was a novelty, African American women for all intensive purposes, in the C-Suites.

The women who chose to participate in this study probably would not have done so if they were not women who were self-defined and self-authenticated. I chose them because I believed they were and they could tell their stories and the stories wouldn't be fairy-tales or perceptions. They were what some might call 'outliers' who broke the molds of victimization and oppression. They all decided very early, they would stand-out and strategically, they would do it well. They would turn oppression on its head with privileges. They would go on the offense in a world of *other* dominance. Their professional identity integration processes would be exercises of perception management but they would also hold others, including organizations, accountable for equity and diversity as well. They didn't forget their heritage but they also excelled in crossing the boundaries without jeopardizing reducing their lives to history.

The portraits in this dissertation are authentic just like the dissertation itself. Not perfect and not always pretty but authentic. The stories will resonate with anyone because the stories do not meet the expectations of the depression and oppression in some literature nor do the stories set and enforce boundaries separating the privileged from the oppressed by color, gender, class and other identities. The stories are just an expose of many hidden and unearthed gems that illustrate anchored core values that are the "ties that bind" otherwise "unreconciled souls" (Allen, 1992, p.58).

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Group identity categorizations, such as race, class, and gender, have been the

bases for how we are viewed and perceived (Landry, 2007). We portray those aspects as

our individual identities, our group memberships, and our places in history through

various channels, including family and experience. Although time and situations have

significantly impacted demographic and geographic landscapes, group membership

prioritization and identity understanding often remain salient, and assumptions and

perceptions are adopted based on the past instead of the present. Other factors that could

contribute to identities are overshadowed by intersectional race, class, and gender

inequities inaccurately altering individual and group portraits.

In the 1970s, at the height of the civil rights and feminist movements, efforts were

made to defend and give voice to different intersectional group positions (Collins, 2000a;

Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993; Lorber, 2004; Rothenberg, 2004; Smolkin, 2004). Social

disparities, inequities, gaps, and faults that were exposed had festered over time. These

differences became the normal assumptions and perceptions that continued to separate

and segregate groups even as the movements were trying to address and correct

disparities and needs. There were political, nonpolitical, individual, and collective efforts

to change history and effect positive social change (Cole, 2008; Crenshaw, 2002; Shields,

2008) through new experiences to supplement and transform our understanding of who

we were, who we are, and who we could be. Now more than 30 years after the formal

birth of the historic civil rights and feminist movements, while time, history, and

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experiences may have changed some personal and group landscapes, perceptions of who

we are may remain the same as who we were. Society's perceptions may be very

powerful and largely negative, inaccurate accusations impacting personal and

professional development achievements.

Statement of the Problem

Writers noted, in the 1970s, the historical feminist and civil rights movements

prompted separate social and political changes to address racism, sexism, and classism

(Bell, 1990; Collins, 2000a; Comas-Diaz & Greene, 1994; Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993;

King 2004; Lorde, 1984; Rothenberg, 2004). Subsequently, socioeconomic gaps and

disparities were identified exposing opportunities to resolve inequities experienced by

members of oppressed race, gender, and class intersectional groups (Crenshaw, 1995a,b;

Shields, 2008). Conceptually, some practitioners were able to cite legal, political, and

social examples of the "double-negative/jeopardy" phenomenon (Crenshaw, 2000, 2002;

Cuadraz, 1996; Cuadraz, Holguin, & Uttal, 1999; Holvino, 2000; King, 2007; Landry,

2007; Shields, 2008; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), or as Rothenberg (2004) coined

it, the "three-edged mode of oppression" (p. 163). Empirical research (Bell & Nkomo,

2001; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Symington, 2004) to substantiate intersectional

inequity and double-negative claims was challenging and often abandoned as a credible

source of knowledge. Additionally, in contrast, intersectional group identity assumptions

and values were not explored at the individual levels to distinguish and differentiate

personal from group identities (Crenshaw, 2000; Cuadraz, et al., 1999; Holvino, 2003;

McCall, 2005, Shields, 2008). Instead, easier categorical approaches grouped people at

higher basic intersectional race, class, and gender categories although the total categories

didn't accurately describe the each individual member's identity (Cole, 2008; Cross, 1991; Cuadraz et al., 1999; Holvino, 2003; Landry, 2007; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008).

Additionally, basic social identities, such as race, class, and gender, dominated intersectional studies originally pursued to address the disparities in oppression and privilege inequities (Cole, 2008; Crenshaw, 1995a,b; Cuadraz et al., 1999; Landry, 2007; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). This situation challenges researchers to adopt methodologies that simultaneously represent personal identity uniqueness and authenticity while addressing group loyalty and association based on race, class, and gender (Cole, 2008; Landry, 2007; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). Practical applications of the intersectional race, class, and gender oppression/privilege concepts and methodologies to study true intersectional relationships have often not been cost-beneficial enough to pursue (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Holvino, 2003; Landry, 2007; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). There have been advances in intersectional, social, and relational identity research between race, class and gender intersections but less within race, class, and gender intersections to identify other opportunities for positive social change (Crenshaw, 2000, 2002; Holvino, 2003; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). Differences and inequities are manifested in racism, classism, and sexism, but in other areas as well, blurring the intersectional and dyadic oppression and privilege boundaries. These other areas are less explored and explained, although they are experienced.

Theoretical concepts were formed, research performed, and feminist movements enacted in the late 1970s and 1980s addressing political and social structural gender gaps (Crenshaw, 1995a,b; Shields, 2008). Soon, these efforts extended to addressing race/gender difference (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a; Crenshaw, 2000;

Shields, 2008). Subsequently, individuals' race/gender group identities defined who they were, positioning them collectively in social power structures and other references, indicating that their identities were the same (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a; Crenshaw, 2005; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). The dyadic oppression and privilege structures have two member groups: women of color as the oppressed, without choices and pressured to conform (Rothenberg, 2004), and White women as the privileged with choices and opportunities (Crenshaw, 2002, 2005; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). These memberships have informed individual and group perceptions, decision making, learning, and knowledge in the past and in the present (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

This positioning may be accurate or inaccurate, but primarily it is not validated by unbiased individual exploratory research. There have been calls for more empirical research exploring life experiences to discover emergent identity factors, patterns, and salience explaining personal identities within and between intersectional boundaries (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Holvino, 2002; Landry, 2007; Shields, 2008). Answering this call might also explain why there are disparities in professional leadership representation and achievements that have been "blamed" on group identity differences and discrimination. Intersectional race, class, and gender disparities have dominated research resources (Catalyst, 1999, 2001), so less energy has been used to address other observable identities and results that might be beneficial.

Theorists and researchers continue to expose the theoretical, methodological, and practical challenges faced when trying to understand the multiple effects of identity factors and the product of simultaneous memberships (Landry, 2007; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). They argue that methodologies aren't demonstrating the relational effects

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of social identities on each other, especially between race and gender, an important dynamic in the member experiences (Landry, 2007; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). The methodologic challenges increase the difficulty of exploring significant informant compounds impacting the personal identity process (McCall, 2005; Landry, 2007; Shields, 2008). Pure scientific, quantitative methodologies haven't consistently captured the dynamic interactions between identities, relationships, and other contextual factors, including time constituting life experiences (McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). Yet questions are raised about transferability of empirical findings and conclusions from qualitative and phenomenological studies, especially with small participant groups (Cuadraz, et al., 1999; Landry, 2007). With the absence of rigorous analytical and repeatable processes, story and narrative products have not been accepted as credible means for knowledge building (Cuadraz, et al., 1999; Landry, 2007).

In summary, four problems drove this study. First, race, class, and gender intersectional identity differences and disparities continue to dominate comparative research arguments, overshadowing in-depth research of other salient factors that may explain inequities, differences, perceptions, and impressions of who we are as individuals and groups. Second, opportunities to reduce social inequalities and promote positive social change are based on race, class, and gender intersectional categories. Needs-based decisions attributed to group memberships may not be accurate and therefore may be wasted efforts and resources. Third, intersectional identity theories and methodologies are plausible, but the level of complexity challenges and discourages studies, limiting the value of intersectionality to explain diversity within and across identities. Finally, professional identity integration decisions and assumptions are frequently based on

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inaccurate perceptions of generalized, categorized identity without taking into account individual differences that may impact starting identity positions (Beavers, 2005). These assumptions may decrease opportunities for integrated personal and organizational effectiveness (Holvino, 2007, Hood & Koberg, 1994; Kouzes & Pozner, 1990)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how people understand their identities through studying life experiences and to understand how race, class, gender, and other identity factors intersect to inform personal and professional identities. These factors can also explain possible correlations between personal socialization and professional identity integration processes. Consequently, the study should make contributions to multiple bodies of literature—including the broad scopes of intersectionality, personal identity, values, professional identity, and integration behaviors—and processes and practices as well as provide a basis for future research.

Research Questions

The following questions frame the purpose for this research:

1. How do African American women understand their intersectional identities?
2. How do African American women experience professional identity integration?
3. How do African American women experience simultaneity of intersectional identities?

Statement of Potential Significance

This study should be significant in multiple areas and on multiple levels: advancing intersectionality conversations by broadening and deepening the discussion beyond the race, class, and gender roots of oppression and salient identities to the differences within traditional intersectional groups and the meanings behind them; broadening the diversity discussion with emergent differences within the race, class, gender, and professional intersections; informing individuals about available practical resources matching their personal and professional identities and increasing individuals' abilities to be agents in theirs and others' career achievements; informing organizations and individuals through practical mining and usage of valuable diverse and innovative resources to benefit all stakeholders; informing organizations of the value of effective personal identity integration to the organization; and informing future intersectionality, professional identity integration, and mentoring research.

Correcting Misperceptions and Focusing on Positive Change

This study illustrates the differences between identity perceptions and realities that may have been distorted by failure to correctly transmit and correlate personal identity information. The study demonstrates and exposes means of transmitting and understanding actual identities, inequities, oppressions, opportunities, and differences using the intersectionality framework (Crenshaw, 1995b; Cuadraz et al., 1999; Holvino, 2001; Landry, 2007; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). Collins' (1990, 2000) advancement of the intersectionality framework informed by "Black feminist thought" has demonstrated the emergence of positive identities and values illustrated in resistance to victimization and Black woman consciousness that has been effective in the transformation of

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institutions (2000). This study provides additional opportunities to demonstrate emergent positive consequences born of negative circumstances and assumptions based on critical intersectionality research within intersectional boundaries. The differences extricated from within will broaden the value of intersectionality, producing "positive social change" (Crenshaw, 1985, 1995; Shields, 2008) for individual and group identities by understanding the nuances that impact entities and processes for development and change. Undoubtedly, "common differences" emerge distinguishing self-defined individuals and groups. There are also common identity traits within and between social groups and values shared within and across, race, gender class, and other intersections.

Significance for Individuals and Organizations

This research has significance for individuals in demonstrating there are practical resources and processes to adapt and adopt their identity entities and prior experiences to make professional decisions. The tools explained in this research along with an accurate self-awareness will assist individuals' effectiveness as agents in their own professional and career development. Individuals also realize themselves outside of stereotypical race, class, and gender groups while collectively serving as parts of movements to advance those groups. They will simultaneously be recognized as unique persons and as authoritative voices for "their people" and their causes. This study promotes the true outsider within (Collins, 2000a) person with individual salient values to use to create personal, professional, and organizational identity "fits" and improve personal opportunities for professional development. The adoption of outsider within (Collins, 2000a) increases personal effectiveness, reducing the anxiety and stress in balancing conflicting personal, group, and professional identities. The study demonstrates the tools

needed to effectively manage individual and group perceptions, creating and maintaining authenticity, integrity, and credibility. This effectiveness will be manifested in individual empowerment using diverse personal resources that may have been dormant, invisible, or silent, such as leadership, self-confidence, resilience, listening, and caring.

In addition, this study broadens practical diversity opportunities. Academically, there is evidence that diversity has progressed beyond the traditional social race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and religion categories (Page, 2007). Other areas, such as disabilities and abilities, regions, education, and other demographics, are understudied and often less practiced professionally in organizations, leaving gaps between relevant theory and practical applications. There has been significant research and writings demonstrating that diverse areas are opportunities to increase social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002), innovation and creativity (Dickens & Dickens, 1991; Hood & Koberg, 1994; Page, 2007; Richardson & Loubier, 2008). This can be accomplished by using existing underused skills or recruiting and hiring on the basis of under-recognized diverse positive leadership, team, technical, and other desirable characteristics. Effective identification of the diversely skilled individuals will lead to greater returns and leveraging of the intersectional practices in the organization.

This study is significant for groups and organizations. Organizations benefit when individuals effectively "fit" into organizations (Dickens & Dickens, 1991; Hood & Koberg, 1994; Roberts, 2005). Recruiting processes can be costly, time consuming, and disruptive to business and client service continuity (Hewlin, 2003; Hood & Koberg, 1994; Ibarra, 1999). Recruitment, retention, development, and promotion of valuable employees require ongoing effective identity integration and professional development

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(Sacharin, Lee & Gonzalez, 2009). This study demonstrates the value to organizations and justifies their responsibility in the process.

Significance for Theory and Research

This study promotes intersectionality and illustrates how to elevate intersectionality research by uncovering heterogeneity in perceivably homogenous groups dynamically defined by other elements that may not have been explored before. The emergent differences demonstrate the opportunities and need for more research into the dynamics of intersecting identity factors (McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). The changing demographic dynamics of our countries and our industries require relevant research to understand the impact of change on our entities. Although this study does not identify prescriptions to predict the effect of identity and contextual factors, it demonstrates the possibility to more accurately understand through experiences the functions of factors in our identity equations. On the individual level, this study and future studies can assist individuals in learning how to authenticate themselves, understanding the influences in their own and others' lives, and knowing how to tap into personal resources for whole well-being. While parts of personal identities may remain salient over time, this research demonstrates what might cause change and the effect on professional decisions, professional success, and a cohesive individual being.

This study is significant in the demonstration of the need for and possibilities in a hybrid intersectionality framework (Shields, 2008). This research demonstrates that the intersectional race, class, and gender categories still make sense to study because there are direct and indirect associated differences and inequities. Additionally, it is nearly impossible not to acknowledge other common and different identity factors within and

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between intersections that make a difference (Holvino, McCall, 2005, Shields, 2008. While the study will likely identify multiple examples of common and different factors, there is much left to study with broader and deeper participant bases, professions, and organizations to propagate what is briefly accomplished here.

Conceptual Framework

Intersectionality-informed theoretical and methodological models were used to support the concepts, literature, and empirical research framed by the above research questions. Conceptually, the framework was adaptable to numerous intersectionality lenses, but the lens of African American women was used in this study. This study demonstrated visible and invisible similarities and differences within a perceivably homogenous race, gender, and class intersection based on different experiences. Additionally, the framework suggested a generic process of professional identity integration that was framed to support the emergence of choices, tools, and informants based on individual differences, with explanations of those differences. The research was based on the argument that identity group memberships are not automatic indicators of personal identities, experiences, and saliencies that transcend professional decisions.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality embodies the mutual and dynamic relationships between social identities recognized as categories (e.g., race, class, and gender), where individuals claim or perceive to have membership constituting personal identity meaning associated with the group categories (Cole, 2008; Shields, 2008). Landry (2007) and Ore (2006), among others, have noted that there is not a consensus on the dynamic relation between the

categories, indicating they may be discrete and may not define or enact one another. Some argue that race, class, and gender must be studied together because they are not monolithic (Holvino, 2001, 2003; Hurtado, 1996; Kim, 2001; Landry, 2007; Merchant & Willis, 2001; Rothenberg, 2004). In this study, the "mutual constitutive" characteristic was accepted conceptually for the interrelatedness it depicts, but the limit of race, class, and gender as the only factors was questioned.

The intersecting race, class, and gender factors have consistently been used in Black feminist literature and studies (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Collins, 2000a; Landry, 2007), denoting their primary function defining African American women and other women of color. Originally, the race component changed the face of the traditional feminist model, demonstrating that all women are not alike and race makes a difference (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Collins, 2000a; Landry, 2007). The model also includes gender, demonstrating that all Blacks are not alike and they are differentiated and defined by gender. Class is the third "normative" differentiating factor, intersecting with race and gender to further differentiate, define, and categorize individuals (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Collins, 2000a; Landry, 2007).

These individual and composite categories preform values and perceptions (Hitlin, 2003; Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). There are two intersectionality models. The "matrix of dominance" model (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a) describes individuals as members of oppressed or privileged groups based on the following dyads: Black/White, rich/poor, and male/female. The other intersectional model is simply one of differences (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a).

Shields (2008) and McCall (2005) reflected on an original and significant purpose for intersectionality: to create positive social change. Shields (2008) summarizes some elements that inform this social change: 1) Change informed by real life experiences that create and change social policy; 2) understanding of multidimensional culturally informed situations and change; 3) expansion of research and the researcher "box" beyond singular worldviews; 4) bridging of psychological and behavioral processes, identifying accurate informants and antecedents to behaviors; and 5) change through artistic and scientific research and co-creative research methodologies. During the intersectionality research process, the researcher and the participants are effective agents of change. Shields (2008) and McCall (2005) also questioned the possibility of other factors that inform "who we are" distinguished as different versus oppressed or privileged based on other intersecting factors. Too frequently, comparative intersectionality studies distinguish between race, class, and gender intersections and make general identity assumptions of "who we are." Consequential assumptions are also made, for instance professional achievement discriminations, based solely on race, class, and gender differences. Conceptually, this research was framed to simply understand other factors that constitute "the self," make a difference, and contribute saliently to "who we are" individually.

Identity, "in psychological terms relates to awareness of self, self-image, self-reflection, and self-esteem . . . emphasized as a quality that enables the expressive of the individual's authentic sense of self" (Shields, 2008, p. 301). Personal identity (Hitlin 2003) qualities are produced by unique experiences, contexts, time, different values, relationships, and experiences that can manifest themselves in different ways, including

motives, behaviors, habits, attitudes, and choices (Hitlin, 2003) through a socialization

process. The personal identity influences other factors, demonstrating the "mutually

constitutive" (Shields, 2008) relationships and "individual autonomy" (Hitlin, 2003,

p. 118).

Mead (1934) and Ibarra (1999) suggested that an identity integration process is

influenced by preexisting historical, contextual, and presocial factors. These factors may

become embedded and engrained in the personal core value system (Hitlin, 2003).

Intersectional social identity group memberships and influential relations simultaneously

constitute congruency, conflicts, and/or ambivalence between individual authenticity and

other allegiances based on core values (Hitlin, 2003) within the socialization processes.

Some have argued that those core values are the result of race, female gender, and

working-class cultural identities (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Bell & Nkomo, 2001;

Collins, 2000a; Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). A purpose of the study is to facilitate the

emergence of those factors that may exist within the complex intracategorical

intersectionality (McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). It is that form of intersectionality, all

inclusive of possible entities informed by nearly infinite intersectional identities, that

defines self and others by more than obvious commonalities (Cole, 2008).

The model in Figure 1-1 illustrates how race, class, and gender are the primary

factors dynamically informing and defining each other in the realm of intersectionality as

depicted by others who have studied intersectional differences (Bell & Nkomo (2001).

Individual experiences, relationships, context, and time inform the individual experiences

and personal identity.
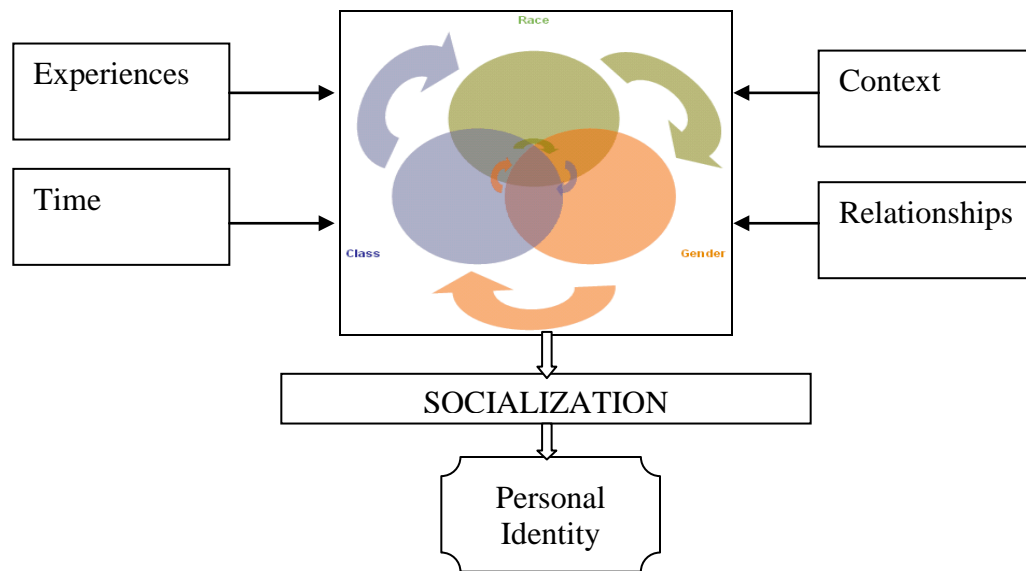
Figure 1-1. Personal identity integration process.

Professional Identity

C. Wright Mills (1959) wrote, "Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both" (p. 3), asserting that the person and the society/environment define each other to some degree. Hitlin (2003) argued that a person has integrated identity anchored by trans-situational core values, roles, and identities not separated or compartmentalized. To frame this study and answer the second research question, the segregated and integrated personal identities were possible outcomes to be answered empirically. The illustration in Figure 1-2 depicts a professional integration process based on the personal identity integration process shown in Figure 1-1. Both figures encompass the possible subprocesses and behaviors described in the literature review.
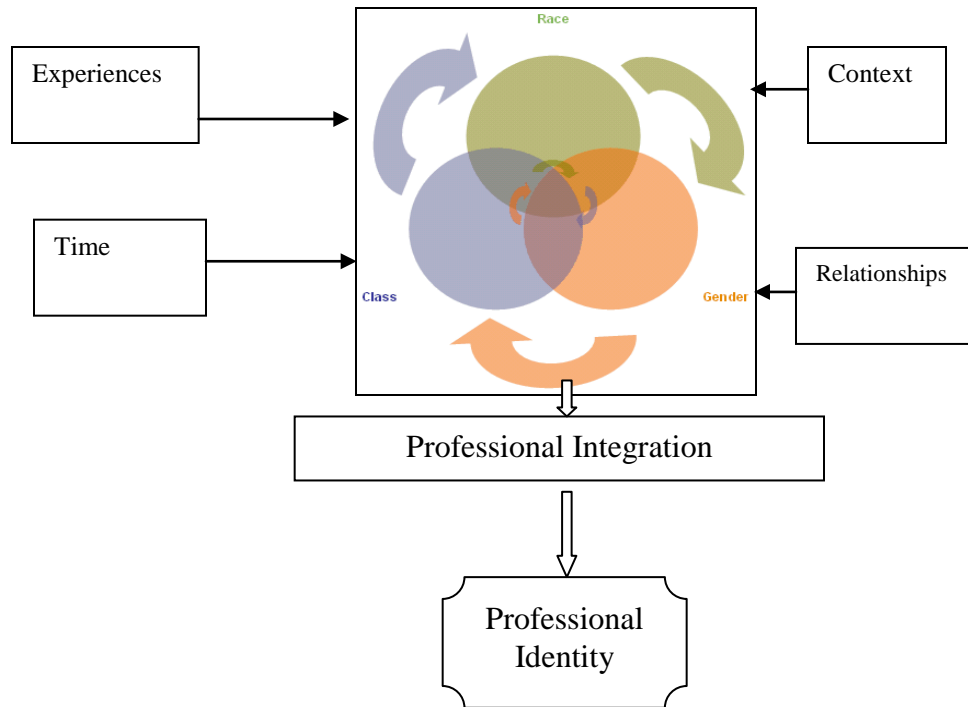
Figure 1-2. Professional identity integration process.

Costello (2005) argued that professional identity is internalized and ingrained in the individual. Based on this argument, the professional and personal identities, values, and beliefs become one personal identity supporting Hitlin's assertion (2003). Conceptually, this socially influenced integration process has simply been referred to as "choice" (McBroom, 1992) of what fits into the personal constellation. Some minorities feel they are devoid of choices in many organizational and professional interactions (Meyerson, 2001). This perception was addressed through this research, as intersectionality leads to positive social change (Crenshaw, 1995a; Shields, 2008) and breaks a cycle of negativity (Meyerson, 2001) by identifying possibilities and opportunities and by identifying how individuals are agents of personal, group, professional, organizational and societal changes.

The framework of this study commenced the possibility of an ongoing process of personal and professional identity understanding and integration with changes to some personal identity elements impacted by time, experiences, situations, relationships, and context, but core, salient, and trans-situational factors will likely remain fairly constant (Hitlin, 2003).

Summary of the Methodology

Intersectionality studies have frequently compared race, gender, and class social identities, resulting in the identification and illumination of differences between those social categories (Cole, 2008; Cuadraz et al., 1999; Holvino, 2002; Landry, 2007; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). This focus has detracted research resources from discovering emergent commonalities and differences within perceivably homogenous groups. Perceivably, this study's participant group was perceivably homogenous, consisting of three African American (perceivably synonymous with Black) women in common senior management roles in Wall Street and investment banking. Their backgrounds, including their personal identities and socialization processes, emerged from this study and informed professional experiences.

Qualitative phenomenological practices were utilized to support this emergence, conceptualize the findings, and identify trends and patterns to answer the research questions. The study requirements led to the selection of the portraiture methodology (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) with conjecture of some Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000a) epistemology where relevant. Portraiture has successfully produced empirical theoretical contributions to African American feminist, womanist, and

academic professional identity theory (Chapman, 2005; Dixson, 2005; Hill, 2003, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

The experiential information was received primarily through one-to-one in-depth interviews, supplemented to a minor degree by shadowing at speaking engagements and triangulation of the data and information. Three in-depth interviews with each participant were conducted using Seidman's (1998) approach.

The constant comparative method (Glaser & Straus, 1967) was utilized to conduct rigorous analysis through coding, categorizing data for rigorous review, making relational comparisons, and developing patterns and themes to answer the questions framing this intersectionality research (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Kim, 2001; Ore, 2006). This study's framework took into account the social "structures and the experiences of race, class and gender" (Cuadraz et al., 1999, p. 157) and included the interplay of contextual and relational elements providing additional clarity (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Hurtado, 1996; Landry, 2007). Some aspects of the study mimicked grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), using inductive analysis to form emergent conclusions. These methodological tools supported complex, intersecting, and interlocking nuances of identities (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Holvino, 2001; Landry, 2007). Purposely painted portraits depicted the outsider within (Collins, 2000a) social race, class, and gender social identities as well as outsider within (Collins, 2000a) professional identities uniquely and contextually framed.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The study had several limitations acknowledged by the researcher:

1. The findings and conclusions constituted experiences of homogenous social and professional intersections of African American women without previously

specified social classes. There was no expectation of identical research results within the group of participants, nor were the findings expected to be indicative of everyone in the same social intersectional categories.

2. The senior-level Wall Street banking professionals' experiences were not expected to represent all similar and different-level professionals in their organizations or industries. Relational, experiential, and contextual factors were expected to distinguish or connect the participant with others inside or outside of the stated intersections in the study. The participants' uniqueness and authenticity was exhibited in their agreement to participate in the study.

The study was delimited as follows:

1. Current professional identities were not observed at work and were not part of the scope of the study.

2. Relational attributes were understood from the participant and not from third parties.

3. Comparisons between race, class, and gender social groups were unintentional and did not define the study's scope.

Assumptions and Definitions

African American woman. Used synonymously with the term Black woman. African American women are individuals with unique experiences and perceptions.

Class. The term class implies different status level that can be culturally, economically and socially defined. Class is a socially-constructed categorization distinguishing individuals and groups by economic status, salary and monetary value. Class categorization has also been based on type of work and employment, segregating

the working class or blue-collar workers from professionals and elitists. Lives can be dictated by social class categorization. This occurs in the realm of interpersonal contexts through social stereotypes (Ore, 2006).

Gender. A social categorization term using biological differences as underpinnings to account for social and cultural differences. At least two gender categories, men and women, are used to assign individuals on the basis of observed physical and behavioral factors (Hood & Koberg, 1994).

Race. The existence of significant underlying hereditary features distinguishing a group of people from other others. Physical features have been associated with socially constructed race identities including skin color, hair type, blood type as well as physical traits associated with geographical locations or national origins (Graves, 2001).

Nontraditional profession and positions. Professions not typically associated with African American women. African American women are often described as underrepresented in these professions and historically not skilled to perform and achieve in the professions. Professions should be distinguished from work/jobs, which require less education, skills, and responsibilities.

Context: The physical, geographical, temporal, historical, cultural, and aesthetic settings placing people and action in time and place as a means of understanding the meaning of what is said and done (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Emergence: The way complex systems and patterns "arise" out of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions (Chang, 2004).

Intersectionality: mutually constitutive relationship and interaction between multiple

social identity categories where a person (s) claims membership and gleans

personal meaning (Shields, 2008)

Simultaneity: Complex simultaneous membership in multiple social groups inviting

competing allegiances when there are conflicting and divergent identities and

values (Symington, 2004; Holvino, 2006; Hurtado, 1999)

Socialization: The process of inheriting norms, customs, and ideologies, providing the

individual the characteristics, skills, and habits necessary for active participation

within society, which consists of a plurality of shared norms, customs, values,

traditions, social roles, symbols, and languages. It is the process through which

social and cultural continuity is attained (Clausen, 1968).

Perceptions: Information and indicators received by "foreign bodies" as products of the

interplays of knowledge from experiences (Jones, 1999).

Perception Management: "actions to convey and/or deny selected information and

indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotion, motives and objective

reasoning" (Beavers, 2005, pp. 80-81).

Summary

We make decisions, choices, and changes through various stages and experiences
in our lives. As we socialize, integrate, and become members of collectives (Ibarra,
2005b), we experience events critical to our personal effectiveness in our professions.
Effective personal and professional identity integration can be a significant "turning
point" (Capra, 1982; Ibarra, 2005a, p. 29) or crossroads in our lives as well as careers. As
we transform our identities, we also have the capability to transform social structures,

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institutions, and society. The reality of framing opportunities demonstrates that we have

choices, but that also indicates responsibilities (Meyerson, 2001). Our choices make a

difference, and those choices are influenced by a plethora of informants, not just a few.

These informant possibilities are discussed in the review of current relevant literature in

chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Personal identity is a complex entity and a process of intersecting and interlocking internal and external elements influencing who we are. Personal identity is not isolated or static but an open and dynamic process that is both conscious and unconscious or habitual, comprising chosen and inherited elements (Brewer, 2001; Hitlin, 2003; Smith, 2007; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Race, gender, class, sexuality, and age (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Holvino, 2001; Landry, 2007; Ore, 2006; Rothenberg, 2004) are universal personal identity categories. Social meanings and assumptions are assigned based on identity categories, placing people in structural positions (Anderson & Collins, 2007). Additionally, intersecting identities have associated meanings based on the interrelated groups formed (Anderson & Collins, 2007).

There are two distinct intersection models. One model highlights inequities and power in a "matrix of domination" (Collins, 2000a). The other model frames "differences" based on dissimilar intersecting group identity positions (Anderson & Collins, 2007). A dyadic structure separating individuals and groups into one of two locations—White/non-White, male/female, and rich/poor—forms oppressed/privileged meanings (Anderson & Collins, 2007). This matrix of dominance structure frequently veils and overshadows the model of difference, leading to a focus on dominance as a power struggle and inequities versus differences being leveraged as diversity in individuals, groups, and society (Anderson & Collins, 2007). The purpose of this research is to understand the dynamics of identity in its individual, social, and intersecting forms. From a structural perspective, the focus is on differences while acknowledging the

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inequities. Differences are in the forefront to understand how individual nuances, whether at the group or individual level, interrelate to form who we are. The scope of the empirical research is delimited to reduce being prone to intersectional group comparisons, but race, class, and gender identity categories are used as categories defining differences (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Rothenberg, 2007).

The goal of this review is to facilitate a more informed understanding of intersectional identities and how they influence and are influenced. This literature begins with the convergent and universal perspective of identity concepts relevant to broad audiences. It concludes with the more specific, divergent lens of historical literatures related to the scope of the participants in the empirical research, African American women. Overall, the literature review accomplishes the following in associated sections: (1) framing identity as identity, social identity and personal identity theories; (2) framing intersectionality, including what comprises it and the gaps that exist; (3) framing professional identity, the distinctions between professional identities, and challenges to professional identity boundaries; (4) framing professional identity integration, behavior and process options, and the roles of relationships in identity integration; (5) framing African American women's history, relationships, stereotypes, perceptions, and challenges; and (6) offering conclusions that summarize the purpose of the research in the context of the literature discussions. The literature review helps make sense of empirical experiences (Weick, 1979, p. 194).

Framing Identity

Theorists have noted difficulties reaching a consensus on a single definition and description of identity (Cote & Levine, 2002; Erickson, 1987; Hayes & Flannery, 2002).

They also have had difficulties distinguishing personal, social, and self identities and the ego identities (Cote & Levine, 2002). Identity is not simply "who I am" (Erikson, 1987, p. 677) but "is the interface between the individual and the world, defining as it does what the individual will stand for and be recognized as" (Hayes & Flannery, 2002, p. 56). See Table 2.1, a matrix for a comparative analysis of identity, social identity, and personal identity theories.

There are compelling arguments supporting the identity theories. When choosing an identity framework for this research, it was important to identify a theoretical framework that supported intersectionality and simultaneity, two constructs framing this study of identity and identity integration. Several supporting aspects were key requirements: the framework's premise of defragmentation of identities that are experienced simultaneously unifying the whole person (Hitlin, 2003); ability to support hierarchical identity factors besides social group factors such as race, class and gender; individual and group identity motivational premises; and an identity framework that accounted for cross-time and cross-situational dynamics and the development of identities over time. Other elements were valuable as well but on the basis of the research primary frameworks and for the purpose of this study and the problem to be solved, the above requirements were paramount.

For the purpose of this research, the personal identity theory is "experienced by the individuals as 'core' or 'unique' to themselves in ways that group—and role—identities are not; often it is discussed as a set of idiosyncratic attributes that differentiate the person from others" (Hitlin, 2003, pp. 118-119). Personal identity undergoes a process of self-definition, socialization, culturalization, adaptation, and negotiation

Table 2-1
Matrix of Identity Theories

Socially constructed self	Identity theory	Social identity theory	Personal identity theory
Hogg, Terry & White, 1995	McCall & Simmons, 1978; R. H. Turner, 1978	Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1978	Hitlin, 2003; Gecas, 2000; Thoits & Virshup, 1997
Mediates relationship between social structure or society and individual social behavior; reciprocal link between society and self	Interpersonal: mediates individual and society by role identity	Intergroup: mediates individual and society by intergroup relations	Intrapsychic/personal processes mediated by values; authenticity links personal identity and values
Organization of behaviors in units	Discrete roles: self identification from roles; group membership and roles not distinguishable	Discrete groups: self identification from norms, stereotypes, and proto-types; in-group cohesion unit, out group distinction	Personal, core unique integrated attributes, concepts, and beliefs anchored in socially patterned values (value identities)
Identities are internalized and define "SELF"	Self labeling and membership in social categories; self-defining level of commitment	Social identification: self-categorization –depersonalized sense of self; perception of self as interchangeable exemplar of a social category	Self-enhancement; self-transcendence; self-definition; private sense of self separate from social roles and familial identification
Levels of analysis	Dissonance reduction; align self-conception with perceptions of self suggested by others' be-havior (role congruency)	Social: psychological process linking identity to behavior via personalization and conformity is studied	Individual: based on value hierarchy; personal level of analysis by relative importance
	Sociological perspective: concerned with individualistic outcomes of identity of role behavior	Psychological perspective: address dynamic impact of society on self through intergroup comparisons	Values operate at individual, institutional, and societal levels; values hold meaning for individuals
Intergroup / intragroup behavior differences	**Role behavior/role identities:** explicates person's individual beha-vioral choices/not direct impact of social attributes on self (e.g., race, class, gender, ethnicity)	**Intergroup relations/ group behavior:** race, class, gender, ethnicity attributes most important; distinction for social relations also intragroup role behavioral choices	**Value-identities** (Gecas, 2000): hierarchical values guide selection/evaluation of behaviors and events; autono-mous not role obligations or intergroup comparisons; value commitments
Roles and groups	Self: principally from role identities; role – many properties of group mem-bership and differential behavior within group	Self: principally from social group identity Group: role differential behaviors within group	Person: integrated individual and social identities; cross-situational sense of consistency
Self-concept – contextual responsiveness and identity salience	**Activated** by individual in response to role	**Elicited** by social context; responsive to contextual cues and factors	**Noncoerced and directed** by necessary and fundamental values
	Less attentive to social situations/context. Stable except in role change; explains chronic identity salience	Attentive to contextual cues; transitory identity - contextual salience in social comparison	Value-consistent across time and situations; yet permeable

(Cote & Levine, 2002) through its mere existence, and experience increases understanding. The perceptions of the person and others, the context, the social structure, and the social institutions (Ibarra, 2005a) shape and define this personal identity (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Rothenberg, 2004).

Erickson (1980) and Costello's identity work (2005) noted that identity is a "partly conscious but predominantly unconscious sense of whom one is as a person and as a contributor to the work of one's society" (Costello, 2005, p. 31). Some personal identity attributes are visible and inerasable, especially race and gender social identities. Other factors, such as class, religion, education, and values, are conscious yet sometimes invisible, and they are subject to change. The factors can be articulated and changed by personal and collective efforts and influence. Costello invoked the term "habitus" to describe the less intelligible, unconscious personal identity that is beneath the surface, a portion of an identity iceberg (Costello, 2005). Habitus is composed of habits, beliefs, values, and worldviews that have been formed over time, and they are more difficult to identify and more difficult to change (Costello, 2005). Cote and Levine (2002) suggested Erikson was mainly concerned with the impact of cultural and sociohistorical identity factors (e.g., race, class, and gender) with an "appreciation of interaction as an ongoing, powerful social force manipulating the self, its formation and its maintenance" (p. 30), while self-psychologists focus on the "intra-psyche" (p. 30).

There are noted challenges in defining identity. Although race and gender appear to be stable and nonnegotiable, they are shaped and defined by each other, groups, organizations, and society (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Ore, 2006; Rothenberg, 2004). A "pervasive system of social control permeates every action" (Chafe, 2004, p. 555)

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associated with race, gender, class, and social identities, constructing meanings, equities and inequalities, commonalities and differences (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Ore, 2006). Personal identity is the sense of self that is socially informed (Cote & Levine, 2002; Holvino, 2001; Landry, 2007; Ore, 2006) by self, social structures, and institutions (Marable, 2004). Traditionally, race, gender, and class are the primary salient and social identities that interact, interlock, and intersect (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Collins, 2000a; Landry, 2007). So while people are individual entities, they should also be studied and analyzed to understand their dynamic nature and to understand them in context with one another (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Cuadraz et al., 1999; Kim, 2001; Landry, 2007). Hoare (1991) described identity as a constellation in a complex universe, and it is heavily influenced and constructed by the attributes in the universe and all of the interactions it encounters (Cote & Levine, 2002; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

Social construction of our personal identities can begin very early in our lives, evident in lessons of inequality and socialization of young children (Hurtado, 2004; Ore, 2006). Early schooling introduces children to learning inequities and discrimination attributed to social race and class positions. Education reform, civil rights, and other social movements haven't eliminated the impact of oppression on social construction creating racial, social, and class disparities (Hurtado, 2004; Ore, 2006; Marable, 2004). Biological factors including race and gender are devalued, and new structural values are socially assigned (Ore, 2006; Marable, 2004). Hitlin (2003) suggested that personal values are salient attributes and they are "socially patterned and communicated" (p. 119). Social structures often veil subjectivity, individuality, and choice when there are conflicts

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with the objective sides of identity culture and structure (Chang, 2004; Cote & Levine, 2002; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Frye, 2004; Marable, 2004). The veil impedes and challenges control of our personal identities when there is a dyadic conflict with the dominant structures defining intersecting race, class, and gender social group identity locations (Collins, 2000a; Ore, 2006; Rothenberg, 2004).

The intersecting locations define personal positions of oppression and privilege, inequality and opportunity based on the group social identities giving power and privilege to the dominant majority and oppressing the minority, pressuring them to conform (Rothenberg, 2004). Rothenberg (2004) claimed that minorities unintentionally advocate this dyad as status quo; they do not resist but instead unconsciously conform. But Rothenberg (2004) also argued that it is presumptuous to conform to the status quo and perceive one group as the target of oppression and never the oppressors. Oppression is often described as relational depending on the targets of comparison (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Kim, 2001; Landry, 2007; Ore, 2006).

During personal identity formation, change, personal agency, personal identity salience, and presumption of control in the process guide the degree of social construction or assimilation (Cote & Levine, 2002; Mead, 1934; Rothenberg, 2004). Control, oppression, inequality, and privilege in groups impact how groups perceive themselves and how they are perceived (Rothenberg, 2004). There are social stereotypes and misconceptions that discriminate against women and non-Whites, devaluing them in relation to men and Whites (Bell, 2004; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Holvino, 2001; Marable, 2004). These differences in the social structure are often identified as "root causes" of inequities in political institutions, economic institutions, and higher-level social structures

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(Amott & Matthaei, 2007; Hurtado, 2004; Malveaux, 2004; Marable, 2004).

Intersectionality was adopted to explain some of the perceptions, misconceptions, and

attempts to correct the errors in these assumptions (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Amott &

Matthaei, 2007; Crenshaw, 2002; Cuadraz et al., 1999; Hurtado, 2004; Shields, 2008).

Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender

People of the same race, class, or gender social group identity categories may

experience life differently depending on the juxtaposition of multiple personal identity

factors that are relevant and prevalent in different situations and contexts (Cuadraz et al.,

1999; Holvino, 2001; Landry, 2007; Rothenberg, 2004; Symington, 2004; Zinn & Dill,

2007).

As noted in chapter 1, intersectionality has been defined as "the mutually

constitutive relations among social identities where . . . one category of identity, such as

gender, takes its meaning as a category in relation to another category . . . where social

identities are . . . social categories in which an individual claims membership as well as

the personal meaning associated with those categories" (Shields, 2008, p. 301). The term

intersectionality was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (2000) and also developed by

Patricia Hill Collins (2000) in Black feminist thought epistemology. Crenshaw noted the

more egregious absence of race (i.e., color) as a function in the equation for inequalities

in feminist literature (Crenshaw, 2000; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). Collins (2000a)

coined the term *matrix of domination* more specifically to address a Black woman

perspective.

Both Crenshaw and Collins described a dichotomy of oppression and privilege,

positioning women of color as oppressed and Whites as privileged in the matrix

hierarchical structure (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a; Crenshaw, 2002). This implies the domination of the oppressed by the privileged and oppression in relation to privilege. The intersection of race, class, and gender places a person in a socially oppressed position, simultaneously feeling the impact of race, gender, and class oppressed group identities (Symington, 2004). Intersectionality explains power relationships, inequities and gaps between social groups, and how those relations are maintained (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a; Holvino, 2001; hooks, 1981; Landry, 2007; Symington, 2004). The intersectionality of race, gender, and class produces a multiplicity as opposed to a sum of personal identity categories (Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993; Landry, 2007; Chafe, 2004). It may be tempting to simplify research and theory with binary categories and additions, but authentic studies informed by intersectionality are more indicative of the different experiences of the "complex whole" (Landry, 2007, p. 1).

Racism, sexism (patriarchy), and capitalism systems intersect, interlocking race, gender, and class social identities and producing different dominating experiences for the privileged and controlled experiences for the oppressed (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a; Crenshaw, 2000; Ore, 2006; Marable, 2004). The systems impact the person through perceived handicaps or advantages associated with the intersecting social group attributes of the social structures (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a). Marable (2004) asserted that racism is a system of ignorance; it systematically exploits people of color and is never accidental within social structures and institutions. Racism, sexism, and classism are systems of physical intimidation, economic control, and psychological control in the White-dominant society over the minorities (Marable, 2004).

An ability to reach goals and to become self-reliant is dependent on how the uniquely socially constructed intersectional positions and perceptions are managed (Collins, 2000a; Landry, 2007). This implies that self-identification and management may be lost through a socialization process (hooks, 1981). The ability to make wise personal and professional choices is dependent on the ability to navigate intersectional group and personal identities (Meyerson, 2001; Parker & ogilvie, 2003). But, persons and groups alike feel pressed to conform, adapt, or adjust their identities and goals because of their own and others' perceptions of them (Collins, 2000a; Costello, 2005; hooks, 1981; Landry, 2007; Rothenberg, 2004). Other persons and groups assume unwarranted power and subject people to unfair assumptions, passing judgment using various forms of discrimination (Landry, 2007; Rothenberg, 2004). Crenshaw (2000) distinguished two forms of intersectionality, structural and political. Structural is the way persons' convergent statuses define and marginalize them, as opposed to political intersectionality, which forefronts persons with multiple group identities with possible conflicting needs and objectives prioritized by the groups. These present different means of research to highlight and foreground the differences for different purposes.

Intersectionality as a methodology should be used to capture real personal life experiences that inform identities versus using quantitative methods to add up results based on multiple categories (Shields, 2008). Too frequently, the emergent nuances of experiences that explain differences are lost or misconstrued by neglecting to ask the "how" questions in exchange for simplified, independent discrete variables totaling a whole. The mutually constituted meaning-making dynamics are lost. Collins (2000b) argued, "Rather than examining gender, race, class, and nation as distinctive social

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hierarchies, Intersectionality examines how they mutually construct one another" (p. 156). This constitutes the complexity of simultaneous meaning making in multiple groups (Symington, 2004). This is one form of simultaneity of personal experience. In another form, the complex simultaneous group memberships are dormant, without competing pulls of allegiance between the social identity groups (Holvino, 2006; Hurtado, 1999). Simultaneity is stressful and wreaks havoc when divergent and conflicting needs are experienced simultaneously. This concept of simultaneity is expressed more specifically in a later section in the chapter in regards to professional identity integration.

Landry (2007), Cuadraz et al. (1999), Jaggar and Rothenberg (1993), McCall (2005), and Shields (2008) have suggested that there are opportunities to expand intersectionality theory and research attributed to misunderstanding of the multiplicity dynamics of the concept. Additionally, opportunities have been identified specific to underutilization, identifying differences within intersectional categories that would distinguish individuals using a multitude of factors (Holvino, 2001; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). The value of intersectionality for a broader population would be realized by addressing these opportunities.

In summary, many researchers have been unable to fully conceptualize how people experience the complexity of multiple identity categories and group memberships by simplifying the experiences into dyads (Holvino, 2006; Hurtado, 1999). Conceptualization requires cognitive, conscious understanding of one's dynamic personal identity structure in the appropriate complex context (Collins, 2000a) or constellation in a complex universe (Hoare, 1991). Holvino's simultaneity model (2006) complicates the matter by demonstrating that simultaneity is experienced at the personal level; people are

challenged to make choices with multiple agendas, pitting their race against their gender

and their class memberships, relationships, etc. (Costello, 2004, 2005). It can be argued

that everyone, regardless of race, gender, or class, experiences simultaneity (Holvino,

2006), but simultaneity is largely associated with women of color and the boundaries

distinguished by their different histories and experiences (Holvino, 2001, 2006;

Rothenberg, 2004). The simultaneity experience has been described as a "push and pull"

bicultural crisis of emotions and tensions (Bell, 1990) and the ambivalence of competing

assumptions, biases, and stereotypes (Holvino, 2001, 2006). Contextual factors, saliency,

and the perceived impressions needed for personal identity integration drive decisions in

the midst of simultaneity. Cuadraz et al. (1999), Holvino (2006), Hurtado (1999), Collins

(1986), Crenshaw (2002), and Landry (2007) indicate that the complexity of

intersectionality and simultaneity are best understood by exploring experiences. Persons

compare their simultaneous personal identities to professional identities and decide how

to effectively integrate them.

Professional Identity

The terms *profession* and *work* are often used interchangeably, but profession can

be distinguished from work in several ways: by the level of criticality, the cognitive

functioning required to perform the job, the physical nature of the job, and the

internalization of the role (Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006); by how members of the

profession distinguish themselves, their requirements, their skills, and their knowledge

from other professions (Costello, 2005; Freidson, 2001; Ibarra, 1999; Rothenberg, 2004);

and by the levels of education, experience, types of knowledge, and specialization

defining the position of the profession in a social hierarchical structure (Freidson, 2001).

Professional roles are constituted by qualities conveyed by the professionals to others, images illustrated through business acumen, business integrity, judgments, level of competency, and ability to be creative (Ibarra, 1999). Professional identity is associated with a level of competence capable of negatively and positively creating demarcating boundaries (McLaughlin, 2003).

Ibarra (1999) referred to Schein and described professional identity as a "relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role" (pp. 764-765) similar to a personal identity constellation (Hoare, 1991). This self-identifying aspect is evident as professionals who perform highly critical functions define themselves by the level of criticality of their functions (Pratt et al., 2006) compared with others. Compared with a nonprofessional, a professional internalizes his or her role and embraces it (Costello, 2005; Meyerson, 2001). In Olesen's (2001) research, the dynamic subjectivity of professionalism influenced by persons with varying experiences and memories, perceptions, and definitions of the profession is referred to as "autonomous expression" (p. 293). The profession is personally remembered and constructed through the persons' memories and images of their experiences. Pratt et al. (2006) sought to build theory around the belief that professional identities are constructed by the professionals. Also, the entry of women into some nontraditional professions has changed the complexion of the professions with more traditionally feminine features (i.e., more nurturing, caring, and relationship-consciousness) (Ore, 2006; Rothenberg, 2004).

There are many professions with perceived boundaried identities and protected complexions. For example, Olesen (2001) interviewed a group of engineers who believed

their professional identity was distinguished and well established. Some engineers felt their current job was not the "traditional" engineering of technical troubleshooting and technology development. Some engineers exchanged technical roles for interactions with others and more creativity (Olesen, 2001). Over the course of time, the engineering identity, at least in the eyes of some engineering professionals, had changed (Olesen, 2001), and some changes were attributed to persons (Costello, 2005; Meyerson, 2001; Ibarra, 1999) or collectives, for instance women, entering the engineering field (Rothenberg, 2004). Changes emerge through innovation and diversity or differences that are leveraged in the profession or organization distinguishing them from similar or dissimilar professional identities. Pratt et al. (2006) noted in their study of medical students and residents how the subspecialties had unique professional identities. The professionals experienced temporarily redefined identities during the internship and residency processes, creating additional distinctions within the profession. These distinctions correlate with social hierarchical subordination of some professional identities (Adams, Hean, Sturgis, & Clark, 2006).

Ibarra (1999) and Adams et al. (2006) noted that over time professional identities are shaped by feedback from persons, society, situations, experiences, the environment, and significant events, which construct new meanings (Olesen, 2001). The new meanings change socially constructed images by race, class, gender, and other forms of personal identity. These changes may align the professional group to meet the growing and changing expectations of customers, consumers, and society. But professional identities, like persons, have guarded boundaries that define and distinguish them from other entities, including other professional identities (McLaughlin, 2003). Those boundaries

and their permeability can hinge on the values, beliefs, behaviors, responsibilities, social views, cultural views, and worldviews that are embodied and salient within the profession (Costello, 2005; McLaughlin, 2003). "Professional boundaries help demarcate identity and secure status. Boundaries around qualifications, technology, space and organization maintain a sense of what makes a group a profession and secures their status against competitors" (McLaughlin, 2003, p. 264). The boundaries are also predicated on the public status that accompanies professions such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, government officials, and judges (McLaughlin, 2003; Olesen, 2001). Many professionals are distinguished by the complex situations they encounter that require ethical and risky decision-making (Costello, 2005; Freidson, 2001; McLaughlin, 2003; Olesen, 2001; Pratt et al., 2006). Internal professional status distinctions (McLaughlin, 2003) are based on "cognitive" and "rational" functional boundaries between semiprofessionals (such as nurses) and other professionals (such as doctors) (Freidson, 2001; McLaughlin, 2003). There is "the categorization of different kinds of activity and response as personal and emotional, or professional and rational" (McLaughlin, 2003, p. 266).

Similar boundaries, rules, and distinctions exist in legal, academic, financial, government, architectural, engineering, scientific, and journalistic professions. There are explicit and implicit boundaries around skills, requirements, and professional identities in education, where tenure and research segregate academicians (McLaughlin, 2003). Some professions have a "complex interpretative repertoire" (McLaughlin, 2003, p. 267) as they overtly or covertly include specific values, genders, races, classes, and intersections of personal identities that define the identities. These exclusive and marginal boundaries

may be sexism (Goldberger, Tarule, Clinchy, & Belenky, 1996), racism, classism, or other forms of discrimination (Ibarra, 1999; Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993; Rothenberg, 2004). Women are often labeled too emotional and not rational enough to perform professional roles that require cognitive functioning (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Costello, 2005; McLaughlin, 2003). It is not unusual for Hispanics and African Americans to be perceived as ignorant and lazy (Etter-Lewis, 1993) and lower-classed persons to be perceived as not self-reliant (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Comas-Diaz & Greene, 1994; Collins, 2000a,b; hooks, 1984). Some groups are disqualified perceivably on multiple accounts based on race and gender (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Comas-Diaz & Green, 1994; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Collins, 2000a,b; Hurtado, 1996).

The challenge in the professions is to maintain a level of commitment to a quality of service and also to achieve a balance by determining where to delineate the personal and professional identity boundaries (Costello, 2005; Ibarra, 1999; McLaughlin, 2003). The image, integrity, and reputation of some professions are not negotiable. The question arises about what constitutes professional rule-breaking. Many professionals, regardless of personal traits, must be reflexive and confident and must articulate their ability to "make sense of risk" (McLaughlin, 2003, p. 267). Still, specific professions have been distinguished by the boundaries that delineate them and alienate some specific personal and social identity types (McLaughlin, 2003). The reputation of the profession and the organization hinges on its members simultaneously maintaining their own personal boundaries in addition to those created by their cultural groups while successfully integrating personal and professional identities.

Professional Identity Integration

Given the unique nature of personal and professional identities, it makes sense to explore multiple literatures illustrating processes, choices, strategies, behaviors, and relationships that can constitute professional identity integration. In the process, strategic choice probability is indicated depending on individual and social group identity values and other characteristics, implying there is no one prescribed method for professional identity integration.

Ibarra described identity integration as "under-explained" (1999, p. 765). McBroom simply described the process as a matter of "choice" (1992). Infinite personal and social group identity complexities, as well as different professions, industries, environments, and times, complicate the choices (Costello, 2004). There are numerous bodies of literature suggesting elements that define professional and work identity integrations. Table 2-2 typifies some key literature in three integration frameworks; identity adaptation (Hood & Koberg, 1994), professional identity transition (Ibarra, 2005a) and integrated/harmonized identity (Sacharin, Lee & Gonzalez, 2009).

Identity integration, in the context of this study, is the process of forming a professional identity from personal attributes of the individual and the perceived image of the profession (Roberts, 2005) in the context of a governing structure, e.g., an organization. This is a hybrid framework of the concepts and attributes identified in Table 2-2. The identity integration processes support personal choices and autonomy to determine to what degree to temper (Meyerson, 2001) or refine the personal identities, manage visibilities (Roberts, Roberts, O'Neill & Blake-Beard, 2008) and choose how to manage stereotypical perceptions while protecting individual authenticity and integrity

Table 2-2
Matrix of Identity Integration Theories

Concept	Attributes	Consequences / Implications
1. Identity Assimilation & Acculturation - Hood & Koberg, 1994;Gordon, 1964; Teske & Nelson, 1974		
- Acculturation – Individual or Group in non-dominant role changes cultural patterns and behavior to the dominant cultural patterns and behavior - Assimilation – Dominant group fully accepts the non-dominant into clubs groups, institution, organization (Hurh,1980)	Conventionalism – Assimilation without Acculturation	Accepted in the group and successful performing role. Company acceptance may signal future change in org.; heterogeneous org.; fosters conflict, diversity, innovation & creativity; capitalize on diverse talent
	Synthesizing – High Acculturation and Assimilation	Maximizes Homogeneity but minimizes useful functional conflict and may make change less acceptable
	Separatism – Neither Acculturation or Assimilation	Likely to be dissatisfied with organization / profession. Exits to start own business or find another job; Org. where individuals/groups do not accept or perceive others as equals; Subordination may cause detrimental effects on individuals and may cost organization great talent.
	Integration – Acculturation without Assimilation	Copy male patterns; more easily accomplish goals; less day to day stress; may be diversified but may cost organization talent
2. Professional Identity Transition - Ibarra, 2005 a, 2005b		
Process of questioning & eventually disengaging from an identity that is central to a person's sense of self, while at the same time exploring potential substitutes. Central identity such as work identity is characterized by a greater degree of intensity; degree of effort expended in role and self integration	Altering possible Identities: Acting, interacting & making sense	Try on Multiple Identities and achieve a "fit"
	Between & Betwixt: Liminal Period - Rites of Passage: separation, transition and incorporation; Identity Play – Challenge, Restructure & Experiment; Provisional Selves	Supports closure process
	Enacting a Turning Point – Crafting a Transition Narrative	Professional Transition Narrative
3. Identities in Harmony - Sacharin, Lee & Gonzalez, 2009		
- Individual difference in the degree to which two (or more) social identities are perceived as compatible or in opposition to each other. Identity Integration moderates how individuals with two (or more) cultural identities shift between their identities in response to cues in the social environment.	Multiple strong, salient identities	Possible Value Clashes
	High Integration - switch to identity frame indicated by environment cues	High – less problematic to identify strongly with multiple identities; assimilation
	Low Integration - activate identity inconsistent with the demands of the external environment	Low – more "caught in between" feeling between identities – more compartmentalization; Dis-identification – with one or multiple identities.
	Cue triggered - Cognitive Frame Switching	Assimilation – High Integrators

(Roberts; Roberts, 2005; Roberts, Cha, Hewlin & Settles, 2009). "In the classical professionalization, the individual subjectivity is more or less entirely integrated into a Professional Identity" (Olesen, 2001, p. 290). Not all situations are "classical," but choices depend on personal identity awareness, professional and organizational boundaries, and the consequence of identity integration on persons, groups, organizations, and professions (Holvino, 2001, 2006). Professional identity integration can be achieved at different stages triggered by different change and cultural pattern cues from the profession or organization (Sacharin, Lee & Gonzales, 2009). The types of adaptation described by Hood & Koberg (1994) also highlight very key consequences of assimilation and acculturation that suggest innovation and diversity may be limited or increased depending on the level of adaptation. So, an intersection of qualities across the frameworks will be instrumental in this study of identity and the value of authentic differences and nuanced perspectives. Another key professional identity integration concept is the role of the organization, the dominating group in the effective assimilation process. This role recognition demonstrates splitting integration accountability between the person and the profession or organization (Hood & Koberg, 1994).

During professional identity integration (sometimes described as professionalization), persons are most effective when they master the body of knowledge and internalize the professional identities (Costello, 2004, 2005). When persons are successfully socialized into the profession, they embody its behaviors, underlying values, and beliefs (Schein, 1992). Over time, they can progressively contribute more of their subjective, diverse sides that distinguish them from others in their professional groups (Adams et al., 2006). If they are not able to project salient, consistent and trans-

situational identities in their profession, the integration process may result in tension-filled feelings and reactions.

Suppression of personal identities may lead to unhealthy, nondistinct, and stagnant organizations unable to manage and leverage diverse populations of people (Costello, 2005; Holvino, 2006; Hurtado, 1999; Meyerson, 2001). It may also result in personal identity crisis-laden professionals unable to exhibit their abilities and unable to become agents for social change realized in the process (Costello, 2005). Personal and organizational effectiveness may be limited by overt and covert discrimination, depression, schizophrenia, discontent, lack of fulfillment, and other identity quandaries (Costello, 2005; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Comas-Diaz & Greene, 1994; Collins, 2000a; hooks, 1981; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Meyerson, 2001; St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). Identity integration choices are critical for framing opportunities (Fulbright, 1989; Meyerson, 2001) before and during professional employment, increasing the likelihood of personal identity congruency and cohesive personal, group, and organizational effectiveness (Costello, 2004, 2005; Holvino, 2008; Ibarra, 1999; Meyerson, 2001; Parker & ogilvie, 2003; Roberts, 2005). Behaviors, processes, and relationships are a broad scope of elements that can contribute to professional identity integration.

Professional Identity Integration Behaviors

Behavior choices are largely based on personal identity, the targeted professional identity, the associated organization, and the context of the situation (Fulbright, 1989; Holvino, 2006; Hurtado, 1999; Meyerson, 2001). The choices require levels of personal-awareness, 'other' awareness, and situational awareness (Meyerson, 2001; Snyder, 1974) for purposeful and effective integration. Meyerson asserted, "When people act in ways

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that outwardly express a valued part of their selves, they make that part of their selves 'real'" (Meyerson, 2001, p. 14). Unless people understand intersectional dynamics of personal identity, they will be unable to explain their personal identity they are incorporating (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Holvino, 2006; Kim, 2001; Landry, 2007). The persons have intersecting motivations, salient identities, beliefs, values, history, and worldviews (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Holvino, 2006; Kim, 2001; Landry, 2007; Meyerson, 2001). They also have personal assumptions, prejudices, biases, and perceptions that inform the personal identities (Rothenberg, 2004). The latter characteristics inform and impair decisions to adapt, to conform, to adjust, or to resist temptations to integrate personal and professional identities (Meyerson, 2001). Equally important, if individuals are not aware of others' perceptions and expected image, the process of professional identity integration may be even more daunting and may fail (Roberts, 2005).

Other Integration Behaviors

Effective identity integration is the ability to adapt, resolve conflicts, and weigh alternatives (Ibarra, 1999), to preserve strong, important personal values and embrace professional identities (Kegan, 1982; Meyerson, 2001). Adaptive behaviors affect "self-preservation and self-transformation" (Kegan, 1982, p. 45), enabling persons and organizations to make both assimilating and protecting decisions in the context of the present (Chang, 2004; Kegan, 1982; Mead, 1934; Palombo, 1999). Adaptation is not "the sense of 'coping' or 'adjusting to things as they are,' but organizing the relationship of the self to the environment" (Kegan, 1982, p. 113), which helps persons adjust their own norms to include the group's norms if they choose in the integration process.

Persons respond to the pressure by trying to fit into professional molds while they also feel the tension to resist because of cultural ties (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Collins, 2000a; Ibarra, 1999; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Rothenberg, 2004). They use conforming behaviors that are more "structure-determined" (Capra, 1996, p. 220) based on their feelings of pressure to conform to dominant norms, intersectional positions, laws, and rules (Parsons, 1937). Pressure to conform is also based on the pressure to internalize cultural values, norms, beliefs, and meanings that are integral to the group (Burke, 2004; Hitlin, 2003; Ibarra, 2005a) in specific situations or contexts (Chang, 2004). As a result of a study, Meyerson (2003) suggested that there are several levels of conforming behaviors: full conformance (selling out), partial conformance (negotiation), and nonconformance (denouncing professional values and beliefs, turning one's back on the professional opportunity and staying true to self). Persons may opt to fight a bigger cultural war in the integration process instead of conforming to conflicting cultural values (Meyerson, 2001). The normal reaction is resistance to change in routines and habits (Costello, 2005). Erikson (1997) noted that these deeper routine identities are surrounded by protective barriers for "territorial defensiveness" (Hoare, 2002, p. 53), which may negatively impact the person's decision to integrate identities. This may also lead to adopting facades, temporary "emotional displays . . . behaviors, gestures and verbal statements" that "signal acceptance of organizational values" (Hewlin, 2003, p. 635).

Ibarra noted that interactive processes "shape outcomes such as the speed of adaptation, psychological discomfort incurred, and the balance of influence between self and role demands that characterizes the negotiated solution" (1999, p. 787). The strength

of different identity factors is negotiated (Meyerson, 2001) and requires various levels of

agency. Emirbayer and Mische defined human agency as

> the temporally constructed engagement by actors in different structural
> environments—the temporal-relational contexts of action—which, through the
> interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms
> those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing
> historical situations. (1998, p. 970)

Personal identity qualities are effective in human agency. Self-efficacy

(Meyerson, 2001), self-determination (Costello, 2005), and self-confidence (Meyerson,

2001) enable and empower agents to make a difference. Change agents also position

themselves to effectively implement and reorganize social structures (Chang, 2004)

through large implementations or incremental small wins (Meyerson, 2001). Agency

constitutes realizing alternatives, weighing and balancing them, employing the

alternatives, and taking responsibility for the consequences to the person and others

(Chang, 2004; Costello, 2005; Cote & Levine, 2002; Ibarra, 1999, 2005b; Mead, 1934;

Meyerson, 2001; Rothenberg, 2004). Human agency increases alternatives and decreases

pressure to conform immediately in favor of transitioning and increasing opportunities to

overcome "structural obstacles" (Cote & Levine, 2002, p. 219).

Formal transitioning can be employed in the identity integration process (Ibarra,

1999) by testing, experimenting, and trying on the new professional identities (Emirbayer

& Mische, 1998) prior to full commitment (Ibarra, 2005a). Formal transition processes

facilitate internalizing and enacting the professional role before formally adopting it

(Ibarra, 2005a) as well as making conscious, informed decisions and trying adjustments

in the integration process (Ibarra, 1999, 2005b). Individuals test saliency of "preferences,

talents and values" (Schein, 1978, as cited in Ibarra, 1999, p. 765) to make personal sense

of the decision (Weick, 1979) through a period of "selecting and discarding possible selves" (Ibarra, 2005b, p. 32). The transition also supports a closure process for old behaviors (Ibarra, 2005a) to "stimulate unlearning which is a precursor to change" (Piderit, 2000, p. 790). Piderit (2000) also supported a formal transition period, noting that "moving too quickly toward congruent positive attitudes toward a proposed change might cut off the discussion and improvisation that may be necessary for revising the initial change proposal in an adaptive manner" (p. 790). Piderit (2000) argued that professional resocialization requires stopping, participating in a formal transition process, getting/giving feedback, and making adjustments, and this process is preferred over the self-monitoring processes employing self-awareness.

Self-Monitoring Behaviors

Snyder (1974) and Gangestad and Snyder (1986) defined self-monitoring as a high-low dyad driven by the personal identity, personal meanings, and the situation, while Chang (2004) described it in terms of "censoring." High self-monitors are cognizant of the professional behavior through environmental cues, and they usually submit to the interpersonal cues to make impressions of "fitting in" (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). Fitting in requires controlling personal expressions and emotions and adapting behaviors (Chang, 2004; Gangestad & Snyder, 1986; Mead, 1934; Palombo, 1999; Snyder, 1974). High self-monitors realize the value of relationships (Johnston, 2005; Mead, 1934), make allies across social identity boundaries (Rothenberg, 2004), and become agents in professional roles (Chang, 2004; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Mead, 1934). They may practice adaptive assimilating behaviors regardless of personal or emotional desires (Snyder, 1974), enabling them to strategically prepare for future career

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achievements (Meyerson, 2001). Chameleon-like skills (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003)

enable high self-monitors to fit into different environments without becoming

Machiavellian (Kilduff & Day, 1994), manipulative, or cunning (Emirbayer & Mische,

1998). High self-monitors do jeopardize losing authenticity critical to integrity and trust

images (Roberts, 2005) in professional leadership positions.

In contrast, low self-monitors' behaviors are more prone to expose their true

feelings, emotions, values, and attitudes, not suppressing or forsaking them for

professional identities (Snyder, 1987). Their emotions overpower situations and prohibit

them from adapting; instead, they question the professional identity, especially when it

violates their personal core identity (Riordan, Gross, & Maloney, 1994). Low self-

monitoring behaviors are usually driven by personal opinions and motivations

(Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Snyder, 1974) and rejection of dissonance of identities

(Costello, 2005) in an attempt to win over others to a line of thinking and beliefs.

Impression Management/Perception Management

Impression management is referred to as a behavior as well as a process. In the

context of this study, it is used in both manners. Persons consider how they are perceived

by others, what their public persona is (Riordan et al., 1994; Roberts, 2005; Snyder,

1987). These perceptions inform their motivation and their ability to adopt a total

professional persona and adapt their personal identities. "Other awareness" informs the

process of learning the targeted professional image expected to be enacted to make the

desirable impression on the professional audience (Hewlin, 2003; Roberts, 2005).

Identity integration is achieved through effective professional image construction and

impression management, processes producing a public display of professional

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knowledge, credibility, integrity, and personal authenticity (Roberts, 2005; Roberts, Cha, Hewlin & Settles, 2009). This is less likely to be effective and lasting if the images are merely outward façades (Hewlin, 2003; Roberts, 2005). Persons should also recognize self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-reliance, and resiliency retention from the process and weigh negative perceptions and impressions on other identities (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Costello, 2005; Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Meyerson, 2001; Parker & ogilvie, 2003).

Awareness of other professions and organizations, cultural tolerance, openness to change, and a practice of diversity (Roberts, 2005) provide hints of integration opportunities (Costello, 2005; Holvino, 2006; Meyerson, 2001). The racial/gender makeup might be a subtle indication of the types of developmental mentoring and sponsoring relationships available or matching required (Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995; Blake-Beard, 2003; Blake-Beard, 2001; Blake-Beard, O'Neill & McGowan; Holvino, 2006; Hurtado, 1996; Ibarra, 1995, 1999; Thomas, 1991). A strong representation of lower-level minorities might indicate many opportunities for minority professionals to mentor others. This may lead to increased leadership opportunities for minority mentors but may also indicate more responsibilities on their part. Professionals may have fewer opportunities to be mentored by someone senior if minorities are not well represented in senior positions (Holvino, 2006; Hurtado, 1996; Ibarra, 1995, 1999).

Gap analyses and assessments inform negotiations for integration (Fulbright, 1989; Meyerson, 2001), impression management, and image-building processes (Roberts, 2005). Roberts' (2005) social identity impression management model suggests two overarching behavioral options/actions: social recategorization and positive distinctiveness. Social recategorization reduces personal group membership to dissolve

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the gaps and discrepancies between the perceived and desired professional image, while positive distinctiveness suggests behaviors and actions to increase positive meanings for the group. Roberts (2005) highlighted two methods of reducing "devalued social identity group membership" (p. 695). Decategorization is demonstrated through behaviors distinguishing the person from social identities and groups, favoring personal uniqueness and difference. Categorization is avoided. Assimilation behaviors are strategies emphasizing association with positive social identity groups.

Roberts' (2005) positive distinctiveness is more directly aligned with integration, which she defined as "attempts to incorporate a given social identity into one's professional image by communicating the favorable attributes of the social identity group and challenging other stereotypes of that group" (p. 696). Roberts (2005) drew on Dovidio, Kawakami and Gaertner's (2000) work, suggesting specific usage of integration by ethnic minorities to retain their social group cultural identities while simultaneously demonstrating connectedness to the majority group through positive relationships.

These image-building and impression-management behaviors have varying positive and negative consequences. There may be damage if the information in the process is inaccurate; thus, the image and identity sought in the process would be inaccurate and untimely (Beavers, 2005; Roberts, 2005; Russell, 2001). Additionally, actions taken to disassociate the person from social groups may damage relationships, authenticity and integrity, and credibility (Roberts, 2005). Roberts (2005) also discussed the purpose of confirmation strategy, noting how it is undertaken to draw on positive "social identity" characteristics that enhance the image being portrayed. Hitlin and Piliavin (2004) noted that many core values that we espouse are perceivably tied to our

social group identities. Kouzes and Pozner (1987), in a discussion about the credibility

factor in leadership, noted, "To have integrity, the individual cannot merely be a

weathervane turning briskly with every doctrinal wind that blows. The individual must

possess key loyalties and convictions that can serve as a basis of judgment and a standard

of action" (p. 33). Making a credible and authentic impression and carrying through with

more permanent change is more authentic (Roberts, 2005) and may be dependent on

holding on to valued relationships, leveraging positive social identities, and building

valuable allied relationships (Ayvazian, 2004).

Impression management is undertaken primarily in the expectation of positive

outcomes for individuals, groups, and organizations. Persons who are successful decrease

psychological tension (Roberts, 2005) and "push and pull" (Bell, 1990) by decreasing the

differences that exist between the person and the profession to become a more cohesive

individual unit. The same impact is made in group and team settings, creating more

cohesive, productive teams (Roberts, 2005). At the organizational level, among the

benefits is the likelihood of attracting, recruiting, and retaining valuable talent, promoting

authentic diversity, and leveraging differences for more favorable stakeholder

relationships (Roberts, 2005). Finally, the proof that impression management works lies

in ongoing assessments and feedback (Morrison & Bies, 1991; Roberts, 2005). Feedback

may be obtained through subtle cues or more formally through self-assessments, gaining

positive, visible assignments and formal performance reviews and ratings (Roberts,

2005). Ayvazian (2004) suggested that allied relationships are a key source of feedback.

Relationships

Interactions and relationships determine if shared meaning is present and befitting of identity integration for acceptance, emulation, and transformation from being outsiders to being insiders (Kegan, 1982; Faules & Alexander, 1978). One of the positive consequences of effective impression management, perception management, and image building is high-quality relationships (Roberts, 2005), or what Higgins (2010) referred to as high-quality connections. Relationships in the network have different values in the identity integration and development processes (Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995; Downing, Crosby & Blake-Beard, 2005). Kahn (2001) argued that relationships should be central to professional work experiences, increasing the value of positive work relationships and their crucial factoring in making meaning in the identity integration process.

Allies. Allies are influential members of dominant parties who embrace the values, behaviors, and cause of the minority, oppressed group and forge additional relations to break down barriers of oppression (Ayvazian, 2004). Allied relationships are based on a mutual objective to make a social difference and empower the minority and to change the power structure in society (Ayvazian, 2004). Allies advocate long-term, continuous dismantling of oppression and decreasing the unearned privileges that are results of oppression (Ayvazian, 2004). Allies are partners of minorities in the fight to stop the "cycle of oppression" (Ayvazian, 2004, p. 600) through individual and collective measures.

Allies can influence change in the social communities of the minorities, social structures, social institutions, and professions by speaking up for oppressed and

marginalized persons, groups, and professions as advocates on issues of racism, sexism, classism, and sexuality (Ayvazian, 2004). Allies encourage others in the majority to emulate allied behavior by initiating additional relationships and by gaining entry for minorities into majority networks (Ayvazian, 2004). Allies are also helpful in the monitoring process, identifying cues in the environment and the culture and suggesting appropriate responses to the cues (Ayvazian, 2004). This facilitates impression management and self-monitoring (Roberts, 2005). Allies are collective agents and partners whose changes impact many groups of professionals, social structures, social institutions, and society as a whole (Cuadraz et al., 1999). Allied relationships (Ayvazian, 2004) lead to alternative mentoring, sponsoring, and network relationships, special projects, and assignment opportunities (Meyerson, 2001; Ayvazian, 2004).

Mentoring relationships. Mentoring relationships have been identified as critical and invaluable tools for personal and professional development, providing psychosocial and career advancement support (Blake-Beard, 2003; Catalyst, 1999; Meyerson, 2001; Fulbright, 1989; Kram, 1983). Mentoring has been described as a process as well as relationships between mentors, people more mature in hierarchical positions, and protégés, those in lower positions in the structure or profession (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Kram (1983) describes mentoring as two overarching functions with nine secondary functions: 1) *career functions*: sponsorship; exposure-and-visibility; coaching; protection; challenging assignments; and 2) *psychosocial functions*: role modeling; acceptance-and-confirmation; counseling and friendship. Much of the organizational behavior and mentoring literature refers to formal mentoring as mentor-protégé relationships and less frequently referring to peer and group mentoring relationships (Blake-Beard, Murrell, &

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Thomas, 2007; Ragins &Verbos, 2007). Mentoring schemas develop from past mentoring experiences, drawing upon information in those relationships to guide and influence the expected outcomes of future relationships (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Positive experiences normally lead to mentors' entering future relationships, while negative experiences "may" deter mentors and protégés from attempting future relationships (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Other mentoring relationships are linked to observations of mentoring relationships or may be based on culture norms (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). There are indications that mentoring behavior may mimic the attachment style, through cognitive maps, in the earliest form of mentoring, familial relationships (Ragins & Verbos, 2007; Bowlby, 1969), including mother-daughter. The security applied in the maternal relations may be carried forward over the years, whether it was based on positive or negative results (Bowlby, 1969).

Some studies suggest that mentor and protégé relationships of the same race and gender intersectional identities are more likely to be successful in identifying and meeting common objectives (Blake-Beard, 2003; Catalyst, 1999). Thus, more intersectional social identity congruency may lead to more success in the relationship. Rothenberg described the congruency value, noting, "It is hard for a girl to grow up and become a commercial airline pilot if it has never occurred to her that women can and do fly jet planes" (Rothenberg, 2004, p. 601). Lack of role models or mentors resembling protégés or mentees has resulted in marginalization, slowed socialization, general work mistrust, and dissatisfaction (Blake-Beard, 2005; Blake-Beard et al., 2006; Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Generally, norm congruency leads to more positive mentoring results, where the expectations and objectives are easily agreed upon and the objectives met result in mutual

satisfaction (Blake-Beard, 2005; Blake-Beard et al., 2006; Ragins & Verbos, 2007).

Career advancement for persons in nontraditional professions will likely be dependent on differing intersectional identities in the mentor-protégé relationship. The mentoring literature suggests an opportunity to identify predictors, antecedents, and informants of mentoring success, personal styles, and diversity factors contributing to mentoring success.

The previous section has offered a broad discussion about the dynamic nature, facets, and perceived correlations of personal and professional identities and their relations in the intersectionality model used to frame this dissertation. The integration of identities requires some basic universal functions: the personal identity, the target identity (in this case, the professional identity), and the process to achieve the integrated identity. The direction then turned toward professional identity integration. As has been noted in various realms, there are gaps identifying and "predicting" successful processes and behaviors, so several behaviors such as self-monitoring, impression management, adapting, and conforming were explored. The literature indicated that there are still aspects to explore, specifically informants and antecedents, impression management (Roberts, 2005), and mentoring relationships (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). The universal understanding of identity and the identity integration tools, processes, behaviors, and relationships must be adapted to make sense and meaning in unique situations and functional equations. Adaptation should include factors and patterns that inform the process, which lead to opportunities to "predict" or "explain" based on more specific and accurate information (Hood & Koberg, 1994).

To preface the empirical phase of this study, the next section provides a brief overview and history of the experiences of African American women in identity formation and professional and work integration. Some distinctions and comparisons are made but only to highlight differences. The overall purpose is to provide historical context for the empirical conversations in the concluding chapters of the dissertation.

The Lens of African American Women

The empirical conversation of this study uses the lens of African American women both individually and as a collective. African American women have been positioned as multiply oppressed in the "matrix of dominance" (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a), denoting lack of freedom of choice (Marable, 2004; McBroom, 1992) on multiple accounts, including race, class, and gender. For the purpose of this research and to use the opportunity to contribute to the diversity literature, this intersectionality study's approach is framed by the difference model as well as the dominance model (Anderson & Collins, 2007). Difference, elitism, oppression, privilege, power, equality, and inequality have affected everyone at times in their lives (Lerner, 1997). Therefore, a hybrid model is used to frame both inequities and difference.

This section focuses on the unique voices of African American women through their historical experiences, not through a comparative analysis within or between social categories. Categorization and 'socialization' of people have silenced and buried African American women in the literature (hooks, 1981). Stories derived from qualitative studies of experiences add clarity (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Landry, 2007; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) to the literature, and this will also be accomplished through this dissertation. Black feminists are criticized for their attempts to create valid theoretical frameworks

with negative stories and narratives primarily based on the oppression and struggles of African American women (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Hurtado, 1996). Some studies have described the differences between Black woman and White woman identities, which perceivably informed differences in their professional identity passages. *Our Separate Ways* (Bell & Nkomo, 2001) is a notable example of prior studies focused on identity comparisons across gender, race, and/or class intersections (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Holvino, 2006; Landry, 2007), paying less attention to historical and current context, influential and impacting factors within the intersection of race, class, and gender. Our Separate Ways (Bell & Nkomo, 2001) also highlights the disparities between Black and White women professionals widening the gap of inequity while illuminating oppressions. But there are positive stories and "good" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) to be gleaned that lead to "positive social change" (Crenshaw, 2000; Shields, 2008). Alice Walker (Phillips, 2006; Walker, 1983) crafted "womanism," distinguishing African American women not as girlish but as "womanish," with great strength and maturity. Womanism is derived from 'Black folk English,' which claims that Black women have "outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior" (Phillips, 2006, p. 19; Walker, 1983, p. xi). African American women want to know more and strive to be better than good; they are in charge, responsible, serious, and have power (Phillips, 2006; Walker, 1983). These positive descriptors of African American women paint a gestalt-like portrait of historically indigent persons who are privileged with positive qualities. The history of Black women, the womanish premise, and some current experiences from empirical studies create more accurate portraits. "History" matters (Lerner, 1997), and the common but distinct voices of perceivably multiply-oppressed African American women matter.

There is a Black "womanhood" (Landry, 2007, p. 18) that deserves to be recognized for her unique voice and her "Black feminist thought" and "Black women consciousness" (Collins, 2000a).

Experiences: Historical and Traditional

The history of African American women, personally and professionally, can be depicted by looking at six "S" words: experiences in slavery, suffering, struggle, survival, success (Bell & Nkomo, 1998; Collins, 2000a; hooks, 2001; Giddings, 1984; Hurtado, 1996, Roberts, 2000) and self-fulfillment (Fulbright, 1989). African American women as well as others have not completely understood, overcome, or forgotten the history of slavery, suffering, and struggle. During slavery, African American women were treated like their male counterparts, and they were expected to work as hard and received the same punishment as men (Hurtado, 1996). Despite the abolition of slavery and the enactment of civil rights laws decades ago, there are perceived and real residual and inherent distances between African American women and White middle-class men (Hurtado, 1996), and there are remnants of slavery through hints and cues of subordination and subservience evidenced in the construction of social structures (Ore, 2006).

Historically, education was a tool used and the toll paid by African Americans to battle racism (Hull, Bell-Scott, & Smith, 1982; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998). As African American women seek to achieve personal and professional success in traditionally White male-dominated professions and leadership roles, they use educational tools to break glass ceilings and cement walls of race, gender, and class group oppression (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Collins, 2000a,b; hooks, 2001; Hull et al., 1982; Hurtado, 1996; Ibarra,

1999; Kim, 2001; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998). Perceptions of roles as mammies, housekeepers, and slaves still dominate perceptions about their professional and work abilities (Bell & Nkomo, 1998; Collins, 2000a,b; Hull et al., 1982; Hurtado, 1996).

African American women still suffer from false perceptions, misconceptions, and prejudices from slavery. They continue to experience overt, covert, and silent suffering from perceptions of subservience to others, leading to denigration of self-esteem and self-confidence (Bell & Nkomo, 1998, 2001; Collins, 2000a; Hull et al., 1982; Hurtado, 1996). African American women still suffer as they battle transformation of these perceptions into self-perceptions, limiting confidence in their ability to make personal choices (McBroom, 1992; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998). Perceptions relegate Black women to limited traditional career choices of teaching, nursing, and social work (Bell & Nkomo, 1998; Collins, 2000a,b; hooks, 2001; Hull et al., 1982; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998). When African American women succeed beyond these limited normative perceptions, they are described as anomalies, "outsiders within" (Collins, 2000a) their own race, class, and gender intersectional groups.

Some African American women "struggle" to support themselves and their families, raise their children, and support their communities while simultaneously performing their professional roles (Bell & Nkomo, 1998, 2001; Collins, 2000a,b; Hull et al., 1982). They also struggle as professionals and single parents (Carby, 1982; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998), haunted by criticisms of their negative role in their children's failures. Some people struggle to learn their history, while many African American women struggle to overcome theirs.

Stories are told about African American women being marginalized since birth and practicing survival skills since they were 5 years old (Hurtado, 1996). They've struggled to survive the effects of preadult discrimination, poverty, marginalization, and the ancestral history they've inherited. But, theirs and their family's self-confidence, self-determination, independence, and self-reliance help them survive (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Collins, 2000a; hooks, 1981; Hurtado, 1996; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). They have also depended on education and their ability to teach professionally to sustain and support themselves and uplift others (Cannon, 1988; Hurtado, 1996; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998). African American women are still motivated to survive, though statistics still place them on low rungs in professions (Catalyst, 1999).

Success for African Americans has been measured against White male-dominant benchmarks (Comas-Diaz & Greene, 1994; Hurtado, 1996; Rothenberg, 2004; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998). Traditionally, White male-dominated–defined success has been achieved by African American women but over a much longer period of time. Some African American women have dispelled myths and defined their own identity, resisted victimization and oppression (Carby, 1982; Collins, 2000a), and negotiated their success measured by self-fulfillment (Fulbright, 1989). At all stages and ages in their lives, success has required them to be aware of self and others, make nontraditional choices, and frame opportunities (Meyerson, 2001; Fulbright, 1989) and relationships, especially family.

Traditionally, many professions and leadership positions have been considered exceptions for African American women (Etter-Lewis, 1993). In the 19th and 20th centuries, African American women earned a nominal number of bachelor's degrees and

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higher degrees (Etter-Lewis, 1993), and in the 21st century, they have made some significant strides, often being the only or first family member to attain college levels of education. Besides education, they have attained coping and survival skills and support from family and community networks that have been helpful for attaining professional leadership ranks (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Catalyst, 2004; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Hull et al., 1982; Hurtado, 1996; Parker, 2005; Richardon & Loubier, 2008; Solanke, 2009). Personal drive to achieve in spite of obstacles and aloneness in education has also helped African American women when they sought careers and professions as trailblazers or pioneers in the nontraditional fields (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Hurtado, 1996; Fulbright, 1989). Often, motivation to improve themselves and positively impact themselves, their race, their community, and their organizations have driven African American women to persevere and overcome obstacles (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Cannon, 1988; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Simms & Malveaux, 1986). African American women have been successful as leaders in the workforce, which has often been attributed to their leadership experiences in their communities (Comas-Diaz & Greene, 1994; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Goldberger et al., 1996; Fulbright, 1989; Parker, 2005; Richardson & Loubier, 2008; Solanke, 2009). They've mimicked success realized in early identity socialization experiences (Hurtado, 1996; Fulbright, 1989). African American women have been taught to 'work harder than all the rest' and be 'armed' against oppression and armed for success (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Hurtado, 1996). In many cases, these lessons have resulted in self-fulfillment for them and others.

Relationships

Minorities realize the effects of many facets of oppression that immobilize and limit the development, socialization, and professional success of individuals (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Cuadraz et al., 1999; Fulbright, 1989; Hurtado, 1996; Ibarra, 1999, 2005; Meyerson, 2001; Rothenberg, 2004; Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993). The most visible and traditional oppressions are manifested in racism, sexism, and classism in lived, shared relationships and experiences at different ages. Alliances and trusted relationships help reduce the impact of oppression (Rothenberg, 2004), but oppression is still evident in the personal and professional lives of African American women. Carby (1982) and Collins (2000) highlighted the role of family support in resisting oppression and victimization. Parents instill self-confidence that African American women can achieve whatever they set out to do as long as they make the effort.

A father's influence. The African American father-daughter relationship can be strong (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Wade-Gayles, 1997). The relationships influence the daughters' identities, and there are links between professional choices and fathers' professions (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Etter-Lewis, 1993; hooks, 2001; Wade-Gayles, 1997). Studies of women in management indicate that their fathers were probably professionals or managers (Fulbright, 1989), and studies also show that African American women's fathers steered them toward careers in education (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Hurtado, 1996; Fulbright, 1989). During the 19th and 20th centuries, fathers often had an advisory role in high school and college preparation decision-making for a specific career (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Wade-Gayles, 1997). Delores Stephens quipped that a "father's advice is like salt in your food"

(1997, p. 235). If a father lacked knowledge, he enlisted the wisdom and experience of others to impress upon his daughter the importance of wise, education-based decision-making for survival (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Hurtado, 1996; Fulbright, 1989).

      A mother's influence. African American women's identities have been shaped by their mothers and other maternal figures, "other mothers" (Collins, 2000a), occurring through shared experiences accompanied by verbal advice and storytelling (Bell & Nkomo, 1998; Etter-Lewis, 1993). In retrospect, women in nontraditional professional roles have been found to have maternal influences in nontraditional professional positions (Fulbright, 1989), demonstrating the impact of maternal lived experiences. Giddings (1984) noted, "Daughters of working mothers are more independent, more self-reliant, more aggressive, more dominant and more disobedient" (p. 353). Working mothers are instrumental in the socialization process (Parker & ogilvie, 2003); the behaviors and identities demonstrated by the mothers may also be strong predictors of inherited daughter behaviors. Many African American women of all ages have benefited from maternal nurturing and caring leadership role models (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Giddings, 1984; Parker & ogilvie, 2003), and they also benefit from strict African American mothers (Hurtado, 1996). African American women have adopted traits from their mothers and embraced them, constructing nontraditional gender identities, as well as supportive, assertive leadership and caring and nurturing behavior (McBroom, 1992; Parker & ogilvie, 2003; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998). Mothers helped shape their daughters' femininity, ability and style of interaction, and ability to build/leverage relationships through tough and stern lessons (Hurtado, 1996). Mothers also taught them

to 'armor' themselves against the discrimination and oppression associated with their social gender, class, and race positions (Bell & Nkomo, 1998; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998) using education, self-confidence, independence, and self-reliance (Collins, 2000a,b).

African American mothers shared socialization experiences with their daughters, especially in the South, because they were motivated to improve their daughters' opportunities to achieve self-fulfillment, self-actualization, and wholeness in a world that historically oppressed them (Fulbright, 1989; Giddings, 1984; Hurtado, 1996; King, 2007; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998; Wade-Gayles, 1984). But, different socialization styles existed through exposure to different levels of oppression. This was accompanied by other contextual conditions informing the experiences, traits, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of African American women, leading to some subtle and not so subtle personal biases and prejudices (Costello, 2005; Rothenberg, 2004). Parental efforts may have socially alienated women in fear, but the traits enable African American women to be effective, independent, balanced, adaptive leaders (Holvino, 2001; Parker & ogilvie, 2003) with positive traits associated with their personal identities.

Intersectionality and Simultaneity of African American Women

Sojourner Truth proclaimed "Ain't I a woman?" (hooks, 1981, p. 160) while suspected of being a man because she spoke out assertively, which was unbecoming of women according to the standard of White women. African American feminism was originally introduced and theorized in the 1800s by Sojourner Truth, Maria Stewart, Anne Julia Cooper, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Frances Watkins Harper and Pauli Murray. In the 1900's, 20th and 21st Centuries, Frances Beale, Angela Davis, bell hooks, and Audre

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Lorde amongst others championed a more holistic awareness and view of African American feminism (King, 2007). This intersectional concept was advanced by Kimberle Crenshaw (2000), Patricia Collins (2000), and others over the past 20 years. Crenshaw (2000) coined the term *intersectionality* to highlight the gaps in feminist and civil rights, answering Truth's question, "Yes, we are" women and African Americans, too. A focus on power and political structures has demonstrated value grounded in recognizing and addressing multiple inequities, sometimes to the detriment of exploiting the positive differences with the intersection.

Traditional feminist theory has focused on the location, structure, and experience of 'bourgeois' White middle-class women, failing to encompass the differences of women of color (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Collins, 2000a; Cuadraz et al., 1999; hooks, 1981; Hurtado, 1996; Phillips, 2006). Prior categorical and collective gender studies and practical awareness failed to adequately address status and power indicators impacting women of color (Collins, 2000a; Hurtado, 1996) and 'others.' Intersectionality addresses the mutually inclusive effects of race on gender and class (Collins, 2000a; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008) while also addressing the androgynous behaviors associated with African American women (Holvino, 2001; Parker & ogilvie, 2003). Intersectionality-informed studies also address class-related identity compounding discrimination and segregation.

African American women's assertiveness and androgyny, work and poverty, single-parent and head-of-household status, and unreported crime against the women may be the consequences of their intersectional group identity association (Ore, 2006). These consequences and attributes may be informed by strong historical and storied influence, but many of the self-concepts of self-confidence, self-reliance, self-actualization, and

self-efficacy may also be consequences of being African American women or they may not. These possibilities compel research to explore the "common differences" within the African American women group (Hurtado, 1996; Landry, 2007; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008; West & Fenstemaker, 2007). Traditionally, intersectionality research has focused on positional and structural differences, changes and shifts of identities, oppression, and opportunities with the intersections between race, class, and gender (Holvino, 2001; Meyerson, 2001; Shields, 2008). Holvino realized that intersectionality research could be leveraged to identify "resistance, survival and agency not just victimization and oppression" (2001, p. 25) and simultaneously fill Crenshaw's purpose to create "positive social change" by positive identification of diversity within intersections (Crenshaw, 2000; Shields, 2008).

Giddings (1984) and others noted that African American women are characterized as self-confident, independent, autonomous, nurturing, assertive, participative, democratic direct communicators with "unshakable conviction" (Giddings, 1984, p. 349; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998). They have strong influential strategies, and they are transformational (Parker & ogilvie, 2003). Their self-confidence, self-reliance, and independence contrast with the "White women" gendered roles in perceived professional positions (Holvino, 2001; Parker & ogilvie, 2003). Bell (1990) thought the egalitarian relationship seeking may be traced back to slavery perceptions, but the behaviors may not readily be accepted in other scenarios, creating the need to be bicultural for survival.

Simultaneity in African American Women

Intersectionality is complex and historically has negative and positive connotations, positively addressing race, class, and gender inequities and consequentially

highlighting negative rifts and boundaries between oppressed and privileged. An African

American woman may simultaneously be a member of a historically positioned

oppressed group while also maintaining membership in a nontraditional elite profession.

Behavioral complexity theory (Hooijberg & Quinn, 1992) addresses the difficulty of

simultaneously managing multiple roles, skills, and goals, possibly leading to

ambivalence and tension when there are conflicting identities and values (Bell, 1990).

The difficulties are manifested in conflicting multiple goals, agendas, and identities (Bell,

1990; Holvino, 2006) that may have positive connotations of distinguishable leadership

skills (Parker & ogilvie, 2003).

Bell referred to the biculturalism phenomenon accountable for awkward

balancing of different personal and professional cultures (Bell, 1990). The intersecting

situations and identities often require African American women to be careful of the

throes of W. E. B. Dubois' 'double-consciousness' (Beale, 1969) attributed to positions

of "double-jeopardy" (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003, p. 40). Their responsibilities

include managing differences and overcoming challenges in personal and professional

identity integration and differences between personal and professional bicultural beliefs,

values, rules, and expected goals (Bell, 1990; Parker & ogilvie, 2003).

African American women's professional identity integration has been subject to

simultaneity, requiring increased levels of group and individual perception/impression

management (Roberts, 2005), the balancing of multiple agendas, and resistance to

oppression and victimization for survival, success, and self-fulfillment (Bell & Nkomo,

2001; Fulbright, 1989; Hurtado, 1996; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998). Effective professional

identity integration requires cognitive functioning to reconcile discrepancies in identities

and professional images (Roberts, 2005) for decision-making (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Kim, 2001; Meyerson, 2001; Parker & ogilvie, 2003). An ability to compartmentalize (Bell, 1990) is beneficial, but African American women's ability to span boundaries and prioritize and juggle agendas and responsibilities is also an asset in managing simultaneity.

African American women have been taught to self-actualize and "go *boldly* forth into the White World to actualize her dreams" (Bell & Nkomo, 1998, p. 289). She frames opportunities given the awareness of her position and the positions of vital others (Meyerson, 2001). For many years, race, class, and gender intersectional location has informed personal values (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004), posed professional challenges (Cross, 1991; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Etter-Lewis, 1993; hooks, 2001), and created professional barriers (Hayes & Flannery, 2002; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Collins, 2000a,b; Ibarra, 2005b). It is the ability to effect change and the ability to manage impressions and perceptions that have created more positive authentic professional images (Roberts, 2005) and increased opportunities to achieve self-defined success in the workplace.

According to Catalyst researchers, the underrepresentation of African American women in leadership positions is attributed to their negative perceptions about themselves and their opportunities (1999). Fifty-five percent of African American women believe they are recruited solely because of affirmative action/equal employment opportunity laws and not because of their personal abilities. Thirty-six percent of African American women believe they need to adjust their identity to "fit into" corporate professional cultures without an option to shape their own identities and the identities of others. This

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statistic is consistent with the beliefs of an African American woman professor quoted

earlier. Her relegation to succumbing to the "White male" way of doing things might

relieve some of the stress of impression management strategies. Fifty-six percent believe

there are negative stereotypes of African American women in their organization, and they

are more likely to accept the stereotypes and biases than believe in their ability to change

those perceptions. Studies have been consistent in noting that African American women

believe there are concrete barriers that are socially constructed and render personal

agency more difficult (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; King, 2007; Parker & ogilvie, 2003).

As African American women weigh professional choices, they consider various

values and behaviors and also consider opportunities through quotas and affirmative

action (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Comas-Diaz & Greene, 1994; Etter-Lewis, 1993). Tokens

are often labeled unqualified, shouldering a burden to consistently overachieve, but they

often become passive voices in the workplace (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Comas-Diaz &

Greene, 1994; Etter-Lewis, 1993). Affirmative action still bears negative stigmas for

African Americans (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Comas-Diaz & Greene, 1994), and tokenism

and affirmative action are still legitimate opportunities used by African American women

and others to gain entry into professions, organizations, and leadership positions.

African American women are better "positioned," qualified, and equipped than

they were 30 years ago to fill professional, organizational, and other leadership roles.

They have filled leadership roles in their families and communities for many years (Bell

& Nkomo, 2001; Fulbright, 1989), and they have learned that positioning themselves to

fill these roles is less dependent on luck, quotas, and chance. They are more dependent on

professional knowledge, skill sets, relationships, and networking opportunities (Costello,

2005; Freidson, 2001; Fulbright, 1989; Meyerson, 2001). This dependency requires strong, trusting, nurturing relationships with allies in "other" dominant professional cultures (Ayvazian, 2004).

Professional Relationships

African American women are challenged to protect themselves from degrading and dehumanizing reputations and devaluing discrimination from social interactions. Their efforts to respect all men have been evident in their personal and professional relationships, and this respect has resulted in silence in other interrelationships (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998). Unfortunately, silence can be misconstrued as ignorance and a lack of courage, but framed appropriately, it enables women to position themselves to listen and speak up when the opportunity is right (Meyerson, 2001). African American women's perceptions of themselves and situations may be their worst enemies when they believe and remember negative stories informing relationships (Roberts et al., 2005). Negative stories highlighting few choices, disempowerment, and oppression hinder opportunity seeking through healthy relationships (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Catalyst, 1999; Comas-Diaz & Greene, 1994; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Holvino, 2001; Riordan et al., 1994). It is a challenge for African American women to distinguish reality from lies and their voices from others, and it is a challenge to maintain confidence in their professional skills and abilities (Parker & ogilvie, 2003).

Historically, African American women have depended on relationships for socialization. They continue to realize the value of relationships while negotiating professional values, worldviews, beliefs, and behaviors without compromising their salient identities (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Collins, 2000a; Giddings, 1984; Jones & Shorter-

Gooden, 2003). Their ability to maintain their personal identity and to become chameleons (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003) and embrace professional identities simultaneously depends on consonant or dissonant identity differences (Costello, 2005). Traditionally, African American women experience more dissonance attributed to their historical position in social structures, their perceived lack of power, and their distance from the White-dominant male majority (Costello, 2005; Ayvazian, 2004). African American women are challenged to strategically, methodically, and sometimes slowly close the discrepancy gaps (Costello, 2005; Meyerson, 2001; Parker & ogilvie, 2003).

Catalyst (1999) and Bell and Nkomo (2002) illustrated this lack of progress in their empirical studies. Though individuals have been 'successful,' the lack of "unity as a sustaining force" (Etter-Lewis, 1993, p. 95) and other dynamics have kept African American women from realizing universal achievement. Marginalization has been blamed for the gap (Ibarra, 1999). African American women who have been 'successful' may still feel like victims of multiple oppressions and still feel relegated to the role of outsiders (Leonard, Mehra, & Katerberg, 2008). The lack of mentors (Blake-Beard, 2005; Catalyst, 1999; Meyerson, 2001) and sponsors has been blamed on a dearth in 'like' race and gender leadership role models and mentors. The literature has indicated that race can be an influencing factor on success and failure in the relationship (Blake-Beard et al., 2006). Since a perceived career value is placed on mentoring, without it an African American woman's growth and ability to break down cement walls (Bell & Nkomo, 2001) may be stunted.

Positive social change (Crenshaw, 2000; Shields, 2008) over the last 30 years might be measured by a "White man's" ruler if African American women and others

don't believe there are opportunities to strategically navigate the six S's of slavery,

suffering, struggles, survival, success, and self-fulfillment. In the historical context,

validating a need for intersectionality, African American and other women of color called

attention to the differences between themselves and the majority. The historical and

traditional bases of lives are driven by many of the perceptions, stereotypes, and biases.

Differences within these same groups may drive the future of intersectionality, realizing

as a group that there are shared experiences and histories that are further explained by

individual experiences and histories.

Conclusion

Conceptually and practically, identity integration has a multitude of challenges.

Quoting Malcolm X, "The word has no real meaning. . . . Whatever integration is

supposed to mean, can it be precisely defined?" (Edwards & Polite, 1992, p. 215). Precise

and predicted may be an ideological stretch. Integration, in itself, is devoid of meaning,

but when the individual experience is considered, the word takes on a life and a value of

its own. Edwards and Polite (1992) articulated the problem with identity and integration

being addressed through this research:

> The trouble with portraits that focus mostly on the negative is that they never give
> a complete or even accurate view. The larger view and essential truth is that
> despite America's history of slavery and its continuing malignancy of race
> discrimination, there have been blacks who overcome, who succeed. In the jungle
> of oppression, there have always been blacks who prevail, surviving as the fittest.
> They not only go against the odds to survive, but succeed against the odds to
> triumph. (p. 240)

Entering this study, it would have been easy to be guided by perceptions of

African American women suffering more oppressions than any other sociocultural group,

making it easy to focus on "negativity" and immediately limiting the audience and reach of the research with theoretical and historical rhetoric and perceptions. Contemporary researchers and writers Bell and Nkomo (1998, 2001), Etter-Lewis (1993), Collins (2000), hooks (1984), Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003), St. Jean and Feagin (1998), Slevin and Wingrove (1998), Edwards and Polite (1992), Lorde (1997), Phillips (2006), Guy-Sheftall (1995), James and Sharpley-Whiting (2000), and Anderson and Collins (2007) have shared the stories and filled the literature with the histories of slavery, the struggle, the suffering, and the success. There are many "his"tories (Carby, 1982), experiences and stories of perceived portraits, but fewer theory-contributing intersectionality transformations (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Landry, 2007). The question remains: How do African American women understand identities, experience the integration of personal and professional identities and how do they experience the simultaneity of professional and personal identities? And how can the answers contribute to positive social change?

For this reason, this literature review began on a broader note of identity and a universal conceptual view of intersectionality, professional identity, and identity integration strategies. There are no prescriptions for life and integration that would "fit" everyone. The ability to integrate is a matter of 'choice' that spans individuals, groups, situations, and time (McBroom, 1986). Integration depends on each person's awareness of his or her intersectional identities and the ability to make meaning of the emergent differences in intersectionality (Collins, 2007; King, 2007; West & Fenstermaker, 2007).

Cuadraz et al. (1999) summed up the direction of this research, which is addressed in the integration of personal identity and professional identity. "Many women

of color and some white scholars advanced a theoretical position calling for research that addresses simultaneity of oppressions and interlocking systems of oppression, taking into account various positions and illustrate the Intersectionality and multiplicity of women's location" (p. 156). The literature is saturated with examples of negative experiences within a limited scope of intersectionality and the double "negativity" associated with Black women in "comparison" to others. This limited and negative lens of intersectionality promotes the concept that all Black women or all people in any group are alike and their outcomes in life can be predicted based on informants and antecedents, race, class, and gender intersections.

While people may have similar life outcomes or may occupy the same professional space, there are different processes, factors, concessions, resistances, and small wins that could have influenced that outcome (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Meyerson, 2001). In spite of our commonalities, a traditionally generalized process will not capture the true distinguished authentic portrait of everyone's experiences. It's these "good" experiences and the themes and patterns that might link them that can transform the stories into theory. Studying these experiences requires a methodology that will "capture the richness and complexity of their lives in social and cultural context" (Hill, 2005, p. 96). This must be a "method of qualitative research that blurs the boundaries of aesthetics, human experience and empiricism to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. xv). The research methodology used to paint these accurate portraits is discussed in chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This exploratory study was conducted to understand how individuals experience personal identities and how they experience professional identity integration. Theoretically and methodically, intersectionality informed the explorations of multiple dimensions of factors that constitute the experiences (Landry, 2007; Shields, 2008). The complexity of understanding what informs identities and decisions based on those factors required the ability to collect and analyze interrelated and compound data based on the belief in the simultaneous interplay of multiple factors. This approach contrasts with assumptions that some factors such as race don't matter or that all people occupying a position of the same gender, race, and class are the same based on discrete factors or groups. A phenomenological approach was used to form knowledge from experiences. More specifically, portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) captured the compound versus discrete nature of identities in intersectionality. These explorations produced "the private, intimate storytelling" and "the public discourse" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 15) for a broad audience.

In this study of three African American women who are managing directors in Wall Street banking, "the significance of individual uniqueness, personal expressiveness, and empathy in African American communities thus resembles the importance that some feminist analyses place on women's 'inner voice'" (Collins, 2000a, p. 264). The purpose of this study was to explore that unique individuality and the influence of patterned common and unique factors on identity integration. The intragroup distinctions are often overlooked, but their recognition facilitates distinguishing perception from reality.

The research was guided by three research questions noted first in chapter 1:

1. How do African American women understand their intersectional identities?

2. How do African American women experience professional identity integration?

3. How do African American women experience simultaneity of intersectional identities?

In this chapter I discuss the research design, participant selection and recruitment, data collection and analysis, the process of ensuring trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

Background: Research Requirements

Personal experiences do not begin in their current perceived intersectional positions (Shields, 2008). It has been noted that African American women have had early experiences interacting with society, creating "public identity" and using "political skills" as early as age 5 (Hurtado, 1996, p. 20). Though consciousness, standpoints, and personal values do not form until later developmental stages, the experiences and processes of identity formation and information begin early in life, requiring a methodological framework that explores life history. Historically, studying life history experiences has been accomplished methodologically through forms of qualitative, phenomenological, longitudinal, and case history studies using "interpretive, critical and feminist approaches" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 317). It was this life experience understanding that I sought to explore in this process, not a snapshot of the person in the current state. Intersectionality (McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008), impression management (Roberts, 2005), value (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004), and leadership (Richardson & Loubier,

2008) researchers and theorists have identified understanding identity and decision informants, antecedents, and other underlying factors as future research implications in their areas. This information is available through knowledge gained through understanding experiences.

Personal responses to situations are informed by their identities as well as by family, community, institutions, and the context of situations (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Personal understanding, knowing, and consciousness are informed by contextual, cultural, race, gender, and other factors (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Experiences rather than cognitive reasoning have often informed learning, knowing, and the understanding and integration of identities (Goldberger, et al. 1996). Goldberger, et al. (1996) quoted one of her study participants, a tenured African American woman professor:

> Black people have a different way of relating to the world, even intellectually active black people. And that way is more experientially related than cognitive-related. . . . We think less about something but react more. I link being able to go from experience, rather than having to think about it. As a black person, I don't have to hold it in. I can express it. . . . But if you want to be successful in this country, the United States of America, you have to be able to function in a white world. . . . You do it "their way" . . . which is not a bad way, it's just a different way.

Living in different and changing situations complicates how to respond and what experience to draw upon. Another Goldberger, et al. (1996) study participant, a Chinese American business woman, indicated, "I was emotionally exhausted from the conflicting worlds. . . . It was different realities that I operated in at different times and with different people. It was a different way of knowing. I am always thinking of different sides" (Goldberger, et al. 1996, p. 336). Merriam and Caffarella (1999) noted that people from different cultural backgrounds have different experiences impacting identities and informing how knowledge is developed. Holvino (2001) stressed the value in learning the

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differences and similarities within the race, class, and gender intersections, as they explain what distinguishes "who we are" and how "who we are" relates to our decisions.

African American women as well as others view reality and form knowledge from multiple sources, through different pathways, with alternate methods and everyday experiences (Belenky et al., 1986). Some researchers have suggested that 'people of color' voices have traditionally been silenced in phenomenological research, while people of color struggle to assimilate and shift into White-dominant environments (Holvino, 2003; Hurtado, 1996; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The research framework thus needed to support dialogue generation, tapping into the reservoirs of knowledge rarely tapped into in the course of a normal workday (Belenky et al., 1986; Collins, 1998, 2000, 2009).

Goldberger quoted a woman of color: "In the Caucasian world, everything is systematic, everything is categorized . . . where in my world, everything is interrelated" (1996, p. 337). Goldberger (1996), Merriam and Caffarella (1999), Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997), Featherstone (1989), and Collins (2000) have contended that identity, knowledge, culture, personal experience perspectives, and contextual influence provide more clarity and accuracy through experiential research. The traditional similarities and differences that are accentuated in comparative studies are secondary to the "good" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) and "positive social change" (Crenshaw, 2000; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008) that were sought during this study.

Choice of Methods

With these realities and complexities in mind, a methodology was needed that would (1) identify the outspoken voices and the silenced voices contributing to the story

of the experiences (which may be voices of others influencing the process); (2) recognize the influence of the contextual backdrop of the experiences that contribute to defining and describing the experience; (3) understand the value of relationships as they contribute to identities and understand the value of relationships facilitating sensitive dialogue in the research process; (4) realize the patterns and trends within and between persons that explain the saliency and changes of identities across situations and (life) time as well as identify commonalities and differences between persons and the contributing factors; and (5) holistically tie together the findings to inform theoretical contributions, practical usage, and future implications.

Since the research requirements matched with the intricate description of portraiture, this phenomenological method fit the purpose of this study. This study "provides a portrait of the experience of people who make up contemporary organizations, each of whom, in many contexts, must struggle to bring his or her whole 'self' to work" (Meyerson, 2001, p. xix). The selves are the personal identities, a conglomerate of many factors such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, values, and habits in the context of geographical location, time, and situations, among many other factors. These aspects are further clarified by observing and understanding their impact through experiences and relationships. Over time and situations, patterns and trends emerge, providing more explicit definitions. Within all of these dynamics, many differences and commonalities emerge and distinguish what's viewed on the surface, the image, by what informs or possibly anchors it underneath.

Portraiture and Its Tenets

Portraiture, the chosen methodology, has been described by its ability to "capture essence":

> The spirit, tempo, and movement of the young . . . the history and family of the grown . . . tell you about the parts of yourself about which you are unaware, or to which you haven't attended . . . reflect a compelling paradox, of a moment in time and of timelessness. . . . Creating a portrait is the process of human interaction. Artists must not view the subject as object, but as a person of myriad dimensions. (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, pp. 5-6)

Portraiture pushed beyond the boundaries of the frames of phenomenological research while using similar data collection methods and rigorous analysis producing valid and credible reports, which "combine empirical and aesthetic description" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 13) from life experiences. Phenomenology (Seidman, 1998) and portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) foster, promote, and produce connections with varied audiences, increasing opportunities to collectively seek social good. These are contributions that are not usually realized in the tradition of most feminist intersectionality studies, which have largely appealed to women of color who connect with the suffering from multiple oppressions. While not decategorizing (Roberts, 2005) intersectional social groups that began this journey, "modern day" intersectionality pushed beyond the boundaries and realized the depth and breadth of the intersectionality framework potential.

Portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) "blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism. . . . Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying, documenting their visions—their authority, knowledge and wisdom . . . in a social and cultural context" (p. xv). Lawrence-

Lightfoot's (1983 & 1994) intersectionality-informed studies have crossed social and structural boundaries. She has done this by first recognizing her own portrait features, illustrating "women who have had a profound influence" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983, p. 4) on her life. Additionally, Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) and others (Hill, 2003; Dixson, 2005; Stewart, 2001) have used portraiture to study the experiences of people of color among students, high school administrators, and entities in higher education, demonstrating the value of this method in various social settings and across professional structures. Study participant bases have ranged from two to tens of people and case studies in schools and organizations.

Portraiture has five primary tenets: context, voice, relationship, emergent themes, and the aesthetic whole (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Context took on the same meaning it does in phenomenological studies reporting experiences. Context is used to "place people and action in time and space and as a resource for understanding what they say and do" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 41). Context frames the portrait, creates the settings, and provides clarity, giving the picture more meaning. In some studies, the picture of oppression has been the overarching frame for African American women, often shown in the context of slavery, suffering, and struggles; another African American woman frame is discrimination and victimization. The context of time, locations, and situations dictated the style of the frame, making it unique.

Another tenet, *voice*, was central to the dialogue for sharing of knowledge, understanding, and experiences common in African American feminism (Collins, 2000a). Voice can be referred to as "an epistemological stance about the source of knowledge and

understanding, . . . sociopolitical stance about who is doing the speaking and for what purposes, . . . methodological stance towards what lies in the data to be heard, recognized through analysis and advanced through the research process" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). During the interview process as during the shadowing, I used the "voices" to understand the participants' perspectives and were documented using my witness and interpreter voices. I observed their childhoods, their college life, their relationships, and their prior experiences by witnessing their voice, and the research interpretations were based on "our" voices from the dialogues shared. As the portraitist, I struggled with the voice of preoccupation with current related events, historical national elections, and global financial crises but practiced restraint from allowing any other conversation and preoccupation to overshadow the purpose of the research. As I used my voice to coauthor the portraits, I was aided by the voices of my committee to refrain from over reporting with an autobiographical voice.

The *relationship* tenet is integral to the portrait creation. The relationship with the participant is the pipeline through which the information flows and the data are collected about the most intimate details of the participants' lives. Trust and empathy were expected by the participant and the portraitist. I expected to be able to trust the integrity of the information shared to co-create a credible portraits closely resembling the actual experiences, while the participants trusted this information would be anonymous. The relationships were also built on acceptance of each other—both our "good" and our "imperfections" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983)—and mutual respect to sustain the relationship throughout the study and beyond. I was a Wall Street banker, a Vice President in operations, when I conducted this research. The professional levels of our

Wall Street banking careers were different, but there was reciprocal respect for each other. There was mutual admiration, mutual respect for each other's time, and respect for each other's character strength. There were "I-thou relationships of attention, empathy, trust, and intimacy" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 135).

The *emergent theme* tenet was realized through an "iterative and generative" process of creating themes, patterns, and refrains and giving the data shape and form (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The portraits were created from the information that was gathered, organized, and scrutinized, with a search for convergent ties, unique metaphors, and overarching themes from the experiences (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). "This is a disciplined, empirical process of description, interpretation, analysis and synthesis—and an aesthetic process of narrative development" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 185).

Finally, the last tenet, the aesthetic whole, culminates the portraiture process. The product (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983) is "not discrete added elements" (p. 23) but the combination of the parts, the tenets that produce the whole. Intersectionality is the intersection of mutually inclusive parts of the person (s) which includes the relationships, the contexts, the voices, the values, beliefs, time and behavioral patterns. As Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) notes, the aesthetic whole is the portrait that illuminates less tangible, invisible elements and qualities that are recognized after deep and rigorous analysis. The aesthetic whole frames and highlights the "subtle nuances" in storied "narratives that reveal the sustaining values" (p. 23) of the research participants. The framed portrait provides a 'good' accurate view of the participants and the intersectionality phenomenon

that is embedded in the day to day, year to year narrow blurred view of the evolution of personal identities.

Participant Selection

The selection process for this study was based on the underpinnings of intersectionality theory, the purpose of this research, and the research questions. Researchers and theorists have compelling arguments why intersectionality studies are not legitimate unless there are comparisons between intersectional groups (Cuadraz et al., 1999; Landry, 2007; Shields, 2008). That would imply the need to have participants from cross intersectional groups (e.g., Black and White or rich and working class or male and female participants). These types of comparative studies don't fully define the scope of intersectionality, and this is demonstrated in the call for more hybrid, complex intracategorical intersectionality studies recognizing the race, class, and gender categories but also pursuing research looking for differences within perceivably homogenous category groups (McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008).

In an effort to create boundaries that foster more emergent information from within a given group, a perceivably homogenous participant base was sought and selected. Taking the primary focus away from the intercategorical analysis and comparisons facilitated emergence of deeper meanings and understandings within the group. Participant race and gender (African American women) were purposefully (Seidman, 1998) selected. Class (socio-economic position associated with a managing director profession) was not a purposefully selected criterion because perceivably, the current class was similar for these three African American women in Wall Street professional positions. The participants' early familial economic class emerged during

the study as the participants shared their experiences and their interpretations of class position. Originally, I considered using a cross-section of participants from different professions but decided in favor of choosing a perceivably homogenous intersectional race, class, gender and professional group of African American women managing directors in an industry familiar to me, Wall Street banking. I asked specific questions prior to the interviews to confirm or deny the selection assumptions other than class. As documented in chapters 4 and 5, a heterogeneous group of participants emerged from the research with distinct personal identities.

Though the study could be performed with any number of participants, a one-participant identity study might give the impression of psychoanalysis instead of empiricism. Additionally, a study with too few participants wouldn't provide an adequate source (Polkinghorne, 1989) for comparisons within an intersectional group. Three to five participants were considered to be optimal in the context of the purpose and scope of the dissertation, and this participant base range would provide rich descriptive data for the intersectionality study. Using Seidman's (1998) criteria and considering the need to produce enough data and experiences to facilitate connections to a broader audience, three participants were chosen. This number aligns with the number of participants in other portraiture dissertation studies (Chapman, 2005; Hill, 2003; Dixson, 2005).

Participant Recruitment

The pool of possible research participants based on the selection criteria was sparse because the number of African American women managing directors in Wall Street banking is few. A pool of 10 possible candidates was created from Internet

searches, personal knowledge, conference event speaker lists and biographies, networking, and "snowballing" (Seidman, 1998) approaches.

I added one additional criterion to distinguish the candidates by selecting participants whom I heard speak in industry or diversity venues. The speaking engagements provided additional data before, during, and after the interviews and also provided opportunities to "connect" with the participants in another venue and to attempt to gauge the levels of consistency of the information each participant shared. Another criterion limited the candidates to those located in the New York/New Jersey area to reduce travel time and costs. This criterion also accommodated unforeseen schedule changes, which were natural given the professional roles involved.

The list was reduced to three women from different banks. The pool member names and biographies available on the Internet were presented to the dissertation committee. One connection was made through a dissertation committee member. The other two connections were made through Working Mother Media (sponsors of the conference venues where the candidates were identified), and the Working Mother Media president served as another entry point to all three candidates.

The first communications were sent via email (see Appendix C). Two candidates responded personally and agreed to a scheduled telephone conversation to discuss the study purpose and scope and the roles of the participants and the researcher. The calls lasted approximately 15 minutes. Those two candidates acknowledged their understanding of the study and agreed to participate. Follow-up email and phone calls were made to the third candidate, who initially requested a week to provide an answer. In

the interim, I had a chance encounter with her, during which I introduced myself. The candidate responded the following week and agreed to participate in the study.

The three-person participant base was representative of African American women managing directors (or comparable senior vice presidents) in Wall Street banking. Briefly, all participants were in their mid to late 40s. The first participant, who was married and had two teenaged children, worked in a global diversity unit in New York City. She had a Caribbean heritage and was raised in the Northeast United States in a self-described "poor" family. The second participant was married with two teenaged children; she was a private wealth management senior vice president in New Jersey. She had a multiracial biological background, was reared in the Northeast United States, and described herself as "privileged." The third participant, who was married and had no children, was an investment management managing director in New York City. She was reared in the segregated southeastern United States and as a teen defined race as just "Black and White."

The participants were elite according to Hesse-Biber and Leavy's (2006) definition of "people who occupy, by heritage, merit or circumstances, a key place in power networks both online and offline" (p. 14). I acknowledged and respected the status of the participants during the data collection process while still recognizing they were like me, African American women with similar Wall Street professional identities.

Data Collection

The primary form of data collection was three one-on-one interviews with each participant for a total of nine interviews. A focus group with the three participants was originally agreed upon by the participants, but scheduling challenges and the staggered

completion of the interviews rendered the focus groups unfeasible, but not to the detriment of the purpose of the study. Following the interviews, the interview transcripts were given a cursory review by the dissertation chairperson to gauge the volume and type of data being collected. The dissertation chairperson agreed, eliminating the focus group would not dilute or harm the research process. Additionally, the committee was notified that a focus group would not be attempted.

In addition to the interviews, pre- and post-interview observations I conducted shadowing at conferences, providing some opportunities to triangulate and validate data for additional consistency across situations and venues. Pre-interview shadowing notes were compared with interview data to a small degree, and no discrepancies were identified. These methods are consistent with portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) and other qualitative, phenomenological approaches (Creswell, 1998).

Interview Method and Process

"By requesting data on dimensions of 'her' personal life," I "invoked lived experience as a criterion of meaning" (Collins, 2000a, p. 265). I used the interviews to learn the participants' understanding of their intersectional identities, including influences and nuances, and to understand their professional identity integration through experiences (Seidman, 1998).

The purpose of the interviews was defined to increase the understanding/meaning of the experiences that informed the answers to the research questions. Overarching expectations were to search for the good experiences and expect the "imperfect" to emerge during the process (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The interviews were a

sufficient means of inquiry and obtained what Schutz coined "subjective understanding" (Seidman, 1998, p. 5) of the participants' perception of experiences. Subjective race, class, gender, and other intersectional identity informants and definitions were witnessed through unique experiences and voices (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

I created an interview protocol consisting of purposeful, inductive, in-depth open-ended questions (Creswell, 1998; Cuadraz et al., 1999; Denzin, 1992) to observe/witness the participants' life experiences (see Appendix B). Seidman's (1998) three-interview series was used, and questions were mapped to answer the study research questions. The first interview was mapped primarily to the first research question, a life history focused on the participant's identity formation process and how she made meaning of her identities. Race, class, and gender identity categories were the initial focus areas, in addition to other emergent informants such as religion, values, family, school, organization participation, regional rearing, history, environment, and time contexts. The second interview focused on information mapped to the second and third research questions, gaining details about the participant's professional identity integration experiences and learning how the understanding of personal identities informed professional identity integration experiences. The third interview reflected how the participant made meaning of and understood her life experiences, including her professional integration experiences. Questions were asked about how the participant defined success and reflected on the lessons learned from her experiences; these discussions contributed to learning about the salient values and behaviors that were core to each participant's identity.

I piloted the interview protocol in an un-formalized self-portrait, self-reflective process prior to the participant interviews. The pilot process evoked my levels of personal empathy toward the interviewees and connectivity to the interviewees which were useful as I conducted the participant interviews, data collection and analysis process. Additionally, the self-portrait process increased my own self-awareness of my personal identity, my personal consciousness, and my personal standpoint (Collins, 2000a; hooks, 1984). My self-portrait interview was completed in two sessions; it was recorded and reviewed, but no information from the piloted self-portrait process was included in the research findings and conclusions to ensure the integrity of the voices in the findings and to avoid infiltration of autobiographical voices (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) in the process. The self portrait process did contribute to the identification of my pre-research bias (Polkinghorne, 1989) and it supplemented my epoche (Moustakas, 1994) summarized in this dissertation prologue and epilogue. The participant interviews were scheduled through their administrative assistants, with one appointment at a time and only one interview per week across the participant base. While Seidman (1998) recommended spacing the interviews close enough together to maintain continuity but far enough apart to ensure time for reflection, no absolute or specific rule of thumb has been given, and work schedules dictated availability since the interviews were scheduled during the regular work day. The nine interviews (three 1-hour interviews each for three participants) occurred over an approximately 10-month time span in 2007 and 2008. Each individual's interviews were separated by approximately 1 month. Only two interviews were rescheduled. The interview series concluded at different times for the three participants due to schedule challenges. All interviews were performed in person in the

participant's office, free from distraction and extraneous noise, with the exception of an infrequent ringing phone. The participants refrained from using phones and Blackberries during the interview.

The data were captured in individual digital recording folders for each interview; I also kept a brief, informal set of notes from all interviews. The digital recordings and transcripts were safely stored and kept confidential using reliable, locked, and password-protected computer resources on password-protected systems/storage. I listened to the recordings first by connecting the recorder to the computer via USB and then transferred/stored recordings immediately to the protected personal computer, backup computer, and separate drive devices to mitigate loss of the data. Files were labeled with numbers rather than names, and only I knew which number was associated with each participant.

The recordings were transcribed by a nonpartisan transcription vendor who had signed a nondisclosure/confidentiality waiver (see Appendix D). The transcribed interviews were generally received within 48 hours via vendor-provided password-protected electronic folders. I saved the transcribed Microsoft Word document files in the same confidential, anonymous manner as the original digital files with folder names using the same pseudonyms used in dissertation chapters 4 and 5. I printed the transcripts and reviewed them for proper names and personal identifiers that weren't "blacked out" by the transcriber and I made corrections (black-outs) on the electronic transcripts without distorting any data. When there were questions or discrepancies, I compared the documents to the digital recordings for a second level of validation and minor corrections.

The participant-researcher relationships developed during the interviewing process through dialogue, which was largely dominated, in a productive way, by the participants responding uninhibitedly to interview questions. I observed and learned their voices (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Occasionally, informal mentoring occurred, both peer to peer and mentor to protégé, with the participant being the mentor. At the end of the first interviews, I presented participants with a unique leather bound journal for any notes or thoughts, purely for their own usage. The journals were well received. During the final interviews, I gave each participant a small personal token gift reminiscent of her personal identity, and the gifts were very warmly received. These gestures helped sustain the relationships beyond the interviewing process. The participants reciprocated in multiple ways, such as by giving an autographed book, participating in a mentoring luncheon I sponsored, sending warm wishes via emails and calls, engaging in follow-up informal meetings and offering warm greetings at events following the interviews.

Relationship building was not recommended and, in contrast, deterred by many research methodologies for fear it might deteriorate the data collection, analysis, and reporting processes (Seidman, 1998). Relationships are critical in the portraiture process, as they evoke trust and respect in sensitive interview and research processes (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Additionally, in-depth interviews are shunned in the qualitative interview process. Cuadraz et al. (1999) noted that some theorists and researchers believe "in depth interviewing has impeded the theoretical analysis" (p. 157). This study's interviewing and analysis processes complemented each other. The rich data collected produced more accurate portraits, findings, and research conclusions.

I used the brief interview field notes to capture some contextual data about the participants' offices, the décor, the participants' cues and expressions, and responses and reactions that added minor details to the portraits. The portraiture method leveraged the semi-structured, interactive, dialogic, conversational style of data collection to capture the participants' experiences through their "voices" needed to co-create the portraits (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Dialogue is an element of Black feminist thought epistemology (Collins, 2000a) that contributed to the intersectionality approach and framework, demonstrating the validity of the knowledge transferred.

Other Data Collection Sources

Data collection also included shadowing—observing participants speaking at industry and diversity-related multicultural events (women's multicultural conferences, financial industry women's conference), race, gender, and workplace panel discussions, and other Wall Street and financial services town hall panel discussions. Limited field notes were taken basically confirming and disconfirming information (the former was typical of the shadowing experience). Additionally, minimal additional data were collected from Internet and journal articles written by and about the participants and from participant biographies obtained from conference programs. I referenced some of the information during the interviews to build connections and to corroborate the data.

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Data Analysis

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I began the data analysis during the interview process in 2007 and continued through the completion of the written dissertation. The analysis consisted of an iterative process: manually poring over the transcripts; privately listening to transcript recordings;

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using Microsoft Word "Find" tool to locate instances of terms, phrases and quotes for codes and categories; reviewing, coding, and analyzing the data; comparing data within each participant's interviews; comparing data between the participants; coding and categorizing data; identifying patterns and themes; using the results to create the portraits including the first person stories, poems, stanzas, titles and subtitles; conducting *member checks* by having the participants review their individual portrait sketches for accuracy; and then I conceptualized the findings, creating an "aesthetic whole" (the fifth portraiture tenet) (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Constant Comparative Approach for Analysis of Interview Data

I used a modified constant comparative method (Boeije, 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, & Coleman, 2000) in the data analysis process, which was also guided by the research questions. The approach facilitated the flexibility to analyze various data text forms through a systematic, structured process identifying intersecting identity-informed codes, findings, and interdependent relationships between the identity informants (categories and codes). Rather than using Atlas.ti software, I completed the coding, categorization, analysis, and presentation by using a manual, labor-intensive process, which produced the rich information that is critical in phenomenological studies (Polkinghorne, 1989). Using Atlas ti or other software may have saved some manual labor required to identify codes and categories. But, the complexity of portraiture and intersectionality warranted a manual process to capture the essence of the data, words, phrases, codes in context and to avoid reductionism of the experiences. Culling and forming the codes from the text, creating categories and comparing data was an iterative and interactive process performed during and after the data collection process. The

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complex information gleaned from the interactive manual process would have required

arduous software training with a lot of manual intervention and still would not have been

as thorough. The process I used is common in portraiture studies and used to capture

factors and specifics by reading, re-reading, writing, sorting, resorting and facilitating the

narrative construction (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The information was

collected by listening to the interview recordings, rereading and analyzing interview

transcripts, and manually coding interview sections, paragraphs, phrases, and words to

interpret antecedents, informants, similarities, and distinctions and create codes and

categories.

The three-step constant comparative approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Glaser &

Strauss, 1967; Boeije, 2002; Hewitt-Taylor, 2001) consisted of (1) comparisons of data

within each participant's individual interview; (2) comparisons of data between the three

interviews for each participant; (3) comparison of data between the three participants.

For individual interviews, I manually coded paper transcript sections to identify

high-level themes to be used to create code inventories. I used color-coded Post-it tabs to

identify different codes (e.g., pink tabs to denote sections for gender, green for class,

yellow for race). I compared codes within the interview for consistency and salience and

reexamined the interview transcripts and applied more descriptive codes where there may

have been discrepancies within interview transcripts (e.g. race described as Black in one

section but described as colored in another interview section). This process helped

identify intersecting context that defined the differences, and the process was used to

identify similarities as well. I identified codes where race description in the South

contrasted with race description in college in the North. This process began after the

individual participant interviews were completed and the recordings were transcribed, checked, printed, and (re)read. The process was repeated for each individual interview for each participant. Additionally, a categorized code inventory was transferred to a Microsoft Word document, and handwritten updates were completed on the documents.

The same comparison process was used to compare the codes from one interview transcript to the codes in the other two interviews for the same participant. I used the created codes and categories as a basis, identified the high-level synergies, and, when there were discrepancies, searched for answers to the discrepancies in the context of the coded area. I highlighted that description by underlining the descriptive information and writing some clarifying information as a code in the margins, so as to identify differences for additional definition or qualification and possible intersecting data (e.g., one participant used the word *dependent* [in the context of her mother as a teen and young adult] and *independent* [breadwinner as an experienced professional]). The codes were one or multiple words or a phrase. Following this second level of coding and comparisons, I updated the inventory with the qualifiers and additional codes (descriptions); this process was done on the Microsoft Word documents. After this step, portrait creation commenced, as discussed later in the chapter.

After all of the participant interviews were complete, I compared data across participants. In this process, I identified the high-level synergies and discrepancies, combined the inventory lists, compared codes on the lists and re-compared some codes on the hard-copy transcripts, and identified and corrected any discrepancies. In the case of discrepancies, I searched for answers in the context of the coded area, again underlining descriptive information and writing the clarifying information as a code in

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the margins on the transcripts and inventory lists. (For example, there were different contexts for the code *maternal influence*—one in which the mother lived the work experience and another in which the mother advised but did not work; the purpose was to identify deeper similarities and differences within the homogenous participant group.)

I integrated the lists by using previously described category names and created additional categories for any differences. The data were grouped in a manner to answer the research questions. Some codes were listed in multiple categories, and some categories answered multiple questions. For instance, the code *resourceful* was listed under "paying college tuition" and also under "learning the new position." In this case, I changed the category title to resourcefulness and included multiple codes. I identified the common threads across the participants with asterisks to create convergent patterns and themes (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997); identified semi or partially common themes with checkmarks; searched for the "root cause" for any difference between the participants and notated it on the inventory by participant symbols and specifics qualifying the differences; created the titles for the categories; followed an intersectionality theoretical model using race, class, and gender separately and then as two intersectional categories of race/gender and race/gender/class; and maintained the original participant/interview associations throughout the process for future reference in the presentation of findings and to associate with relevant qualifying references. This process was done primarily in long hand and then converted to a Microsoft Word document.

Presentation of Results

To present the results, I associated the categories of codes from the integration step with the research questions and additionally with relevant theoretical and existing empirical references. This process involved identifying direct relationships between the coded data and the research questions, the findings and the literature creating themes and identifying congruencies and differences. The themes, congruencies, and differences were examined to determine where there were additional circumstances, explanatory factors, and contextual information that made a difference. I created the individual portraits using the individual participant results from the above analysis. The portrait sketches were reviewed by the participants as "member checks" and used to co-create the unique portraits including poems in chapter 4 as detailed later in this dissertation section. Additionally, I coded the literature review sections and the dissertation introduction by the category subject areas. I matched the interview codes with the literature review codes to formulate answers to the research questions. I used thick, rich descriptions from the interview transcripts (in chapter 5) and compared the references with the research questions to conceptualize answers and conclusions (chapter 6). I created an audit trail, a table of the thick description quotes cross-referenced with the participant name and participant interview transcript page.

Findings and conclusions were intersections of individual, unique understandings based on different experiences and intersectional identities and common understandings based on patterns and trends that emerged as a group. Collective understandings at one level may be qualified by a factor or experience differentiating the understanding at another level. I referred to the coding and modified the coding throughout the analysis

process, over the course of a year and a half, to maintain consistency in individual voices in addition to common group voices. Ultimately, I produced an intersectional study of "common differences" (Joseph & Lewis, 1981) within a "heterogeneous" group of African American women managing directors in Wall Street banking indicative of individual lived experiences of the participants through these phases (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Schutz, 1967).

Preparation of Portraits

As mentioned, participants were given creative pseudonyms based on positive, unique points in their experiences. These names were used in the individual portraits (chapter 4); names were also used when presenting the findings in the thick description format to answer the research questions in chapter 5.

The unique portraits presented in chapter 4 were comprised of poems and first-person storytelling. Outlines for the poems and stories were prepared from the individual participant themes/patterns of experiences produced from the interviews and analyzed data. Some themes were repetitive in the experiences, and others identified unique experiences at different developmental stages. The outlines were used to form story chapters and poem stanzas filled in with my interpreted statements and associated participant quotes from the interview transcripts. The stories and poems contained repetitive refrains and metaphors from uniquely interpreted points made during the participant interviews. The portraits were uniquely crafted and illustrated through poetry, canvases, stanzas and storylines and epilogues that I co-created with the participants by using the participant interview data and using the participants' reviews of the portraits doubling as "member checks" to verify the interpretations. The poem and story stanzas

represented the life chapters that differed for each participant emphasizing how they lived and why their lives are not necessarily prescripted chapters. As the researcher I chose participant data, poem and story structures by anticipating the broad audience, the ability to reach and connect with the audience and by choosing data and methods that were distinctive, authentic and might make a difference. The participants checked the stories and poems for presentation goal achievement, at least from their perspective.

During the reviews (member checks), two research participants read the portraits and provided minimal revisions of a few words (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and one participant requested that the initial portrait be revised. Portrait revisions were made and resubmitted to one participant via the participant's personal email. During a brief telephone call I received from one participant, she acknowledged receiving the revised portrait sketch and the participant promised to call back with any feedback. I made more than three email requests for feedback, but no additional feedback was received from the participant. The revised portrait highlighted more "good" in the experiences. Since this participant didn't respond to the request for additional feedback, a peer review of the participant's transcripts/data was performed by a fellow doctoral student with similar research interests to serve as a part of the review, verification and trustworthiness process. The peer review didn't produce adverse or different results. Subsequently, a few remarks made by the peer reviewer were added to the findings. The entire portrait process accomplished two goals: uncovering "authentic experiences of the actors while at the same time co-creating a coherent category system" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 190).

Efforts to Ensure the Trustworthiness of the Study

Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that the trustworthiness of a study is exhibited through four criteria: credibility for internal validity, transferability for external validity, dependability for reliability, and confirmability for objectivity.

Credibility was achieved through multiple in-depth interviews, rigorously poring over the data, and creating and verifying the sketch and analytical processes (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Lincoln and Guba (1985), Cuadraz et al. (1999), and Landry (2007) agreed that intersectional studies require in-depth interviews to maintain the trustworthiness of individuals' experiential data. I performed member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) with the participants using their individual portraits and a peer review of interview transcripts for accuracy, authenticity, and confirmation of thoughtful, thorough data collection, analysis and presentation processes; these processes uncovered no significant discrepancies. Revisions were made as noted earlier in this chapter.

Triangulation was conducted to ensure the accuracy of the findings and trustworthiness of the study through repeated comparisons of data from the interviews and data from shadowing and observations of participant conference speeches, panel discussions, and articles. This process provided greater assurance of relevant research producing usable, credible, viable, scientific, and artistic results (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The triangulation effort was done "to capture and report multiple perspectives rather than seek a singular truth" (Patton, 2002, p. 546). I was vigilant about the distinction of my voice so it did not overshadow, distort, or replace the participants' voices (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

As this research was legitimized, the data were confirmed through preservation of the findings without researcher bias overshadowing the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I reviewed the data to ensure that the differences and commonalities were understood and reported. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) used the metaphors of "click of recognition" and "yes, of course" (p. 247) to describe how the audience responds when the findings make sense to them. This review process demonstrated the viability and value of the study which is illustrated in the potential benefits, connections, recognition and confirmations across broad audiences. My dissertation committee members were active participants in the process and provided critical feedback that was applied appropriately.

Ethical Considerations

This research study adhered to the requirements of The George Washington University Institutional Review Board (IRB). I successfully completed the required IRB coursework and examinations, as did the principal investigator. The IRB also required committee members to hold earned doctorates and requested their curriculum vitae, which were submitted. Once the IRB approved the research, the interview process began. Additional annual IRB refresher courses and examinations were completed by the principal investigator and the researcher until successful dissertation defense.

The participants were fully informed of the purpose of the research. They were informed about the methods of data collection, including the review of articles, biographies, and autobiographies, as well as the in-depth interview process and the portraits. The participants acknowledged their participation through signing an informed consent form (Appendix A).

It was important to address the level of confidentiality possible with a small population pool from which the participants were drawn. The participants agreed the study results would remain anonymous (even to committee members and the transcriber).I used pseudonyms in place of the participant names throughout the written dissertation. Otherwise, company names, school names and other proper nouns directly associated with the participants were replaced by pronouns or categorized, e.g. Ivy League schools versus actual school names. The participants read and provided corrections to the individual portrait drafts (sketches). The drafts included direct quotes, some quotes regularly made by some participants in public venues. The participants had the opportunity to request quote and other data removal from the portraits during their reviews. The confidentiality of participants was not guaranteed but steps were taken, as noted here in this chapter and in the informed consent process (form in appendix a), to assure due diligence to protect the participants.

Conclusion

In this study, I used systematic qualitative data collection processes: in-depth participant interviews, observations, shadowing, and additional article research to capture the experiences of the research participants (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). I understood the experiences more intimately through interactions and relationships and in the context of the situations (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) and the moments in time. The participants experienced their intersectional personal and professional identities simultaneously.

I used an analytical framework to create nuanced, individual interpreted portraits and a framework that was driven by the corroborating literature, research questions, and,

most importantly, participants' experiences. The portraiture process was used to synthesize the data, knowledge, and themes across the data (Moustakas, 1994) and emergent patterns (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). I performed repetitive reviews and comparisons of the findings and identified consequential themes and patterns between the three participants (Symington, 2004) used to inform the individual research portraits (chapter 4), the richly described research findings (chapter 5), and the research conclusions (chapter 6).

CHAPTER 4:

PORTRAITS

African American women are often compartmentalized into one voice, one experience, one type of oppression, one privilege (or no privileges) in one intersection of race, class, and gender (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a; Holvino, 2006; Landry, 2007). Black (used interchangeably with African American throughout this study) women identify and connect with other Black women for whose rights Sojourner Truth pleaded against racism, sexism, and classism, "Ain't I a woman?" (Davis, 1983, p. 63). According to literature and history, Black women share similar discriminations, heritages, values, beliefs, and standpoints (Carby, 1992; Collins, 2000a; Holvino, 2000). It is presumed that since Black women share intersectional racial, sexual, and class social identities, they must share the same beliefs, values, and standpoints. Sharing the same sociocultural intersection has also posited Black women as a marginalized group (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a; Shields, 2008). Within this group, though, there are individual women, whose individual experiences and portraits with nuances and features make them "outsiders within" (Collins, 2000a) their own culture. These unique

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features along with common Black women features and other features as well, those of mothers, grandmothers, and their experiences, tell their stories.

The purpose of this chapter was twofold: to learn how three African American women experienced their intersectional identities and to understand how these identities and other existential and essential factors influenced their professional identity integration processes. These existential and essential factors further complicate intersections of privilege and oppression historically associated with Black women (Holvino, 2000) but more clearly explain the differences and similarities within the intersection. This study filled gaps in the literature related to the little-studied intracategorical complexity of intersectionality, a hybrid of the traditional political and structural power intersectional studies and differences beyond the group identity comparisons (McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). The nuances and the intersecting factors making up the individual are "her" stories (Carby, 1982) of these three participants.

The portraits in this chapter are illustrated through "first-person" stories demonstrating interactions and interfaces informing the participants' identities (Hayes & Flannery, 2002). Experiences shaped identities and the individual, personal portraits that may resemble multiple identities simultaneously (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Hitlin, 2003; Rothenberg, 2004)—identities of the individuals, their mothers, their significant others, and their experiential journeys (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). They are the "essence . . . that is captured when qualities of character and history [are included,] some of which I was unaware of, some of which I resisted mightily, some of which are felt deeply familiar" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p.4). They represent the self-definition, socialization, culturalization, and adaptation processes in the women's lives (Cote &

Levine, 2002; Ibarra, 2005a; Parker & ogilvie, 2003). They are also portraits showing historical hints of slaves, mammies, prostitutes, and big-butt women (Carby, 1982; Collins, 2000a) in addition to "Black women consciousness" (Collins, 2000a) and resistance to oppression and victimization (Carby, 1982; Parker & ogilvie, 2003).

The portraiture methodology was used to collect the life story data to form the portraits, through multiple voices, that of the participant and that of myself as a witness and interpreter and coauthor (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The research methodology was explained in detail in chapter 3. The study participants may all "convey the authority, wisdom, and perspectives" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 4). But, along the journey there are other connections through age, race, gender, profession, values, beliefs, habits, and experiences distinguishing women who look alike on paper. When the women "interface with the world" (Hayes & Flannery, 2002, p. 56) and tell their story, their authenticity traces back to childhood experiences, and this is evident in the portraits. The women are "in between" (Holvino, 2000, p. 9) and "belonging and not belonging" (Holvino, 2000, p. 9), experiencing unique "successful marginality" (Holvino, 2000, p. 9; Hayes & Flannery, 2002; Hurtado, 1996). These women have professional agendas and identities in 'nontraditional' roles historically uncommon among the oppression-laden stigmatized group of Black women (Carby, 1982; Collins, 2009; Davis, 1983; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

Framing the Portraits

The portraits are framed with personal and general historical, contextual, and situational data forming "moments in time" (Collins, 2000a) of the experiences of the participants. As a portraitist I witnessed the stories during the interviews; as an interpreter

during the data analysis, I used my voice and my relationship with the participants to cocreate the portraits and frame them (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). My personal reflections after reading transcripts and having conversations with the participants contributed to the "aesthetic whole" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) of each of the women and produced study findings and conclusions presented in chapters 5 and 6. The interpretations as a witness, the qualitative portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) methodology, and the Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000a) epistemology contributed to the co-creation of the portraits of the women. Participant interview quotes are interwoven into the portraits, adding richness to the moments, and paraphrases of interview quotes tell the stories formed over moments in time (Collins, 2000a).

The portraits' chapters, titles, and repetitive refrains reflect unique participant moments, events, and experiences as they were witnessed by the portraitist (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The poem titles and openings are reflections of individual stances interpreted during the study. For example, during the last interview, Bolsa mentioned that she wears a button that simply states, "*I have attitude*" to describe a positive self-confidence she exudes. Penny acknowledged she will always be in debt to someone, something her mother wouldn't let her forget. But Penny took pride in the hard work she performed to be successful, highlighting that it took *blood, sweat, and tears*. Atta didn't like drama and had to be the manager of her agenda. These were no surprises in the interviews, so Atta concurred there were no *"No aha's."*

The stories of Bolsa, Atta, and Penny are better told in their voices, conveying their knowledge, their understanding, and their experiences. '*History*' is not repeated; instead, '*her stories*' (Carby, 1982, p. 214), framed by context and history (Lawrence-

Lightfoot & Davis, 1997), are told. Atta, Bolsa, and Penny are the names of the

participants for the purpose of their portraits and for the findings in chapter 5: *Bolsa*,

because she told her "Bolsa story" (The participant referred to her life story from

immigration to United States, from living in poverty, to her life today as a "Bolsa Story",

akin to "rags to riches") of her family's immigration to the United States; *Penny*, because

her mother called Penny's father her "bad penny" and Penny worked so hard to "measure

up" and be the "good penny"; *Atta*, for the "atta girl" she would pass on to those who

were blazing the trail with her and after her.

Historical Context

In the 1960s and 1970s, the civil rights and feminist movements arguably changed

demographic history forever. At this time, *intersectionality* was coined. The time period

of 2007 through 2009 might be remembered for the greatest financial crisis since the

Great Depression of the 1920s through 1940s. Additionally, in November 2008, Barack

Obama became the nation's first African American president; at the time of the

interviews, he was running against a woman in the Democratic primary—a national first

on both counts. Considering the significance and timing of these events, it is relevant to

mention the "moments in history" before sharing the portraits.

These historical events intersected with Penny, Bolsa, and Atta as professionals

and as individuals. Bolsa, speaking at a financial industry event in October 2008,

suggested that those same sociocultural forces impacted her identity, causing her to take

steps to learn new "buzz words" and a new management mission. She was now using

those buzz words and the new knowledge in everything she presented in her organization.

During one interview, Atta also indicated that we should be more keenly aware of

changes in organizations and how those changes impact individuals and performance. As

we painted these portraits together, we created not only pictures of today, but pictures of

past experiences in the contexts of history and her-story (Carby, 1982).

Bolsa's Story

The Canvas

The executive office overlooking the Hudson River is picturesque, a serene view

that may have shaped Bolsa's temperament but pale in the face of her story. Even as she

speaks, the world shakes. This diminutive woman, in stilettos, is as neatly dressed as her

office is neatly outfitted. A woman of excellence with humble roots, high-achieving

diversity accolades, and family pictures are noticeably absent but were not missing in the

dialogue we shared. Bolsa didn't think these symbols, e.g. pictures and ornaments,

defined her life and values. She didn't hesitate sharing about the family she loved. Her

resounding voice described her. I thought I had predefined her success or "goodness"

(Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983), but I didn't know her journey to managing director. By the

time the interviews concluded, I knew a large part though not all of "her story":

A poor immigrant girl
An African American woman
A mother, a wife, a daughter, and two dogs
then . . .
A managing director, an extra fifty grand . . .
A means to an end, her daughter would have two prom dresses.
She couldn't leave that at the table.
Choices? Decisions? Based on what?
Getting out of that poor, Black box?
Yeah, Black!
She said, Sorry ma, I cursed.
Ma thought being Black was a curse.

Coming to America: 'A Better Life'

A typical story: We came to America for 'a better life'—yeah, that's what my mother and father sought, a better life for them, for us, and for our families. My cousins were my only friends. It was a better life for them, too. Maybe Ma and Dad couldn't articulate it, but they told me the story and I lived that story with their choices. I was only a victim of their choices, not a victim of my race, gender, and not a victim of being poor. I am no one else's victim.

I didn't choose that picture, that hair. I looked like Buckwheat in that picture. I cried. Couldn't my sister have had bigger feet? Oh, those were my shoes. Look at my face in that picture. I'm telling you, I was already saying, just like Mother said: My daughter will have a better life, no secondhand anything, and I will perm her hair.

Daddy met us at the boat when we arrived here in the U.S. He led the way for me, 'lil ole me,' to have a better life. As an immigrant girl, I came here in a breadbasket.

This is Home?

A Jewish tenement in the South Bronx was our first home. Go figure. You think that's odd? I shoveled coal to warm these people and myself. I shared my bed with my cousins so they could also have this better life. I didn't mind, but . . . ? I was a baby raising my baby sister. Friends, who are they? Everybody's my parent, my brother, my sister, and my cousins. Seems like all the folks on that boat were family. There must be more to this life than this thing called home. Ma made ends meet with no money and made me feel loved and warm. Dad, he wasn't father of the year. And that one day, I will never forget when he hit my mama. Ma and I drew closer after that day. All of this family—mom, dad, aunts, uncles, and all those cousins—they were all I had and all I

needed. Yeah, that was home. We moved, got a real house. But a 'house is not a home.' Family, sticking together, sharing shoes, shirts, beds—that's home. Home sweet home!

Not Disney, But . . .

We had vacations. I wore my Sunday best. I wish my sister had better taste. If I had to wear her clothes, I needed to shop for her. She made it in the military; she and my brother, they were doing their own thing in the military. But, she had no taste and I wasn't following them into the service. That wasn't me. Instead, I lived for vacation. Ma and Pop did the best they could. Disney World? Me? Right! Radio City is more like it. You know, the holiday shows? Botanical Gardens, now that was a treat. I put on my Sunday best. I didn't care who wore it last. I was wearing it now. Wow, we're going out. 'Lil ole me,' the little things excited me.

Who Am I?

Ma ain't Black because Blacks are poor, they are thieves, they are druggies, prostitutes, pimps. Walking to school, I detoured around Blacks. They littered the streets; the pimps, the poor, the thieves, the prostitutes slept and dealt on the streets of the South Bronx. Ma warned me about them and told me I wasn't one of them. I would not be 'herded' into society's place for Blacks, not jail and not the streets. Not Black men, not Black women, not Black, period; I wasn't Black. Ma would be mad. Even today, if she knew, she'd be mad that I am Black. But, they, Blacks, need me.

Wasn't I like them? I was poor. I was buying food and everything else with food stamps. How embarrassing! What must they think of me? I know they saw me. But, Ma still said I wasn't Black. Then, what was I? I was my culture, my Caribbean culture. I

was from the Islands and proud. But we came to the States for a 'better life.' And like it or not, we became Black, one of 'those people,' that class, depending on a White man's money to eat cheese.

But Ma wouldn't have any of this. Ma always said, "Be independent. Don't rely on them. Don't depend on anyone, especially not a man." To this day, I don't depend on anyone. Maybe that's why I am the breadwinner. My family depends on me. I like it that way. Everything I do is for someone else, even for my husband. He's happy walking his dogs, shuttling the kids. It was my choice, our choice. No foreign nanny for my kids. My husband would stay home and I would work. I am the breadwinner: "from a breadbasket to the breadwinner." I don't depend on anyone.

But, I've got reminders. That picture—I wasn't pretty. Not in that picture, you know that Buckwheat picture. You tell me Ma couldn't afford a little pomade? God, that picture! It haunts me. That's not who I am. That was a moment, one haunting moment. And I looked like I was in pain. I was. My feet were killing me. Those shoes were tight. Well, there were other pictures. I was a high school twirler. You couldn't miss me, the only one, the different one, short, 'less endowed,' the non-White one. Shhhh! I was the Black one. Yeah, I am Black now and I was Black then. I'm just different.

I'm not like them, not like those Blacks. Not in the box with those Blacks—not the men, the women, the prostitutes or the pimps. I am me. I'm not typical and far from where society wants me to be. Maybe it's because of Ma; maybe she was prejudiced, maybe not, maybe ashamed, maybe not, maybe just confident that she didn't have to be like anyone else. She was herself. She was her culture and she was proud. She wanted me

to be proud, too. So, today, with a choice, I am me and proud of it. The roots of my hair may give it away—you know, my race. But I am me, 5'1", size 9 shoes and all.

Ma Said and She Kept Saying . . .

Ma just kept saying, "Don't depend on anybody for anything, especially not a man." She kept saying it. You can be a doctor, a lawyer, a bank teller. Couldn't she think of anything else I could be? I had no role models. Those siblings, they just gave me clothes, shoes, and said be satisfied. They enlisted in the service. Not me! So, I turned to my Catholic high school, you know. I had to get prepared to be something, someone, just not dependent on anyone. But there must be other options besides a bank teller. But did I have a choice? There was just one college, no other choices; it was right there staring me in the face, every day. It called my name and I answered. I didn't know there was anything else, anywhere else. Now, that's a real short list. Well, at least I was prepared. We couldn't afford cheese, but we could afford to prepare me. All because Ma said . . .

I couldn't depend on Ma for money. She didn't have an education and not much work experience to talk about. But, she spurred me on; she told me I could do anything and be anything. Dad said I could be a lawyer. But that was it, only moral support and that's all it took. No role model, no mentor, no money, just Ma. She was and she is my hero. This poor woman, she couldn't drive to my school to meet my teachers; she had no car and couldn't drive. She warned me, from experience, "Don't depend on anyone, especially not a man." Alright, Ma, I got it! But Burger King, my man!! Ma didn't mind. Burger King was my ticket. No school loans, just Burger King. I wonder if that works today. He got me through college in that pair of jeans and a sweatshirt.

I knew when I grew up it would be different. It would be a 'better life' for me and mine, that's what I knew. I already knew I would have a 'better life.' My daughter would never wear hand-me-downs, or shoes that were too tight, or Buckwheat braids. She would have friends, real friends, sleepovers. She would love family, but she would have more. She'd have a long list and then a short list of college choices. But, if she walked by Princeton and it called her name, she could answer—but answer quickly, please. Make up your mind!

When I grew up, I knew that was my goal. And, I am still not there, so that is my goal. Might retire when I'm 50, but now, in this crisis, probably not. But, I will make it happen. That's my dream. I've lived their, my family's dreams for 20-some odd years. Now this is my dream, because Ma said so. Me, in a box, with everybody else, the Blacks, the Whites, hell no! Ma said I had my own story, my own goals. I would not be 'herded.' I wouldn't let them make my decisions, not on their terms, not their definitions, not their time, not their picture of a Black girl with Buckwheat hair, a Black woman who was a poor girl. Did I mention I was poor? Ma didn't say it because there were no excuses. Ma said I could be anything in life.

Life Begins . . .

Dad thought I'd be a good lawyer. You know, confident with a knack for talking—that's me, even as a child. Ma said maybe a bank teller. Okay, there were a few other choices. But me, what did I want? What did I want? Money! A job offer—money! Twelve thousand dollars! That was the first offer. Ma said, "Take it. What decision-making, what choices? Are you crazy, child?" She said, "Take it"! I tell my daughter about college choices today—just choose, take it! You don't have to sell your soul; take

it. I learned. Don't sell your soul. When life ends, my tombstone will say, "I didn't sell my soul." So, life didn't just begin here. And it didn't end here.

I knew life didn't just start, and I knew who I was didn't end. I was an Island woman, true to my culture, true to my family, but not Black. Don't make me say it, just let me say 'Other.' I was offended when they tried to paint me Black. I just wanted to be Other. That's who I was then, just Other. Today, thanks in part to me, we have other boxes. I guess there is a box for me, that poor immigrant girl, looking like I was mad at the world with that deep voice—yes, that was me. It bugged me. They wanted to put me in that box, that 'Black box' on that job application. Not me! But, in their world . . .

Welcome to the real world. This was the real life. Society puts you where they want you to be. But, I am still me. I am who they want me to be if I depend on others for my success, my confidence. But Ma told me, "Don't depend on anyone." I didn't, not really. But, I did start a new life. My 'techie' life began. I didn't know it then, but my road to managing director began, and I was embarking on a new life. I knew I was Black and Black women needed my help; they needed my 'deep' voice at the table and in the room for them. Life began and that link to my "Verizon" network was formed. I was a voice for someone else besides myself and besides my mother. Yes, Ma said, "Don't depend on anyone." I had to be myself, have my own identity, and depend on myself to decide who I was and who I wanted to be. I was out there on my own. So, my network grew. I still had family, aunts, uncles, cousins, Mama, Dad, brother and sisters. Now, I had my husband, my daughter, my son, some fish, and a few dogs, and I had people, watching me, imitating me. I was out there, with more life.

My family was my blood; they still are. But there's more now. Not everyone had my ma, your ma, that role model of confidence, of strength—not the most educated, yes poor, but life began with my ma. Their ma's may have warned them about the world and told them to put the 'armor' on but didn't tell them when to take it off. Their ma's didn't say "you can" only "no, you can't." They made them think there were no opportunities, only discrimination, only Black people who are criminals. Mama used to say, "You can be anything . . . just don't depend on anyone, especially not a man." Over and over, she said it. "I got it, Ma, I got it." But, I thought there was something she didn't know. There were people, White people, Black people, different people and other people who would be my lifeline. They'd choose me, not their White buddies. I wasn't Ivy League. It wasn't affirmative action. Didn't matter, life began, another better life for 'lil ole me.'

Lil Ole Me?

I had confidence. But still, I didn't think it could happen to me. I could be anything? That still resonates. But still, 'lil ole me'? Yes, I had a Jewish mentor—and not from my Bronx tenement but at the table, in the executive suite, in the boardroom! Speaking up for me? Who would have thunk? I beat out his golf cronies and I beat the odds. Never in a million years. "Go ask her, yeah, the short Black woman." That's what he said. He had that much confidence in me. More than he had in the others, the Whites, the Blacks, the men, the 'pedigree,' the Ivy League. I had the power, me, the Black achiever? Yes, Black! That tag stuck. 'Lil ole me,' literally, short, diminutive, size 8 power suit, size 9 'Zappo' heels, with confidence.

I'm a short, African American woman with skills, technical skills, and experience. I'm only a victim of my parents, their choices, nobody else's. I learned to do the dance,

and I could dance with the stars, the Wall Street stars. I knew the politics, the buzz at the

water cooler, and the word in the news. I used the buzz words, I spoke them, I presented

with them. I learned to tango and waltz with and against the politics. I learned from the

pros, those role models, those mentors, those people in the room and at the table speaking

up for me, expending capital on 'lil ole me.' I did the right thing. But, there were lessons,

many lessons learned. Why weren't they calling me, you know, this new regime? Yes,

right now, they were not calling me. Now, I'm a managing director. I had to raise my

hand again, higher, speaking their language and focusing on their problems. It's a crisis

out there. What got me here may not get me there. So, I had to change.

I found a way. I refused to be a victim. Not then and not today. Remember, many

obstacles, food stamps, hand-me-downs, embarrassment, pimps, prostitutes, and

society—I've had them all. But I found a way. Not a lot of choices, not a lot of bantering.

I had no wiggle room. But did it matter that I was Black? Am I Black first? Am I woman

second? Was I poor first? Was I my culture second? Am I a managing director first? I am

not confused nor did I sell out. Yes, there were problems then and there are many

problems now. Can I fix everything? Do I have to change everything about me, about the

crisis? I am still just 'lil ole me,' with a voice—my voice, not theirs. I had to make

changes, but I didn't sell my soul. If you know me, you know, I would never sell my

soul.

I Didn't Sell Out

I am who I am, 'lil ole me,' not always who they think I am. But, I don't leave me

at home. Why should I? I am Catholic. Yes, a Black Catholic, not a Black Baptist! Why

was it a surprise? Why the assumptions? Why the categories? Why the stereotypes? Why

do I have to be a Black Baptist? No, I'm Catholic, yes with ashes on Ash Wednesday, the whole 9 yards. I wondered, what was a Black person, Black woman, supposed to be? No, I don't wear dreadlocks and definitely not on the trading floor. No more Buckwheat hairdo. I've permed my roots. I know who I am, so I can tell them, those who look to me as a role model, to get rid of the dreadlocks. You are not selling out because you don't wear dreadlocks and a dashiki to work—maybe when you get to the executive suite, but these days, maybe not.

Be loud? Be brash? Be arrogant? Be silent? Bear the burden? What burden? Be a victim? You don't have to be those things to be you. I don't have to be that way to be me. When I was young, I learned who I was. I defined me, my success, my metrics and pass/fail. Others would go to the table for me. They would expend capital on me. Not necessarily because I was Black, a woman, or poor; I wasn't an Ivy League grad. I didn't sell out and become what they wanted. I didn't settle for what anybody wanted. I didn't sell my soul. I waited too long. Ma said I could be anything. I am sold. I can and I am doing anything and I haven't sold out. They may have tagged me and tried to sell me, but that's just it, they haven't sold 'me,' 'lil ole me,' all that I am, no more, no less, me. No crossword puzzle to solve, just me.

You Define My Success? No! I Do.

So, why would I let you define who I am? Why should I let you define my success? Success is not being a managing director. It's not being a Black woman in a corner office or one overlooking the Hudson. Success is not making it out of the box and leaving others behind clawing their way out with no mentor, with no role model, with no one at the table or in the room selling them and with no 'open book test.' I didn't have to

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succeed for anyone's sake, no one else's but my own, my mother's and my daughter's.

Today, my mother may not remember, but I remember, Mama, the struggles, the

dependencies, the hand-me-downs, and the encouragement that I could be anything. So, I

know what it means to be me and to succeed. It may sound simple: no secondhand

clothes for my daughter, no tight shoes on my son's big feet, no food stamps to buy

cheese, no sharing my bed except with my husband, and no worries about Ma's health,

though dementia has its grips. I don't need this job forever. I know what success means

for me, maybe not for you; this is too modest for you but not for 'lil ole me.'

I've Got Attitude?

I wear a button,
"I've got attitude."
A positive attitude.
Yeah, there was affirmative action.
But I took the action.
I benefited from being Black.
But Ma need not know that I am Black.

When I make decisions,
I, not African American women,
I make my decisions.
I've worked hard to know what to say and when to say it.
I know how to "do the dance" and now I teach it.
I dance out of the office at five.
No one else is going to feed my family,
Buy my husband a car,
Help my daughter with her makeup,
And visit colleges
Or let my son be like me.

See through me.
Not the prettiest picture.
Remember Buckwheat?
Ma, you could have done something with my hair.
Tattered sweatshirt, one pair of jeans.
Change anything, anything?
A little taller, a little more endowed.

But seriously, anything?
Not coming to America to live in the Bronx?
Not believe I could be anything
When things looked damn bleak,
Crowded bed, hand-me-downs, food stamps,
But would I change anything?
Why try? It's over. I am me and all of that stuff is who I am.

"I don't have the answers to all the freakin' questions in this world."
So, worry about being Black? Me?
That's not my problem. That's their problem.
Society and anybody who dare discriminate against me,
That's their problem.
I am not going crazy trying to be what they want me to be. No way!
Can you see through me? See the energy. Not the anger.
Hear what I am trying to say.
But, I don't need to explain myself.

God damn it!
I am who I am.
A couple of kids, a bunch of dogs, some fish.
I happen to work here and when I go home . . .
I am not this
And I'm going to be home longer than I am here.

Ma, from a "breadbasket to the breadwinner,"
I am independent.
I didn't let anyone take my soul.

The Good Penny Story

The Canvas

Prima donna? Screamer? Angry Black woman? Come on. She's come a long way. Expelled from school in the second grade just because she had a big mouth? Penny picked herself off the floor, dusted herself off after an independent battle over a *MAD* magazine and show and tell. Her independent battles with her mother could be heard down the block and around the corner. She was a happy-go-lucky kid with only a quarter in her pocket and not a care in the world. And her mother was an "amazing . . . beautiful

older woman with a big heart . . . the one who was." So, Penny would be "one who was" as well. Young Penny was wise beyond her years. She challenged her mother, but Penny would make her mother "proud" of her. Penny, though "privileged" in many ways, was "opportunistic," always sweating to "measure up" and attain greater heights untold for African American women.

Her second-floor office is 'Far from the Madding Crowd' (a book title befitting of the locale away from the hustle and bustle of Wall Street) but close enough to a mall where Penny could meander and catch a good sale on shoes, relieving stress before going home. Penny has made all the top lists for women, Blacks, bankers, and people. But not without blood, sweat, tears, a little help from some "others," and Twizzlers! She described herself as a "stick" of a woman, a proud mother of two sons whose pictures adorn her office, one with great taste in clothes, a far cry from the maternity dresses she said she wore that chased the clients away. I imagined the tomboy in the baseball cap, barefoot in shorts, being "blessed" on the weekend. She said she wasn't a great public speaker, but nevertheless blessed.

But with the financial crisis and the changes, I wondered about her for a while. Her bank has made the headlines just like the rest of our banks. Yes, all of the banks, bailed out, merged out, bankrupted out, were now all Wall Street banks whose identities were once revered by the world and now they were held responsible for the demise of the world economy. Who survived is the question everyone asks. I'm sure Penny did. She is more than a survivor of a Wall Street crash. Still a trailblazer in banking but even more, she is still a "Black woman" who doesn't have to wake daily and remind herself who she

is. She still hears her mother quipping: "You owe me, blah, blah, blah." No matter how far she's made it, somebody helped.

Prima Donna? No, That's My Momma!!

My mother was an amazing person . . . high school grad at 16, an accomplished concert pianist, a teacher and nearly a Ph.D. She married the 'bad penny,' the 'mañana man.' He said he knew Sidney Poiter and he played penny ante card games. But, until the end, he loved me and my mother. She was wise from the Depression, 'sale-seeking' with a big heart. She was from the 'colored' era, a light-skinned, heavy-set, beautiful woman. She was a die-hard Catholic whom I tried to convert. At 11 or 12 years old, yes me, I preached to my mom, "Accept Jesus as your savior."

Unbeknownst to her, I had a very strong role model, my mother. She was beautiful, accomplished, and taught me many lessons, in the classroom and out. My mother made no excuses for being 'colored,' being a woman and being privileged. She was a good, smart woman, an amazing woman. She was prudent and not wasteful. When she was older, she was a bit spiteful but beloved. She was always sickly, but still, she was the 'one who was.' She lived forever until she died at 90. Maybe I didn't tell her often enough . . . From the crying mom of a kid who didn't "measure up" to a proud mother of an Ivy League grad, a grandmother, no granddaughters, so I still owe her. But I know she was proud of me, the senior executive banker who realizes she still owes someone—my mother's lesson that I will never forget. My mother was a huge influence on my life. I am the Good Penny.

The Good Penny: The Privileged One

I was the one, most often the 'only one.' My brother was older, so I was the focus. If I could have, I'd have taken away my brother's pain, but I couldn't. I was a tomboy, I bowled and I rode my bike all over the place with just a quarter in my pocket. Not exactly what my mother called being accomplished. Yes, I was an 8-year-old girl who was just 'not measuring up.' I just talked too much. It brought my mother to tears.

I was expelled from school and I wasn't good enough. Public school was not an option, not for my mother's daughter. It was only the best for me, because she chose me, she adopted me. But, she was my 'real mother.' I went from my biological Jewish guilt to Catholic guilt, praying in school 50 times a day, to a fundamentalist Baptist school. And my mother—remember 'die-hard Catholic,' bless her tortured soul—she took me to Europe on her sabbatical and I preached all the way there. Admittedly, I was a little pain in the neck. Then, my mother became sick. This changed me and my mother, and we came back to the United States.

Still, we fought like prize fighters. The neighbors heard us. I was independent and so was she, and she was quite a bit older. She was still strong and she made her own decisions and so did I. It was the 'clash of the titans.' She knew I would make my own way. I was opportunistic. I had good friends and one whose father dragged me along right into the Ivy League. New best friends and a father figure, I had it all, all I needed. I was a radical. I "put some color on the council" as one of two Blacks in this all-girls school. Yes, me the tomboy in an all-girls school. Me, president of the student council, and my friends president of the National Honor Society, captain of the basketball team,

valedictorian, and all three of us got into the Ivy League. Not exactly a Black community, but I was the privileged one. I found home.

"Jane Austen Awakening"

Yes, that's what I'd call it. I wouldn't call it like hugely, hugely a Black community, *but* I found a home in that Ivy League school. I found people who looked like me and were people that I could talk to and relate to and that were down the hall from me. Every time I went to school, I never went anywhere locally. I was always away from home. At home, with mom, I did not have a lot of Black friends. My mother was colored, light-skinned. So was I. So, when I sported an afro haircut, Mom was not a happy woman. But I was much happier in my skin when I could go back to college because I had more people who looked like me, who were around me.

I had a real sort of a Jane Austin awakening kind of thing. It was wonderful to be with people who were intellectually stimulating around things that I hadn't even thought about from a race perspective. And at that time we were much into anti-Apartheid and sit-ins. But, until this day, I wonder, reading that thesis paper I wrote, how did I do it, how did I graduate from the Ivy League? I got a B+, but there were typos, grammar mistakes. It is horrible, so awful. But, a good thesis. My premise, my thesis was that motherhood shows up not just biological mother to daughter, but grandmother, aunt, neighbor, friend, teacher. And particularly in the African American community, motherhood as mother to daughter can be more the exception than the rule. Good lesson for me in life, and it was an eye-opening chapter about the mother-daughter relationship possibilities. Now onto another chapter.

My Husband: Smarter Than Me?

As for my relationship with my mother, we didn't always see eye-to-eye. Momma used to say, "If there's one thing you should do is always marry someone smarter than you." And she was right about that. She probably helped me the most around having my husband deciding to be with me. He was a prep school grad and now in the Ivy League. He was "street-oriented" and I didn't know that world, so he showed me.

But early on, there was a little issue, a beautiful Cuban-American girl. Yes, another girlfriend. But my mother, the wise woman beyond her years, said, "If you make him choose, you will lose." So, I played the game; I got another boyfriend. Before you know it, my future husband dumped his Cuban-American beauty and it was me in control. But today, we have a partnership, not always 50-50 but an equal partnership. Meanwhile, it was time for us, me and then my 'future' husband, the "street-oriented" one, to share another experience. He showed me Blackness in 3-D; I finally learned to live it.

The Harlem Experience

This was another huge door opening. We went on to live in Harlem for 4 or 5 years, an incredible experience. We had a lot of good friends who lived up there. And the other reason was that we were very, very close to my husband's sister and her husband at the time, who was my husband's best friend. Because a lot of the Ivy Leagues, we would go back and forth to their various Black functions. They became very, very close friends. A bunch of other folks lived up in the Convent Avenue neighborhood. So it was inexpensive and a lot of fun; we had people that we could live near. We would walk around the corner, go to Wilson's for breakfast, and there was culture and everything else

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that kind of goes with it. I could slip across the bridge in 5, 10 minutes. My mother was older at that point. The people, the friendships, and then the deterioration—it was horrible. And then finally our car was stolen three times and we were afraid to walk around the corner to get a bottle of milk. You know what? It's time to go.

The Family Experience

We got married in 1985, 1986; I was 26, and we lived together before we got married and my mother tried to clean it up. She told people we were engaged and we started getting all of these wedding gifts ☺. Well, we did get married. My husband got a job in another state. So we moved and I commuted to the city from one bank to another. Then I got a job in that state, too. Then it happened. At barely a 5-day-old job, I got pregnant, maybe something in the water. I wasn't the only one, we were all getting pregnant. Scary! I had to tell my husband. First, I tortured him like I tortured my mother. I've always been the banker. I'm just like, I'm not spending $2000 on a couch. I'm about to have a baby. I don't even have short-term disability. Pregnant? I was worried. He was ecstatic, embarrassing me on the train. Two boys later, he's still thrilled. But pregnancy was not my forte; fashion wasn't either. That big flowered ugly dress on my suddenly huge body was not a pretty sight. I gained 90 pounds. What were the clients and the coworkers saying? I really wanted to burn my clothes by the time I was done; I hated them so much. Who cares. I love boys. I'm a tomboy from way back. I'm not a frilly person.

They play lacrosse. The oldest is in college now. Seems like he's home more than in school. He still hates me. No, not really. I made him move away from school, friends, and neighbors and I didn't ask. I just took the job. My youngest went from 5'9" to 6'3"

and he's driving me around. Scary! My son is so much like my husband and a little bit like me in that, you know, he just says whatever—no thought goes unsaid. My kid, he doesn't curse at me; he's just grumpy or grouchy.

My husband is the stay-at-home dad, and we chose him over some stranger. We decided, no seriously, 'we' decided, no control-freak and no games. I'd found my niche and he found his: blogging, our old dog, and taking care of the boys.

Right Place, Right Time

Yes, it's banking. Now this was diversity at its best, and $25,000 a year to boot. It was like I was back in school for 9 months. I could do the fractions and decimals. That was fun and, again, I was surrounded by smart people; that's my space, you know, the Ivy League bunch, we helped each other. Like high school, I stood out, a person, women of color, one Black in a group of 30, though a third of us were women. I passed by the skin of my teeth. They didn't know what to do with me. What's that all about? First, I was in the credit department and then floated around until they figured out a place to put me. Everybody didn't quite fit in the same box. Then, I had my boss there and he was very instrumental. My boss advocated 'whistle-blowers' if there was a problem. My boss also taught me something memorable about speaking up for people. He said, "Know your borrower." He wasn't just talking about the obvious, the bottom line on paper, if you know what I mean. You really need to know who the person is, both credibility and integrity. My credibility is important, too; so was my mother's. Yes, these were beyond the times, "the wilder times of my life," you know, Harlem.

This was about being in the right place at the right time and knowing the right people. I had to start raising my hands, scoping out those opportunities; you know, I have

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always been opportunistic. I owed some people who endorsed me. I was the borrower in good standing. Then I was in the wrong place at the wrong time, and that was a very disappointing time of my career. The parameters of the job changed so dramatically. So, you know, shame on me; I should have been out looking for something else to do. I took another banking job, and I was the only officer who looked like me. And I was displaced. My son was just 6 months old. I thought it was one of the stupidest things they had ever done, a whole diversity exercise. We were paired up with mentors—like I really needed a mentor—but nonetheless, bottom line, I was displaced.

I don't know about race or gender discrimination. I just know it was a lot of stress for something really stupid because they hired me back a week later, go figure. Most of us who were dismissed looked just like me, you know? And yeah, I have to do to others just what they did to me. What do I say, wrong place at the wrong time? We react to all kinds of cost-cutting initiatives and stuff. Is it fair to a guy whose only crime was working on the same job in the same company for 27 years? It's déjà vu. Then there were the bank collapses and the new names. A vision of the business kind of like McDonald's: you got the same hamburger no matter where you went—it isn't about that. It's about a customizing, unique experience, and he just didn't get it. Then there was the whole thing about perception. You make a mistake and it sticks to you like gum for the rest of your career, seems like the rest of your life. You don't get another chance, even if you fix it. Some people don't get it and they lose. Others, they understand, Black, White, doesn't matter, they can still get it. He didn't micromanage me, and I was one of his top performers. Right place, right time? Right people, right opportunities, many choices.

Along the Journey: Choices and Decisions

My husband and I don't fit in the neat boxes. He blogs and I have my niche. But we still make decisions and we do it together. Really, I'm not the 'whiny Black woman.' One day my husband said, about his real job, "I just don't want to do this." And so we made a decision: he would stay home and take care of the boys and I would do my thing, whatever that looked like. We moved to the perils and the joys of living next door to people. They ask you when are you going to rake your leaves. The community was ethnically diverse, and it was wonderful. We were introduced to our best friends by mutual friends, and I shared with her my experience of being adopted. They ultimately adopted a little boy who is right in between my two. It has been an experience not having to worry about my children, so that worked out really well.

When this position became vacant, I got it. Was race and gender a factor? I grew up in this business and understand what makes it tick. My boss, who is a tremendous mentor for me, really coached me. It was a metamorphosis, in that not everything has to be a 10, not everything has to be so excitable, scale it back, and she was really helpful with that with me. Your boss just promotes you to this very senior-level position and the first thing she asks you to do is to move. Okay. I had young kids. When I told them, they were furious. The older one still to this day hates my guts over it. He's shy. But the younger one is probably doing fine. In retrospect, though my son still hates me for making this choice, it was a good move for the boys, right near the school. A lot of people have been very good to me and have looked out for me that are in key positions in this organization, so a lot of the exposure and the things that I get are as the result of

people, well-positioned, whether it's in marketing or it's in community relations. I've probably gotten to go to my fair share of really neat stuff. But like Mama used to say . . .

"You Owe Me"

My mother's favorite words when I was a kid, especially when I was throwing a little 'hissy fit' about something and needed humbling or just a lesson in giving back or paying forward, were "You owe me, blah, blah, blah." I'm also probably one of the more higher-ranking Black women in the organization. I think the first year I had this job everybody called on me for everything. I was expected to do everything 'diversity' related, mentor all those who looked like me, be a lender to all of these borrowers in need. I think being a Black woman in my business is a responsibility, in terms of how you show up as a role model. It has been a burden. But you need to get control of that 'poster child' label. Let me do the things I really care about. I have deep, deep passion around financial literacy for African American women. I'm consistent; I know how and where to channel my energies and not to the detriment of my job.

I still had a responsibility to give back, to help those who looked up to me. So I recruited her. It doesn't always work out, and it didn't for this one girl, so I bore the burden, by choice, to find her another job. That's an investment that I made in her, she made in herself, and it's kind of a tough way to go. I've been there before and I'm sure they needed to fill a spot with someone like me, an African American woman. It was a checkmark for the diversity quota. That wasn't my motive, but still . . . I owe.

But, who walks into work and says "I am a Black woman"? I pray before I leave the house in the morning and I go into business gear. I am a woman on a mission. I still talk too much and still struggle with listening. I am grateful for a good job but "blessed

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on the weekends." Please! I am a hot head with a sense of humor. I value my heritage. I don't just take pride in it. White men don't know how to deal with it, with me, with senior women leaders; it's awkward, difficult, very difficult, and Black makes it harder on them. Black men have problems, too. They are quick to coach me. Put diversity issues in the room. I'm not the fixer for all the problems with race and gender just because I am a Black woman in a high position. Conflicts are there because of what I know and who I am. If I was playing the race and gender card, I might be perceived as a 'whiny Black girl.' So, no matter what, I am grateful and I owe.

Blood, Sweat, and Tears

Yes, Mom, I am taming the 'drama queen.'
No more tears, Mom.
Those hormones can wreak havoc on me.
An understanding husband and great kids in tow,
I'm always shopping, two pairs of shoes
To relieve the stress before I go home.
Opportunistic, always raising my hand
But checking my schedule first.
Oh, I can be picky.
So, I didn't get that aisle or exit seat on the plane.
Taking risks, personally and professionally
But, listening to the right people and different people,
A collection of people, a strong network of people
That you care about and that care about you.

So, I think I'm in my 30s.
I'm still an idealist
Taking more time for myself
A son in college,
Another driving me around . . . scary!
Yes, taking more time for me
And I've got a good husband,
A risqué blogger, but a good guy.
He taught me, "don't give a . . . ."
But always be conscious, be aware.

We are a little "weird enough"

Not stereotypical
Happy "on the periphery" but not in a margin.
Jack and Jill has never been our box.
They may just try to put us in there
But, we move around
We move well from "people to people,"
Different kinds of people.
We can interact with different kinds of people.

Ready for the new chapters,
New skills, new tools, new culture.
I remember second grade—just talked too much.
Wow, that was an early chapter.
Took a lot of energy
Thinking about things,
the magnitude, the volume, sheer volume.
It's been a long time.
Reflective—no, cathartic.

I hear my mother saying
"You owe me."
I've had a privileged childhood,
A privileged life,
"The best of both worlds."

Mom, I know: I owe.

The Atta Girl Story

The Canvas

Atta's lifetime achievements quickly became clearer than the windows of her

Manhattan office in the middle of the hustle and bustle of midtown New York City. Yes,

Wall Street in midtown, downtown, across the river in New Jersey. If all of these banks

were physically located on Wall Street, that part of the island would sink. There was a

dull film on Atta's window that transcended the cloudy day of the first interview. From

what I'd seen and heard in the conferences where she spoke, Atta was highly respected

on Wall Street, and she is just one of the African American women poster children. She

quipped, "We are all trailblazers." Though everyone clamors around Atta and the other senior Wall Street bank executives after they speak at the conferences, the women don't claim to be the only voices on Wall Street. But surely, Atta's executive position would be the cream of the crop, A+ or at least above average.

Every IPO and every merger was visible in some form in her office. Atta's golf game was apparent. Not boastful but recognized, she reminds herself all along her journey from the Deep South to Wall Street that she has realized success because she "figured it out." She might not have changed the face of Wall Street if her mother had been like everyone else's mother, armoring her with a security blanket. Atta reminded me of the newscaster Robin Roberts from *Good Morning America*. Both were excellent bowlers, both were confident in the past and confident today, "architects of their own agendas" and from the South. So, I presented her, from my heart, Robin's book on CD, *From the Heart, Seven Rules to Live By* to listen to on her drives to and from work. One rule for Atta: Just figure it out. Just say she can't and Atta will "*figure it out*." She can't become a Wall Street managing director? Why, because she is a Black woman? She "figured it out."

Don't Forget Home

South Georgia is home. Since I was 9, I've called it home. How could you be ashamed of home? Home is where the heart is or was. I still call it home, and I go back home maybe five, six times a year. I may go back home to live or at least to play golf or sit on the beach with my husband. It's his home, too. While others flock to Naples, Florida, to get 'connected' and be in with the crowd, my husband and I go home—no Wall Street there, but it's home. South Georgia is as far south as I need to go to get away,

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to retire, to do whatever. It's my home. Girl, you better own up to your home, Waycross, Georgia? I know that town. That's where my identity was born.

Who Said They Couldn't?

Mom could, so she taught for a living and she taught me, too. She taught me to weigh the options and then choose. So, it was on me, only me; from an early age, it's been my choice, my decision. I had to "figure it out, think of something." I was in control, and the only time I haven't been in control is when Mom died. It felt like just yesterday. Finally, I had no choice in the matter or otherwise, I would have chosen. . . . That was out of my hands and in God's. This was a reality.

Grandma did the only work known for Blacks to do in the South. There were not many choices in South Georgia, but she later found her niche as an entrepreneur. I wonder if anyone said, "No, you can't," but she sure could and she did. Not even Dad could do it like Grandma could. She knew that Blacks wanted to dance together, hang together, party together, tell stories and just be together. Yeah, Grandma knew supply and demand. I must have her genes. Grandma overcame any historical 'can'ts'; she overcame segregation and integration changes. She adapted, adopted, survived; she hoped and the bar 'hopped.' Dad was just a shadow of a woman who knew how to and she did. But Dad gave it a shot. He's my family, so I ain't mad at him!

I found me, myself, my soul, and my love in South Georgia. Found my love in a bowling alley. I made a bet long ago and finally cashed in. I married that man who lost a bet to get my phone number, but I gave it to him anyway. Yes, great opportunities found in South Georgia, love and school, preparation for my future, my success. Some may forget where they came from. You won't own up to Waycross? Well, you can't know

who you are if you don't know where you're from. You think you can only find love, get

college-prepped, and find opportunities in the North? Look at me, a product of South

Georgia and not ashamed to say so and not ashamed to go home again. Yes, home

again—where they outwardly said you can't if you are a Black woman. That's what they

probably said to my mother and grandmother. They made it so when I had issues,

someone said I can't, they said, "What's the problem?" Being from the South is no

excuse, no victim, no reason why I can't, not even because I am Black, a woman and

Black. I have, like they had, high expectations for me. So when I don't live up, I ask

myself, "What's the problem?" Then I *figure it out.* It hasn't always been easy, not

always so black and white, but I *figured it out*.

Just Black and White?

I didn't know what it meant then but I know it now; that's my identity, a Black

woman. What did that mean? It's only Black and White in the South. In South Georgia,

it's not Trinidadian, Jamaican, Cuban, Polish, Jewish, Russian like it is in the North; it

was just Black and White. No culture, no religion, no, it was just Black and White. I'm a

Black woman and I know who I am, where I am from, and if I don't know, I don't know

where I'm going. I was going North wearing "topsiders" because I thought that was what

they wore in the North, especially in the Ivy League. I don't know who told me that.

They should have told me it wasn't just Black and White. I learned and I learned quickly

what I needed to be, what I needed to wear, how I needed to speak to compete and fit in,

but only to a degree. I learned some great lessons in Black and White in the South and on

other terms in the North. Yes, there was segregation in the South. There was

discrimination in the South and probably in the North, too. But I'll figure it out just like I did when I was just a teen.

They Could Only Look at Their Shoes

At 14, I was me first. I was a Black Catholic girl and I could sing and bowl, too. I could hold my own anywhere and with everybody. I was confident, so I bet a boy, my future husband, and he lost. Will I ever let him forget that? I was not afraid, not motivated by fear, not then and not now. I was confident, I did my homework, I asked the questions and I made decisions for me. If I wanted to be skinny, it was for me. Guess I didn't wanna be. I was me and didn't need to be anybody else or look like anybody else. Not me!! I'm different from anyone else, White, Black, it doesn't matter. I was conscious, to a degree, comfortable, confident, nonconformant, and I was competitive. I'm not confused and not scared. No fear of the unknown. I could compete at everything anywhere, in high school, in the Ivy halls, in business school, and on Wall Street.

Mom and Grandma were comfortable in their skin as Black women who didn't have the world—but they gave me the gift, it was something I'd needed, confidence, not fear! They said, "Be good at it." What else did I need? Not a lot of "trash-talking" like Dad did. Mom and Grandma, they didn't just talk, they did. They were leaders and role models in action. They knew I could, with high expectations, be "better than." All my life, I would have to be "better than" just to be as good as. Not just in South Georgia, or in the Ivy halls, not just on Wall Street. I wouldn't measure up objectively, not in the eyes of many people, some Black, some White, and others too who were constantly watching, some waiting for me to fail or slip or hoping for a fall. No excuse for me to be burdened to carry doubt or fear, not then and not now. I just have to be "better than," and that's still

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my agenda, my expectation of myself, not just talk but action. But, was that good enough?

In that Catholic high school, it was A+'s and nothing less. When they tried to give me less, I cried "prejudiced." But with Mom and Dad, that didn't fly; that was no excuse. They said, "Girl, you better figure out something." Prejudice, discrimination, bias, or other stuff was just baggage, excuses, and victim mentality. "You better do something." Better find some more tools, and that was my job. Since then, there were no excuses and no victim here—but there were other real victims out there, not me. I've got tools, and I've needed them.

I needed those tools right away to deal with the ROTC. They had a problem and I let them know it. "Better look at your shoes—yeah, you. You know who you are." It should have been me chosen as company commander. So, I was a Black, Catholic, confident girl, but it was my turn and I knew I deserved it. But they had a problem, so they chose a White, less experienced girl who was a year behind me. How could that be? It wasn't my problem, no excuses, no victim here. It was their problem, and I let them know it. And all they could do was not look at me. They "looked at their shoes." I asked them why: Tell me it wasn't because I was a confident Black girl and I was good, better than good. But I wasn't the victim because I knew who I was and what I deserved. I left that victim's baggage at their feet on their shoes. Maybe that's what they were looking at.

Early, I Figured It Out

Summa cum laude, 4.0, blah, blah, blah, blah. I had family in California, so maybe UCLA would be my choice. I didn't know much about the Ivy League, but I learned, I listened, I followed, and I found there were colleges outside of UCLA,

Georgia, and Florida. I had choices. The short list grew longer with Ivy League and top-tier schools. Who knew? They did, the White students knew, so I followed them. They wondered how I could get into all of those schools, those Ivy League and top-tier schools. I had skills, I had what it took, and it wasn't just how I looked. That was their problem. They thought it was just because I was a poor (but I wasn't poor) Black girl from the South. Maybe it was some affirmative action thing or a quota. They just didn't know and that wasn't my problem. That was their problem. And they would have to *figure it out*.

All I knew was I had to be me, write my own essay and do it my way, and I'd have opportunities. I just kept hearing my parents say "*Figure it out*." And I did. I got into all of the other top tiers—not because I was a poor little Black girl from the South or because they needed color in the North. I *figured it out*. I didn't look like anyone else, didn't write like anyone else. I just *figured it out*. I figured out how to get into those schools and how to pay for a college education, too. I had tools, many more tools than they knew. My parents just said, "Weigh it, weigh it." So, I did and I headed north. If I succeeded or if I failed (not a chance), I couldn't blame anybody. They told me to weigh it, to choose, and I did.

Whew, passed freshman year in the Ivy League. I didn't need those topsiders after all. And, although I didn't know Wall Street, they already knew me. I'd make a difference in more than one way. I would change the gender from man to woman, the race from White to Black, and I was skilled so that sealed the deal. I learned I didn't always need a mentor, maybe just a sponsor, someone at the table for me, someone with a voice for me, someone to invest in me. Yes, being Black and being a woman gave me the

chance. But I chose and I was "better than." I was magna cum laude, MBA, blah, blah, blah.

Well, on the way, it was my agenda to be a managing director. It was my choice, at least a year earlier. It was where many others did it their way, many different ways, many different people, smart but different people. Not all bowlers. Not all golfers. Not all Black. Nearly none were Black women. But, I was confident with that choice. I could be "me," the "raw" me, and be successful at what I wanted to be. Wouldn't you say I *figured it out?*

I Had to Be Me!

On Wall Street, in South Georgia, in the Ivy League, wherever I was, I always knew I had to be me. Raw identity, not skinny, but groomed, Gucci today, Coach tomorrow—okay, I wore the uniform. I was confident with high expectations of myself as a Black woman. I needed a company where I could be "better than" and be successful, IPOs, mergers, acquisitions, promotions, whatever I wanted to be and achieve. The company, the people, and the opportunities are still the same today as they were yesterday. There is energy and there is drive; there are people living the motto "Yes, we can." And in these times, these troubled financial times, we must live like we can.

Through good times and crises, I could do without the drama. I am still me after all of these years. I am still that Black South Georgia girl, still singing, still Catholic, still led by the spirit, still "better than," still confident, making no excuses, making and taking opportunities. Uncompromising and unyielding my "raw" identity, I'm just tempering it and only a bit. I'm not a victim, I'm a "victor" and successful on my terms. What more can you ask? Maybe law school one day. I know I can. if I want to, I can.

Where were the mentors, the role models along the way, someone who helped shape who I am today? Mom and Grandma, yes, they taught me by example how to make decisions and how to lead as a Black woman. I also value those who said "ratchet it up or tone it down." Yes, they helped refine my tone and my identity, but experience taught me lessons and toughened me as well. Then there were sponsors, staking their reputation on me, going to the table, selling those adjectives that defined me. They toughened me and I found wisdom and reality. They knew and I knew I had to be me, and they helped me learn what else I needed to be. Yes, there were some add-ons, but I am still me, the authentic me.

I'm not the stereotypical anything; I am just me. I don't fit the mold, not a whiny, angry Black woman, not a victim, not hiding behind or hiding from discrimination. Not that mold. I 'can't' carry that baggage, so that wasn't part of my package or part of my toolkit. I couldn't play that blame game and succeed. I had to bring my "A" game. Every day I had to be better than, not just a Black woman but a Black woman who could sing, bowl, seal IPO deals. I was tough and I raised my hand, both hands. I could have been derailed and sometimes I was, so I had failures and ground to make up. I learned this and I figured it out. They needed a new face on Wall Street, but I had to be more. It was more than just Black and White or any other colors and cultures, too. I knew who I was and I *figured it out*. But, it wasn't just that black and white.

Along the Way and Still Today, I Figure It Out!

When I don't know, I ask. I'm a Type A, but it doesn't matter. Sliding down into a hole feels funky, like you're failing. What are you going to do? Suffering in silence but only for a while. I had to get smart and *figure it out*, had to ask for help, and I *figured it*

out. Rejection—some folks of color get rejected and walk away. Some make 'dumb' choices and they never ask again; they're not asking for rejection again. Not me. I *figured it out,* kept asking questions to *figure it out.* My parents didn't fight my battles, didn't challenge my teachers, and didn't answer all of my questions for me. They just challenged me to *figure it out*. Yes, ask the questions but then *figure it out.*

In a new role here at the bank, I am still challenged to *figure it out*. Race, class, and gender don't matter. I just know nothing about this role and this is all new. So my attitude is just keep asking questions until I *figure it out*. I have my agendas, my expectations, and I just need my business plan. I'll manage this move like I managed others, and I have learned just when to make the moves. I am managing my own agendas and staying in touch with "perceptions of reality." I learned I have to keep asking. I still remember in high school, I was asking where they were going. They were going to see Ivy League reps, and I said "Then I'm going, too." I'm smart. I am "better than." I can definitely go there, too. I could go anywhere. So, if I don't know, I ask, and then I *figure it out*. I make my opportunities. If I want a promotion, I ask for it. A year early, I have to ask for it. I didn't get it when I didn't ask. I became that squeaky wheel. They heard me, saw me, and saw what I could do. They saw that I was "better than." That became their perception of me.

There Is Power in Perception

I expected more, I gave more, and I got more. I have high expectations of myself and I am in control; I manage perceptions. My voice is power; their voices for me became power. Sometimes, silence is power. I had to learn when to use the power tools, but I had to know what my power tools were as well. I've learned to sell me, whatever

that may be, whenever it is needed, however it is needed. But, it is me. Not selling out, but selling. I always give it straight; therefore, they trust me. No BS or MBA; they trust me, my credibility and my delivery. I manage my agenda, manage who I am, and manage what they see, their perceptions of me. I have no regrets, just lessons learned. It's never too late to change their perception of me. Harder, yes. But it's never too late to change how they perceive me, what adjectives they use to describe me. They said I wasn't tough enough but never again. I changed that perception of me. I've found power, power in me and in my identity and in the perception of me. So I perceive, I am empowered, and I measure my success.

My Perception of Success?

How do I define success, success for me? All I have is time, so I must create and manage my agendas, defining my own success, setting my own goals and accomplishing them. It may be spiritually, professionally, personally, but it is me. Maybe I prefer no drama this year, 30% salary increase that year, managing director another year, lessons learned in 2008, a good golf strike but no hole in one. It may not be success for them but it is success for me. It may be quoting scriptures I never quoted before, writing business plans, all these things, because they're my goals; when I achieve them that's my success. All A's was my goal, not my mother's or my grandmother's, not my boss's or my husband's, but my goal, my choice, my way. They were there and they did care, but I am successful. I am in control. So, if I fail, it's my fault, not theirs. White middle-class males, it's not their fault. But discrimination, it's their problem. Me worry about that false perception? Not me. Worry would definitely derail me from attaining my success.

So, marriage, if it's in my plan, my choice, then it's my relationship to nurture, to take care of. No more independence. No independent decisions; of course it matters what he thinks. It's different. I am used to it being solely up to me. But I made a choice and asked, "Can he relate?" In my circles, he has to relate. He could have been a garbage man but one who watches CNBC. He has opinions, his own opinions. What others think, No! You enlighten your mind. Does he need to be a surgeon? No, he needs to be able to operate in my world—okay, our world. My success, our success, doesn't depend on others. But it depends on me, the choices I have and the decisions I make.

Success is not a burden for me. I have to be stellar and that is my choice, not as good as but 'better than,' but that is not a burden for me. If they were my assumptions, the bias, the bull, the baggage of oppression or discrimination, then it was my fault, the burden was on me. If I was stressed or if there was 'drama,' I had to manage it. That other stuff is their problem, like the ROTC, their problem, gum on their shoes. My game, my life, my choice is mine, but no problem. My game must be tight like in a football game. I must control my mistakes. You just don't have as many chances to make mistakes and be forgiven when you have to be 'better than,' as a Black woman, 'better than.' So, you must work twice as hard to prepare and to limit those errors. So, I do. Then you have that opportunity for success and to manage your own agendas. Even if you have a failure, failure must lead to 'lessons learned.' Yes, I have failed. I had tough experiences changing perceptions of me, perceptions about toughness, perceptions about whether I wanted it, the promotion. But, it's my agenda.

I am confident, consistently confident and conscious of the perceptions of me. Who said I wasn't tough? That wasn't reality. I had to ask myself questions. Who told

you that? Those assumptions I made about topsiders, about an associate's role, I ask myself, who told me that? I learned, through questioning myself, questioning them and through experience, I learned. I did tough things in tough times and I got toughened by the experience. I stopped assuming. I asked myself, "What's up, girl? What are you thinking about? Who told you that?" I had to take off the weight of their shoes, their assumptions that I got into those schools because I was a Black girl. I had to trade in victimization for real tools. I needed tools to avoid the 'drama.' Being 'out of control' is an insult, and it may be a reality, but to me, it's an insult. So, I'm an idealist? Success may be 1 day with 'no drama,' 2 months with 'no drama,' no crises, 'no drama'! I can live with no drama. All of these crises on Wall Street are just too much drama. Maybe I will go back home to South Georgia.

Do I overanalyze and try to figure everything out? No, there are better ways to spend my time shoring up my 'A' game, working on new skills, building new relationships, finding new 'sponsors' and more money, too. But, that's my agenda. It drives and occupies me and my time. Time is all I have, so I manage it.

No Ah Ha's

No 'Ah Ha's'?
Don't like surprises.
No drama, you're right!
I am still that girl.
Mom, *I figured it out*!
I'm honest, loyal, and thoughtful.
I care, yeah, about my friends.
They're good to me and they trust me.
This is who I am:
At home, in South Georgia,
On the golf course,
At work, speaking, singing, writing.
I own my skin, my own reality.

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I create perceptions of me.

So what can I give them?
Those who like that perception,
Those like me but not exactly like me,
Those Black girls and Black women,
Those who also change the face of Wall Street?
Or Main Street?
Or Pennsylvania Avenue?
I give them
Atta girls!! *You figured it out, too!*

Be better than,
Be recognized.
Not many chances to make a mistake.
Be yourself.
Wear your wisdom.
Wear it every day.

When they say you can't,
Say, "Yes, I can."
And do it—don't just say it, do it!

I like being the first.
Because I am a woman?
Because I am Black?
No, because it's an honor
To have a vision for myself.
There is a position
Where there's no one else
Not that intersection
Not one who looks like me.

In a choir singing Bach or Mendelssohn
In the executive suite on Wall Street
On CNBC
Doing something no one like me has done
Being first drives me.

But, I'm not alone,
Not the only trailblazer.
No, we are all trailblazers.
So, to all of us, all like us,
Mom, they *figured it out*!
I give atta girls!!

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Conclusion

As the portraitist, it was fascinating to listen to the voices and listen for the stories in the experiences the women shared. I witnessed (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) the emergence of the nuances, the common but different (Joseph & Lewis, 1981) portraits of perceivably oppressed women who were supposed to be victims of a socially constructed intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2002; Cuadraz et al., 1999; Holvino, 2006; Hurtado, 2004; Landry, 2007; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). Then, I thought, they looked somewhat like me, but it was now my voice just like theirs, an outsider within (Collins, 2000a). Yes, it is me, but it is also we. There are so many attributes; so many intersections that make up me that distinguish who "I" am. So, there is the growth in the discussion beyond the intersection of race, class, and gender, though it still makes sense to start there because there are common truths based on these factors. But, though complicated, simultaneously, there is salience beneath, within, and outside of the traditional intersection.

The portraits above are not perfect reflections of the experiences of the participants; they are reflections of unique journeys of commonly described African American women in nontraditional roles. Historically, Wall Street banking was not the possible or chosen profession for African American women. But, they did it their way. Their unique, authentic identities shine through, distinguishing who they are and how they came to be. They didn't just land into their positions (Shields, 2008). And the deeper their identities, their values, and their experiences are explored, the more 'excellent' the portrait becomes.

Framing the Findings

"Rearticulating a Black woman's standpoint is fruitful" (Collins, 2000a, p. 268). This Black feminist epistemology illustrates how African American women understood their identities. Through these stories representing "her" stories, the research questions have been answered by each woman, demonstrating her own standpoint. Written stories and reflections connect Black women with the truth (Collins, 2000a) and with others (people). In chapter 5, the findings from this study are presented in a structured form, illustrating the "aesthetic whole" of the "patterns and trends" that emerged during this study supplemented by the rich evidence from the participants' experiences. "Looking within and across the drawings of emotions by artists and children, emergent themes can be noted that have been recognized as clarifying and resonant by numerous individuals" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 232).

CHAPTER 5:

FINDINGS

This chapter represents the findings from the qualitative, phenomenological,

portraiture research framed by the three primary research questions: How do African

American women understand their intersectional identities? How do African American

women experience professional identity integration? How do they experience

simultaneity of intersectional identities? These questions were answered by exploring the

experiences of three African American women who were managing directors in Wall

Street banking during the time of the interviews, 2007 to 2008. Their individual, unique

portraits were shared in portraitist/participant-coauthored stories in chapter 4 of this

dissertation. In this chapter, the findings are structured to answer the research questions

using the rich data, quotes, themes, and patterns that emerged from the participants'

experiences. This was achieved using the portraiture framework and methodology:

> Emergent themes occur within and across the stories, language, and rituals of
> subjects and sites. Naming convergence emergent themes clarify the ways in
> which parts of the whole fit together and make tangible the intangibles through
> which insiders experience their realities. (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997,
> p. 232)

In this chapter, the themes and patterns emerge and begin to converge to answer

the questions about personal and professional identity under the intersectionality

framework. Table 5-1 presents an overview of the findings.

Table 5-1.
Matrix of Emergent Themes and Patterns

Pattern	Bolsa	Penny	Atta
1. Core theme: Intersectional identity anchored by core values			
1a. Relationships—maternal influence	"My hero"	"Huge influence"	"Role model"
	Not color–"your culture"	"Colored," "Black"	"Black and White"
	"Poor, food stamps"	"Privileged"	"Not poor"
	"Ugly–Buckwheat"	"Tomboy"	"Not skinny"
1b. Self-empowerment	Self-reliant	Independent	Personal resources/tools
2. Core theme: Identity integration anchored by personal identity values			
2a. Personal empowerment	Twice as hard	Measure up	Better than
	Not sell my soul	Get my point across	Raw identity
	Know your tag	Know circumstance	Ask questions
	No doobies	Whiny Black girl	Angry Black woman
2b. Relationships	A mentor for me	Like I needed a mentor	Success team
	He was a corporate sponsor	Know your borrower	Sponsor—expending capital

African American Women's Understanding

of Their Intersectional Identities

Supportive Relationships

The participants understood their identities through relationships, storytelling, shared experiences, lived experiences, and advice consistent with African American feminist thought (Collins, 2000a; Bell & Nkomo, 1998; Etter-Lewis, 1993). The participants' understandings were heavily influenced by maternal relationships in supportive family structures (Carby, 1982; Parker & ogilvie, 2003). Maternal nurturing values were evident in different styles by mothers who were professional role models and those who gave advice. The mothers were leaders at home and they were the matriarchs; they gave the development advice. Leadership is not measured in just one venue, a profession, but in the other facets of life (Carby, 1982; Collins, 2000a; Etter-Lewis, 1993;

Giddings, 1984; Parker & ogilvie, 2003). Strong yet different mother-daughter relationships influenced the participants' self-reliant, independent, confident, self-defined identities, core values and beliefs, and professional identities as well. The participants' own "conscious" identities emerged during their own lifetime experiences. Joseph and Lewis (1981) wrote about common strengths in maternal relationships but drew distinctions between the experiences of Black and White women in *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black & White Feminist Perspectives,* where they highlighted race-based differences and value-based commonalities. They illustrated how similarities and differences exist within Black women and across the race boundaries as well. In this study the mother-daughter relationship value was similar but there were salient value differences within the intersectional commonalities.

Penny, Atta, and Bolsa described similar patterns of father-daughter relationships that were less influential than the relationships with their mothers. Bolsa noted: "My dad was a good man and he waited for my mom to get off the plane with her three children, and that's how we started our life." But when it came to issues related to Bolsa's racial identity, she said her father could "give a crap." Atta said she learned her dad was "trash-talking and . . . just not the people person." Penny described her father as "laid back . . . the mañana man. . . . If he could put it off until tomorrow, he would do it." Common but different father-daughter relationships reflected respect for fathers' leadership but awareness of little beneficial influence.

The participants described how they developed strong, supportive maternal relationships with their mothers consistent with identity-shaping mother-daughter relationships in the literature (Bell & Nkomo, 1998; Etter-Lewis, 1993; Hayes &

Flannery, 2002; Joseph & Lewis, 1981). The strong relationships constituted shared

experiences, advice-giving, and storytelling. Bolsa's mother had just died, and she

referred to her mother as her "hero." Penny noted, "My mother was just a huge influence

on my life. . . . She was an amazing, an amazing person." Atta's mother had just passed

away and she recalled, "You know, when I think back to my view of my mother, as I

grew up, she never appeared unconfident, scared, fearful." Speaking of confidence, Atta

boasted about her paternal grandmother, "Oh, my gosh, she's probably my biggest role

model from that perspective because she was sort of like—she used to tell me all the

time, 'Whatever you be, be good at it.'"

The participants told some stories and shared some situations describing their

mothers and grandmother. Bolsa described "coming to America" as "a Bolsa story . . . I

came in a breadbasket":

> My mother didn't work a day in her life until I was 16, when she came to this
> country, as a nurse's aide. Her grade level of education may be third or fourth or
> fifth grade, depending on how you count. . . . My mother's one of 11. . . . She
> didn't want to have her kids share shoes.

Penny said her mother grew up "in the Depression." Penny also described her

mother as "strict and she was firm but she had a big heart; when she got older she was a

bit spiteful but beyond that—people don't get nicer when they get older." Penny boasted

about her mother being a "concert pianist. . . . My mother was well educated; she was a

teacher."

Atta marveled at her grandmother's accomplishments in a segregated South.

"She's the entrepreneur of the family, . . . started her career off at King Edward Cigar, . . .

the place for Black people to work back in the 40s and 50s." Atta described her

grandmother's thriving tavern.

That place was hopping; it was a mint . . . especially during segregation time. . . . But as integration came in, in the 70s and 80s, . . . even in the 70s I would say— even in the 70s and 80s, early 80s, she found a way to make it hop.

Atta described her mother as "an educator. She started off as a physical education teacher and then moved into administration and when she retired was an assistant principal in a middle school."

There were differences in the participants' mothers' education and professional experience levels that informed how they influenced their daughters. Bolsa's "hero" mother wasn't very educated and had little formal work experience, but she was the leader in the home and managed the family's little money. Bolsa said her mother told her, "You can do anything you want. . . . You could be a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher, a dentist, a bank teller." Bolsa thought there must be more career choices. As noted earlier, Atta's mother and her grandmother were huge influences and professional and leadership role models both inside and outside the home. They were confident and they had high expectations for Atta. Penny's adoptive mother was "older" but still a "role model" and an educator. Her mother was one of a few "colored" women concert pianists. Penny traveled the world with her mother, sharing many experiences during her mother's sabbatical. Atta, Bolsa, Penny, and their mothers seemingly shared common race and gender positions in the "matrix of dominance" (Collins, 2000a). They had different experiences contributing to the type and style of influence they had in their daughters' identities, and they had common and different values as well.

Race: Intraracial, Intercultural, and Ethnic Differences

The participants' racial identities were implicitly and explicitly impacted by their mothers' understanding of race informed by various factors. One was skin-tone (Cross,

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1991). Bolsa said her mother was raised in the West Indies and she was "very fair-skinned" and her grandmother was Irish: "You would think she was a White Irish woman." Bolsa also explained, "When you're from the West Indies you don't call yourself a color; you are known by your culture." Penny described her adopted mother as "fairly light-skinned." William Cross (1991) noted there is diversity within the African American race identity defined by different shades of Black, which frequently translated into different classes within a race. Penny noted, "My mother came from the era where you called people 'colored.'" Penny said she decided very early, "I've always known I'm Black, I've always been Black."

Atta was raised in the South during the historical shift from segregation to integration. Atta described the southern racial dichotomy:

> Because in the South there's Black and there's White; it's not, you know, Jamaican or Trinidadian or African—it's Black and it's White. So it's not Polish or Russian or Italian or Jewish, or all the things that I got exposed to. . . . So that was the big hot moment moving to the Northeast.

Bolsa, influenced by her mother's stance about American Blacks, embraced her "West Indian" culture although she was born in England and raised in the "South Bronx." During the first interview, Bolsa admitted that her mother

> was probably a racist. She never did like Black people. Because the ones that we saw . . . was not the good part of Black people. You know, the ones who robbed you, the ones who burned houses, the ones who stole cars, the ones who were taking drugs. And it was American Negroes I should call them—she particularly did not want to be associated with that class of people. . . . My mother particularly didn't want anything to do with Black people at all. . . . My mother didn't like the fact that we were being considered Black in America. My mother . . . was very troubled by us being called Black.

Bolsa believed her mother was concerned about being Black "because she thought that it was taking away from our India—as West Indians." Subsequently, Bolsa embraced

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her race, being African American, and she declared, "Don't worry about being Black. . . . Don't let it bother you. . . . It's not my problem; it's the other person's problem. Because that's not who we were."

Though Atta was raised in the South where she was clearly distinguished (Smith, 2007) as Black and her experiences confirmed that assertion, Atta became more "conscious" of what that meant to her. She noted:

> So this whole sense of "Black identity" was now out in the marketplace. But I can't say at that point I was so tapped into it, but definitely probably *unconsciously* I was. . . . Now, it was a transition, moving from the South to the Northeast, because you become more aware of different ethnicities. That was probably the first big hot moment.

Atta, Bolsa, and Penny described their early understanding of race based on their relationships with their mothers, their values, and the standpoints they developed over their lifetimes of experience.

Intersectional Class Identities

As professionals, the participants were perceivably financially well-off and in similar middle to upper economic and social classes. Discussions of early experiences yielded class differences. Penny noted, "I had a pretty privileged childhood. I grew up in a beautiful home, . . . middle-class African American community." Penny remembered that as a kid she thought she was fine. "You had 25¢ in your pocket."

Emigrating from the Caribbean but growing up in the South Bronx, Bolsa experienced being "poor" by anyone's definition. She questioned whether this was the "better life" her mother sought. "I had to get government cheese—we were on food

stamps—and I was so embarrassed. . . . I just knew that other people had stuff . . . but we were poor."

In the discussion with Atta, I asserted, "Being middle class, I didn't know what it was. Had no clue. I just thought I had everything I wanted. I wasn't poor." Atta merely affirmed, "I felt the same way." Atta also understood how Blacks were classified in the South as 'working class.' She noted,

> King Edward Cigar . . . was like *the* place for Black people to work back in the 40s and 50s. . . . If you had a good job . . . and you weren't, like, a teacher, you either worked at King Edward's or you were a longshoreman.

These early descriptions illustrated different classes with associated oppressions, but the participants described similar values instilled by their families. Concerning money and values, Bolsa claimed her mother "saved it like a machine, . . . no investments, no money market funds, no stocks and bonds. . . . What you make, you save it and you don't throw away any food." Penny described herself as "privileged" but because her mother grew up during the "Depression" she said her mother would "never buy anything unless it was on sale." Penny also described her personal experiences with her mother noting, "Her string pulling was really around guilt . . . record keeping. . . . She knew, to the penny, how much money I owed her for prom bills and probably adoption fees and so forth."

Penny and Bolsa also described similar altruistic family values. Penny recalled her mother's values, noting, "Anything that when I was done with it, always went back to the school. There were always children that she was clothing; there was always a kid she was bringing home." Although Bolsa's family was "poor," her parents lived the value that "it's better to give rather than to receive." Bolsa remembered her mother "would

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always make us share, to the point where . . . I resented that." Bolsa commented on how her father's values and his sacrifices led his family and extended family to America. "My dad had a big heart that way because he figured, 'We still have more than they do.'"

The participants described examples of other class-associated experiences. Penny implied she wasn't sure if her class and race identities contributed to her expulsion from the second grade. She also shared a similar story her mother told her. She said her mother

> graduated from high school when she was 16 as one of the few African Americans who live in Portland, Maine. . . . She was several points away from getting her Ph.D. . . . She just never got a chance to finish her dissertation—there were just some things you didn't do. . . . And I don't know . . . about Black and class and all of the interplay there, you know, do you hide—do you put those things behind you and you kind of keep them quiet? And I think that was what we did. Certainly in a middle-class African American community.

Bolsa remembered her mother's reference to "American Negroes" as "that *class*" and she "did not want to be associated with that *class* of people." Bolsa's own beliefs and understanding of social "class" were originally shaped by her mother's understanding and experiences. Bolsa remembered her mother's teachings. "It was her in terms of be an individual and don't worry about labels, you know. And don't put yourself in a box and categorize yourself."

Bolsa and Atta described similar experiences of financing school, working, and paying their own way through college. Bolsa did it with the help of "Burger King" for her non-Ivy League local college experience, while Atta thanked "McDonalds" and several other campus jobs for her Ivy League education experience in the Northeast. There were subtle inferences about the participants' viewpoints about "class." Penny was "privileged" and she found her "home" in an Ivy League school with a class of "intellectually stimulating" Blacks. Bolsa's mother's reference to "that class"

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distinguished her own "poor" position from that class of people she thought were worse off. Atta was in a "class" of her own. Penny always wanted to be "different"; she was "privileged." Their race, class, and other factors informed their gender identity.

Gender Awareness: Independent Women

Some have noted that Black women are aware of physical beauty but place more value in their own independence, inner strength, and inner and self-identities, not on aesthetic and physical appearances (Collins, 2000a). This study's participants' experiences supported Collins' assertion. Penny described her mother as "a beautiful woman in her own way. Not in her own way; she was a very, very good-looking woman." Penny described herself as a "tomboy" with little "taste," illustrated in this example, "I was pregnant. . . . I was huge. I gained 90 pounds. . . . I was a moose. . . . I have no taste. So I had like red dresses and pink dresses. Oh, it was awful." Bolsa commented that her sister "was the pretty one." Speaking about herself as a child, Bolsa reflected, "You were ugly! You were really ugly. . . . When I was young, I was not a good-looking kid at all." She said she looked like "Buckwheat" (of the Little Rascals) in her naturalization picture. She said, "I didn't perm my hair until I was maybe 20. . . . I went to college for 4 years with a pair of jeans and a sweatshirt. I didn't care how I looked . . . because my mother was not into makeup at all. She would always tell me, 'You don't need makeup.'" Bolsa shared how her mother encouraged her. "She would never say I'm not the prettiest and I'm not the smartest." Bolsa's mother repeated the advice. "Don't put yourself in a box and categorize yourself. . . . Just, like, be yourself."

Early on, Bolsa said she decided that she "better be smarter or you better have something to help you make it through." Atta took an early stance about her weight.

So I didn't have those issues in high school that I needed to, you know, look like the other people or act like the other people or I needed to get really skinny because I was at a White high school and everybody else was really skinny and those sorts of things.

Atta, Bolsa, and Penny described similar lessons, advice, and values their mothers thought would help prepare them as "Black girls," as illustrated by Atta's mother:

You can't be as good as, you have to be better than. And she said that's just the way it works, so if you really want that A, you better shoot for an A+. Because you might have a teacher, because she is who she is, that wants to mark you down. So, you get the A+ so that if she marks you down, she can't mark you any further than an A. And so what she was also communicating to me—which I didn't get at that time, which I get today—was the level of subjectivity that exists in all of our worlds.

Similarly, Bolsa said she understood she had to be "twice as good" and work "twice as hard" just to catch up and get something right "three times" before it was accepted as anything but luck. Penny remembered her mother crying because Penny didn't "measure up" and she was expelled from second grade in a private school. The school officials recommended a public school option, but Penny's mother wouldn't concede. Penny would finally be sent to private schools and be home-schooled by her mother while they traveled in Europe together.

Shared Experiences

The mother-daughter relationships led to "personal meanings associated with those categories" (Shields, 2008, p. 301) of intersecting race, class, and gender identities. There was evidence of independence, self-reliance, and confidence emerging from the participants' intersecting social race, class, and gender identities, binding them through common values. Penny and Atta had mother-daughter experiences consistent with Giddings' (1984) argument, "Daughters of working mothers are more independent, more

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self-reliant, more aggressive, more dominant" (p. 353). Bolsa was independent and self-reliant even though her mother didn't work and she depended on others for life essentials. Bolsa's mother implored her, "Don't rely on anyone, especially not a man." Bolsa promised herself (and her mother). "You know what? I'm going to have so much ability to be independent, you know, it's going to break the mold. So I'm very independent." Penny attributed her independence to her mother's extraordinary older age. "I probably got to have a much more dominant role because I was—because she was older." Penny described her relationship with her mother especially after being accepted into the Ivy League:

> She was a very strong role model to me—for me—in terms of being very independent and making my own decisions. And we used to clash. I mean, starting when I was like 15 or 16 years old. . . . But I made my own decisions. And I think the fact is that once I got into [the Ivy League], . . . there wasn't a whole lot that, from my perspective, that she could really tell me.

In the South there were still remnants of racial discrimination, and Atta's early experiences and lessons from her parents and grandmother contributed to her independence and decision-making style. When she perceived she was the subject of prejudice and discrimination, her parents didn't respond like other kids' parents. They challenged Atta to examine herself, saying, "You did something. . . . Figure it out." With impending Ivy League tuition bills, Atta's parents responded, "We don't know how we're going to pay for that." Atta said that she responded, "I don't know either, but we'll figure it out."

Atta and Bolsa described their mother-daughter relationship as salient over their lifetimes until their mothers' recent deaths. Bolsa said she had to reassure her mother that she hadn't become so independent that she was neglecting herself. She told her mother,

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"Ma, I have everything I need. . . . No, I have everything I need." Bolsa proclaimed, "Whatever I want, I just buy it myself. . . . I—to this day—do not rely on anybody; not even my own husband or my children. And it's hard because you can't do everything yourself, you know?" Atta suggested time hadn't changed her mother's advice, "Even when I got older and went to college or graduate school, . . . I was trying to make a decision, professionally, and I would want her to say yea or nay." Atta said her mother merely said, "Weigh it out. Weigh it out. Your call."

The participants shared experiences, received advice, and heard stories that were salient over time and resulted in salient values. Their mothers, their cultures, and where they were raised helped shape their identities, too. These maternal, experiential, and contextual factors intersected with each other to inform their personal identities. Additionally, the more they lived the experiences and faced their own decision-making and choices, the more "conscious" they were of who they were and what values they embraced.

Self-Empowerment: Shaping Identity and Increasing Consciousness

Historically and traditionally, Black women experienced multiple inequities and multiple oppressions attributed to their positions in the matrix of power based on their race, class, and gender identities (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a). This assertion is often aided by additional storytelling, history, others' experiences, and advice (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Etter-Lewis, 1993) forming an understanding of intersectional identities. The participants described some of their own lived experiences that molded and refined their understanding of their race, class, and gender identities and consciousness. Atta admitted, "I don't think that I was as conscious of my identity when I

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was growing up as I am today." This is consistent with Erickson's (1980) and Costello's (2005) assertions that identity is a "partly conscious but predominantly unconscious sense of whom one is as a person and as a contributor to the work of one's society" (Costello, 2005, p. 31). Atta described her perception of the process: "Well, you know, experience refines it. That's what—that's what I think really sort of refines your identity."

The participants were approximately the same age. They had different experiences growing up in different areas of the United States and coming from different cultures. Penny was raised in the Northeast, in a "middle-class African American neighborhood," found her home in a more intellectually stimulating Ivy League environment, and went on to live in Harlem, which she described as "race-awakening." Atta was raised in "South Georgia" where there were remnants of a segregated "Black and White," and she moved to the Northeast for college where she lived in a race and cultural "melting pot." Bolsa was raised in the Northeast in the "South Bronx" after migrating from the West Indies by way of England. Bolsa's family's island culture and her mother's negative stance about American Blacks influenced Bolsa's understanding of her own identity. Bolsa thought the Jewish area where she was raised was a "great neighborhood." But Bolsa shared thoughts about her lack of relationships in the neighborhood.

> I didn't have that many friends growing up . . . because my parents felt that we had enough cousins to play with. . . . So I never had friends, I never stayed after school to hang out; my mother always wanted us close to her. You know, very secure and very private. Just keep to family, keep to family. We have enough family, we don't need friends—that kind of thing. We never went out much, and if we do it was as a family.

The participants described other relationships, epiphanies, and defining moments that shaped their understanding and perceptions of who they were. Atta described

friendships she had maintained for 37 years and described herself as someone "who cares a lot about who she is, particularly in her friends' lives. You know, I like my friends to know that they can trust me, that I'm there for them." Penny traveled to Europe with her mother during her mother's sabbatical and was home-schooled by her mother, who had her own "Montessori" academic background. Penny's mother's illness cut short their trip and forced them to come back to the States. Penny described some of the high school relationships she formed when she came home.

> My two best friends—one in particular—her father took a real interest in me and really pushed me when I was in high school to get out and really interview with Ivy League schools and he dragged—wherever his daughter went he dragged me with her.

Bolsa, Atta, and Penny were raised in different geographic areas but they described similar Catholic high school experiences in which they all "stood out" to varying degrees. Bolsa recalled, "In high school, I became a twirler, . . . first Black twirler. . . . I was the captain. And that was the first time I actually had a leadership role." Bolsa also remembered that this was the "first time anybody ever realized that I was Black. 'Oh, she's the Black one.'" Bolsa also noted, "That didn't bother me. . . . You start to develop a little bit of thick skin, you know." Penny attended "an all-girls' Catholic school." She recalled, "I was one of two Black people in the school of 800 girls." Penny said, "I do believe that I ran on a slogan for student council president of 'Put some color in the council.'" Atta transferred to a different Catholic high school with "a lot of the kids . . . from my junior high." She claimed, "I had an opportunity to learn. A great environment." Atta remembered she wasn't exposed to other private schools yet. "Back then I didn't know anything about the prep schools, like Andover and St. Paul and Groton and all the schools that you hear about when you move to the Northeast." Atta said she

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graduated "at the top of the class" and she asserted, "I was just me and my whole goal was to continue to do well and to stay at the top."

Atta recalled a poignant experience in seventh grade, when she thought she was the target of discrimination and bias prior to her high school experience in the South in "1974-1975, . . . right on the heels of all the Black power . . . Black identity": "I remember—either I didn't get a grade I wanted or she didn't pick me for something and I remember that's the first thing I said, 'She's prejudiced.'" Atta also recalled, "I think that was probably my . . . first time *feeling* that way." Atta described how her parents responded to the situation:

> My parents . . . to their credit, would never let me get away with that. . . . Despite . . . disparities in the workplace, they would never let me get away with that. . . . Which I appreciate today because I think that helped me build my own personal resources instead of having the tool—and I'm going to call it a tool—of blaming things on other people.

Atta recalled a classmate's comment when she was accepted to all of the Ivy League and top-tier colleges. She said he stated, "You only got in because you're Black." Atta responded, "Oh, really? Well, if that's true, don't you think it's about time you started working for me?" In the ROTC, Atta thought it was her turn to become company commander and they made an uncustomary choice of a White girl a year behind Atta. Atta thought, "Is it because I'm Black?" Atta summarized her early experiences:

> A mission had been accomplished. . . . They knew, and I knew . . . I didn't need ROTC to have a successful high school career; I graduated *summa cum laude*, twelfth in my class, 4.0 GPA, . . . got into every school that I applied to. . . . So there was no point for me to—in my mind—there was nothing to prove. . . . Now, you might have argued could I have made a cause and let up for the next person that they did that to? . . . There was nothing to gain . . . and so I look back and I say to myself that it was the spirit that led me to those decisions, because my parents didn't push me, either. It was, "Whatever you want to do." So it was *my*

choice. . . . I wasn't conscious of how I made the decision, but it was a spirit-led. It was no reason for me to do anything to the contrary at that point.

College experiences and other lived experiences continued to shape the participants' identities. Penny remembered her parents' response to her haircut after she went to college. "Both had a fit when I cut off all my hair and had a big, giant afro." Penny shared, "I take great pride in being Black, . . . not pride; . . . I very much value my heritage. I value being different; I value not being like everyone else, *not looking like the majority*." Penny claimed,

> I would say I was *much happier in my skin* when I could go back to college because I just had more people who looked like me, who were around me. . . . It was wonderful to be with people who were intellectually stimulating around things that I hadn't even thought about from a race perspective.

Penny recalled, "During the 70s . . . it was a time of race awakening." Penny moved to Harlem to facilitate this learning. She said she and her future husband "went on to live in Harlem for 4 or 5 years, . . . which was an incredible experience." Penny commented about Harlem, saying it was "the draw of the community." Harlem changed for the worse, and Penny said there was "the deterioration of the neighborhood because of crack." Then she moved.

Bolsa remained adamant that she was not Black. In one experience, she couldn't find a "box" on an application that described her race. She sought her mother's advice. "Mommy, what do I put for ethnicity and race? . . . And she's like, 'I don't know.' Check 'other.'" Bolsa claimed she still did not associate with being Black. "Never called myself Black. Ever. Ever." Bolsa thought her boss was presumptuous when he responded to a question on a survey form. "Apparently there's no category for your race. But I fixed that; I circled 'Black.'" And Bolsa responded, "Unless you know something I don't, I

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don't consider myself Black." Later, during the interview, Bolsa shared her lifelong dream for her daughter. "Hopefully, my daughter will not have to bear the same *burdens* that my parents did when they came to this country and other Black people did when they came to this country."

Bolsa was "poor" with no Ivy League college education and Penny was "privileged" with an Ivy League education, but they had similar experiences and motivations when making their first job choices out of college, although there was a noticeable disparity in the salaries. Bolsa noted her future employer's offer. "We're going to pay you $12,500." Bolsa's mother pushed her, "Accept the job. . . . Take the freakin' job." Bolsa said her mother's dream was to see "her kids were doing well; educated, you know, and now life was going to be great." Penny was "privileged," Ivy League-educated, and she contemplated pursuing a writing career but she noted it "only paid about $9,000 a year, and that pretty much took care of that." Penny shared about her final choice. "Most appealing was that it was $25,000 a year. That was number one." Growing up, Penny and Bolsa were in different economic classes and possibly different social classes, but they were attracted by the money though contrastingly different amounts and different motivations. The three participants commanded initial salaries commensurate with their economic "classes," their college educational experience, and their family needs. Though they experienced different types of oppression and privilege, they had some common beliefs about being "victims of oppression."

Self-Empowerment: Independent, Self-Reliant, Resisting Victim Mentality

During the interviews, the participants shared their viewpoints and some reasoning in contrast with oppression and victimization associated with being a Black

woman (Collins, 2000a). Bolsa described her stance, "It's because you're a victim of—

not a victim in a bad way, but you are a reflection of your life experiences, right?" Atta

appreciated her parents' stance:

> They were not those parents that would run to the school every time it looked like
> their child was having an injustice or whatever. And I used to get so mad. . . . My
> parents were like, "Ump. You did something then. You better figure it out."

Penny described the second-grade expulsion experience as "life-changing" and

she declared from her earliest memories, "I was fairly opportunistic. . . . Opportunistic—

that's probably not the right word. I would say, how did I distinguish myself, or how did I

recognize, or look at?"

Atta described a situation when someone tried to protect her from being a victim

by mitigating the risk of failure. The Black woman appeared to be "armoring" (Bell &

Nkomo, 2001) the students from experiencing failure, oppression, and discrimination.

Atta recalled:

> I'll never forget, our eighth-grade teacher, she really loved our class. She was a
> Black woman. . . . She told us to sign up for the average and the above-average
> classes, to not do honors classes. Because she didn't want us to . . . fail.

Atta shared how she responded, "Honey, sophomore year, junior year, senior year—

every honors course I could take." Atta stated, "You know, so that's how I got exposed."

The participants described how they were 'armed' and empowered with other

tools instead of a 'victim mentality.' Bolsa described the power of confidence:

> If you're with a person that has confidence, they always look good. They could be
> the ugliest person in the world, but they always look good. . . . You see the inner
> part of them, more than anything else.

Atta's mother taught her, "Because you are a Black girl, you're going to always have to be better than." Atta never mentioned being told she was a victim. To the contrary, Atta was influenced by her mother's and grandmother's confidence, noting, "They just were."

The participants described how experiences tested their confidence. Penny recalled being laid off at work. "Displaced! I don't know if it was because of discrimination . . . whether it was gender or race." Penny surmised, "Overall, if I had to talk about the challenges or obstacles that I've had to overcome, they're probably both race and gender related." Bolsa took the following stance regarding victimization at work. "If we talk about victim in the workplace, sometimes I think people put themselves in that position. . . . You want to be White—you've still got your culture." During the last interview, Atta offered some advice about confidence in the workplace. "Whenever you're feeling your confidence being low, remind yourself that it's not an accident that you're sitting in that seat." Atta said you should question situations. "Is it his own bias? . . . Then that's a different thing that you have to deal with." Bolsa also contributed similar advice. "You should have enough confidence in yourself to determine where people put you. And unfortunately, if you kind of put the guardrails around the conversation," this is when you are "stereotyped."

During one discussion about an African American feminist book comparing Black professional women to White professional women, Bolsa shared her perception of the impact of these types of books. "Because [of] books, . . . Black women and White women hate each other in the workplace. That's what sells the book. Not the fact that we've arrived. If we've arrived, no one's going to buy the book anymore." Bolsa believed these

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comparisons were damaging. "It's bias in terms of you comparing yourself to how others seem to operate and you comparing yourself to how others seem to get things done or to get work." Bolsa noted the possible impact, "Hundreds of people are going to believe it."

The participants had spoken to audiences sometimes numbering in the thousands in various venues. Atta often spoke about, wrote about, and shared about the power of perceptions and how "perception was the copilot of reality." Atta, Penny, and Bolsa could have embraced historical perceptions of the oppressions associated with their identity intersections, and they could have adopted the victim mentality. Atta summed up her thoughts. "I didn't want to carry the race or the gender around as a burden, as an extra thing to carry, if you will, and to worry about." Bolsa shared her mother's dream and her own plan to break a vicious cycle. "That was the plan. And so in that little box, between the link between my mom and me, for hers—for her to feel comfortable that all the sacrifices she made . . ." The participants' experiences in resisting a victim mentality were unconscious and conscious actions defining and distinguishing themselves from each other and their mothers. This was their personal shifting resembling Collins' Black women consciousness (2000) through self-definition, self-valuation, and respect.

Self-Empowerment: Self-Definition and Self-Valuation

At different junctures in their lives, Penny, Bolsa, and Atta had "lived experiences" demonstrating a consciousness similar to what Collins (2000) described in "the importance of self definition" (p. 119). Atta simply declared it was about "me" and Bolsa would not be "herded." Penny wanted to be "different." Atta, Bolsa, and Penny had unique but similar values that emerged when prodded about how they defined success. For example, Bolsa wouldn't model herself after her older brother and sister, suggesting

that when they returned from the armed service, they "still have to start over again." Atta boasted her mother was the "greatest influence to this day in my life." She also claimed, "When I was in junior high and high school I used to always say that I am me." Penny's mother was from the "colored" era. Penny described her mother as "beautiful" and her mother was her "role model." Penny said she always knew she was "Black" and she was a "tomboy" who made her own decisions.

There were other examples of the distinctions Bolsa, Penny, and Atta drew between themselves and others. Bolsa shared how she defined and introduced herself publicly in some speaking venues:

> I'll ask people to tell me about myself. . . . Tell me who I am. . . . Raise your hand if you think I went to an Ivy League school. Raise your hand—all those stereotypes that you don't think about . . . they can't visualize me any way other than the stereotype because they think "Black female"; they've already made the decision.

Bolsa proceeded: "Well, let me tell you, . . . I'm a housewife, I'm a mother, I've got two dogs and a fish. . . . If that means you need to make sure they know that you're a managing director." Penny described her views about defining selves, "I would challenge anybody, anywhere, anytime to tell me that they define themselves—do they wake up every single morning and as they put their feet on the floor—right?—and they're headed to the bathroom—"Ah, good morning, I'm a Black woman." Though Penny said she was comfortable being a Black woman, in retrospect, she described the routine a bit differently. "As the morning rolls on I'm probably defining myself . . . one day . . . as a woman who has an opportunity at some point to explore the potentially Jewish roots in her life and what that's all about."

Atta described herself and her self-defined values.

I would say she is an honest, loyal, thoughtful person, who cares a lot about who she is, particularly in her friends' lives. . . . They can trust me, that I'm there for them. That matters a lot to me in terms of part of my self-definition.

Similarly, Bolsa noted that "integrity" mattered most when making decisions, and Penny said she valued "establishing credibility, having a good reputation, being known for integrity and transparency and directness." Career wise, Penny also mentioned she valued "achievements around driving business or personal compensation, to some degree; it's not everything." Penny also shared how she defined success, "I define it in looking at my family and hoping that they're healthy and happy, safe, . . . as probably [having] a relationship with the same person for almost 30 years." Penny also noted, "Part of that in success is being able to leverage . . . ways in which I can give back."

The participants made statements demonstrating common educational values. Bolsa said, "My mother would always tell me that education is power." Penny's mother and Atta's mother were educators. Atta said her parents had "somehow built an expectation that I felt very tangibly that I was supposed to do well." Atta claimed, "I really had this expectation . . . because I knew they expected the A's; when I didn't get the A's, then I, too, had a problem." Following her challenges in the second grade, Penny went on to private schools because her mother wouldn't accept a public school education. Penny was accepted into an Ivy League school and she described how it pleased her mother. "I think the fact is that once I got into [an Ivy League university], . . . I got in on my own; you know, I applied, I did everything. And she was so proud of me."

Atta's parents made it clear they didn't know how they could pay for an Ivy League education. Atta explained how "McDonald's helped me. Then I had three jobs while I was on campus. . . . I graduated *magna cum laude* . . . , took a full load, had four

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or five activities, and three jobs. . . . There's nothing you can say to me." Bolsa

understood her family couldn't afford her college education. She told another "Bolsa"

story:

> I didn't even sleep at the school; I came home every night. It was about a 20-
> minute drive. And then I had to not only go home, sometimes I had to go to work.
> I worked at Burger King. . . . That's how I made money for my tuition. . . . You
> smelled like fries, but I didn't take out a loan. I don't have any debt; I paid my
> tuition up front. . . . My parents didn't have to worry about paying my college.

Bolsa added she would not realize success in life "until my daughter says something to

me, after she graduates from college, that leads me to believe that all my teachings—from

the time she was in my stomach to that moment—she got it."

The common value placed on the education by the participants and their mothers

is not uncommon for African Americans especially with the history of slavery and

suffering. Education was described as the tool for liberation and freedom (Allen, 1992;

Anderson & Collins, 2010; hooks, 1994; Slevin & Wingrove, 1998). The early slave

women taught their children at home especially their daughters (Hine & Thompson,

1998). The scholar, W.E.B. Dubois is cited for his emphasis on the power of education

and the empowerment of educated African Americans (Allen, 1992). DuBois argued

education is the solution to "two unreconciled souls dwelling in one dark body" (Allen,

1992, p.58). In this study, education may have contributed to the reconcilement of the

participants' simultaneous personal and professional identities, a freedom from oppressed

history and ambivalent simultaneity.

As adults, Bolsa, Atta, and Penny's lives and values challenged some traditional

race and gender roles. Bolsa and Penny had "stay-at-home" husbands. Bolsa shared about

the early realities of marriage: "It was a struggle for me when I got married because I

realized I had to tell somebody I'm coming home late or I'm going to go on a trip, as opposed to going and coming back and saying I went on the trip." Penny had a similar challenge. "I think from very early on I was in charge of my own decision making." But, Penny also noted, after she was married, "*we* made a decision." Atta knew any locale move she and her husband made depended on Atta's ability to relocate her "Wall Street" profession. Atta shared about her concept of marriage. "You've got to take care of this relationship. You can't act independently."

Some researchers have linked Black family support to an unhealthy dependence on families (Carby, 1982), and they link Black independent working women to their children's transgressions and academic demise (Carby, 1982; Collins, 2000a). It's also been argued that Black women are so independent and subject to being victims of physical and mental "battering" because they refuse to seek assistance (Carby, 1982; Collins, 2000a). This study's research participants' experiences challenged these assertions and "historical" perceptions about Black women. Atta, Penny, and Bolsa shifted their understanding and consciousness away from some historically oppressed identity positions in the "matrix of dominance" (Collins, 2000a), and the values they adopted were boundary-less and salient. The family values the participants espoused included respect for their parents. But, their mothers, as mentors and role models, encouraged independence, self-sufficiency and family matriarchal leadership. Thus the women's leadership in terms of her professional career was a role shift with the support of their husbands. Anderson & Collins (2007) discussed the "ideal" family with the wife in the nurturing role at home and the husband in the public role at work. This is a norm by which people and families have been judged. Bonnie Thornton Dill (Dill & Zambrana,

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2009) asserted, the family norms, especially the family structure and roles, are dictated by culture, race, class and gender identities and family positions in the larger economy. All of these factors played a part in the family and professional roles the participants and their families chose. There are further comments summarizing these findings in chapter 6.

Conclusion: African American Women's Understanding of Their Identities

Atta, Bolsa, and Penny understood their identities through common but different storytelling, shared experiences, advice, and lived experiences. Their identities are unique portraits of maternal influences shaping their race, class, and gender identities and values intersecting with other factors as well that made them unique. The salient identities they formed differentiated, authenticated, and explained their courses in life, demonstrating their different life history roads to Wall Street managing directors. But, there were common understandings across Penny, Atta, and Bolsa's life experiences:

1. Values were the salient cores of their identities: e.g., altruism, education, independence, resisting victimization, and family.

2. Relationships were "root" causes, antecedents to their identities and their viewpoints that guided their lives, with maternal relationships in particular informing their values, motivations, character, and behaviors. Also, relationships with husbands and the roles played by husbands and this study's participants spoke volumes of the personal and family identities.

3. Self-empowerment was a suite of tools for painting their intersectional identities.

Experience of Professional Identity Integration

In the introduction of her book *Tempered Radicals*, Debra Meyerson proclaimed, "This book provides a portrait of the experience of people who make up contemporary organizations, each of whom, in many contexts, must struggle to bring his or her whole 'self' to work" (Meyerson, 2001, p. xix). But as Roberts, Roberts, O'Neill & Blake-Beard (2008) note in their account of Martin Luther King's task of managing his own visibility, King admitted, "I am conscious of two Martin Luther Kings. I am a wonder to myself … I am mystified at my own career" (p. 425). In chapter 4, Atta, Bolsa, and Penny's individual 'whole selves' were framed in individual portraits. Those selves comprised common but different race, class, gender, ethnic, and cultural identities as well as other contextual and perceptual informants. But their values and the value of relationships remained constant. When discussing identity integration, the participants made common references to the importance of values, self-awareness, authenticity, relationships, and perception management as keys to their achieving their unique definitions of identity integration. It was integration they spoke of, no extreme conforming, 'work-life balance,' 'juggling,' or denying their authentic identity or heritage. But, it wasn't always easy; there were struggles, lessons learned, and a desire to help others as well. These were all relevant in their self-identity formation. They'd relied on core values, family relationships, and their own self-empowerment, and these were salient tools in professional identity integration. They enlisted "values" as they effectively and simultaneously incorporated the professional roles into their personal lives.

Personal Empowerment: Self and Other Perception Awareness

Atta, Penny, and Bolsa valued authenticity, integrity, and credibility as they lived

their personal and professional lives, and they believed they were each "one" person

grounded in self values. They valued their heritage, but they knew they would struggle

with managing others' perceptions of them that were outgrowths of perceived group

identities and values and personal perceptions as well. They felt comfortable in their own

"authentic" skin. This is who they wanted others to know, so perception and impression

management were prerequisites and tools they continuously drew upon. Atta questioned,

"How could you be authentic without owning who you are and where you are from?" She

noted, "That's the first part of integrating your identity, is to own that." Atta described

herself,

> That girl is still here . . . in the abstract, . . . an honest, loyal, thoughtful person,
> who cares a lot about who she is, particularly in her friends' lives. . . . They can
> trust me, that I'm there for them.

Atta also admitted she could be "me, to a fault."

> Bolsa offered a similar observation:

> It's too difficult to lie about who you are every single day; you're going to fall,
> you're going to screw up. So you might as well just be who you are. But I think it
> takes a level of confidence.

> Bolsa suggested, "Bring whoever you are to work . . . but know who you're

bringing" and "You're going to be confident that you don't have to hide who you are. . . .

You have to be comfortable with that scenario." Bolsa took a stance. "It's all based upon

the family nucleus that I had and the learnings in the family. Interest in yourself and

being confident, you know. I won't let anybody take my soul."

Penny recalled she had problems with the notion of being authentic at work:

When we were at the multicultural conference, I believe a lot of people did use the word *authentic*. And I struggled with that word . . . because I think that we are lying to ourselves if we tell ourselves that we don't have to adapt and change to the circumstances that we're presented with. And so if that makes me not authentic, then that's fine.

Penny described herself and some of her idiosyncrasies. "I'm also a hot-head with a good sense of humor, I'm a screamer, and I can be a prima donna from time to time." Penny admitted she could be prone to a "hissy fit" in some situations. She shared her objective in life: "On a personal side is being able to triumph over some challenges or obstacles or weaknesses. I'm renowned for not listening; I know that and I work hard at it every day." Penny toiled at being a better listener. Atta referred to authenticity and adaptation as knowing who to "put out there" and "when."

When Bolsa received her first job offer after college, she knew who to put out there, coming from her poor background, and she said her mother chided her, "Take the freakin' job." After additional experience, Bolsa described her own viewpoint and stance about job decisions. "In this business, people get enamored with dangling money in front of you." When Bolsa was offered the managing director position, she knew it would mean "another $50,000 in your pocket . . . you're literally leaving on the table." Bolsa noted she was "not going to make people force and put me in a stereotype that they are— that all they see is that. Right?" Bolsa recalled her values:

> Compensation. And managing that way with fear. But that's not my motivation so they can dangle that all they want. I want to come to a position where I have intellectual freedom and I feel like I'm contributing to getting somebody— something done with my power and authority that they can't do. That's all I need in my job. Everything else I could give a crap. You know? So we have a match. I'm quite happy.

Independence and empowerment meant the ability to manage her integrated life, and as Bolsa noted, having "intellectual freedom." Penny argued that what was important to her was "to get my point across in a way that is convincing and influential, and in being able to see the change or modified outcome—to meet my expectations." Atta shared what she valued most in her integrated identity:

> Being the architect of your own agenda. And understanding what it is you want to accomplish professionally, and personally and spiritually, and in every aspect of your life. And what's going to make you *feel good* about how you have spent your time, or invested your time, because that's really all you have, you know, here on this earth. . . . The measures of success, if you will, are holistically it's about accomplishing whatever is on that agenda.

Atta described herself and her agenda: "You know, I would say she's smart, you know, intellectually driven, very driven to be at the top of her game." Atta was also aware of the value of accurate perceptions, noting she wanted to be known for her "toughness": "I may be thinking it but I may not be living it. I may not be displaying that." Perceptions were critical to all of the women.

Bolsa noted, "I'm not going to come in every day and bring out my baby pictures of my family and my husband and my grandma." Bolsa explained, "I want people to see through me. 'I just wish you could see what's in my head right now.'" Bolsa described how she introduced herself prior to speeches in an effort to change inaccurate perceptions about herself:

> My name is . . . and I'm a housewife and mother of two. I've got two kids and one husband and a bunch of fish and a couple of dogs. And I happen to work here 60 hours a week. Because that's really who I am. When I go home I'm not managing director, I'm like, . . . You know, that's who you are, right?

The participants consistently emphasized the importance of ongoing perception awareness and perception management. Atta's mantra was "perception is the copilot of reality," and she explained:

> I think one of the things that I learned along the way is that we end up putting a lot of pressure on ourselves that may or may not be necessary. . . . So some of the pressures and stresses that I think are introduced are part—culturally what we've been brainwashed with, about having to be better than.

Bolsa acknowledged a common perception of "Black woman" having to "work twice as hard." Bolsa clarified her belief:

> We don't have to work harder at the work, we have to work harder in advance. . . . This doesn't come natural for us. . . . That's more hours in the day, that's more time spent. And I say that may not be forcing you to work late.

Atta described a situation when she believed accurate perceptions would have helped. "When I wasn't as effective as I would have liked to have been in the early part of my career, then realizing that I wasn't doing what some of my peers was doing. . . . I had a definition of what a second-year associate was in my mind." Atta didn't know how she came to that inaccurate perception.

The participants' self-awareness of perceptions and the awareness of their social group-related perceptions were invaluable as they integrated their individual and professional identities. Sacharin, Lee & Gonzalez (2009) noted, "Identities provide the lens through which the world is perceived and behavior is organized" (pp. 275-276). Hence, effective identity integration depends on strategically visible integrated identities (Roberts, et al., 2008). Bolsa had adopted her mother's perception of group membership, "the herd mentality, farmer group, farmer class." Bolsa's mother consistently gave her the same advice. "Just, like, be yourself, you know." Bolsa shared some positive

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perceptions about Black women. "African American women have the most broadest life experience compared to the people they have to work with."

Penny, Atta, and Bolsa shared about managing perceptions and managing impressions others had of them. Atta suggested:

> I didn't understand the power of when you put different parts of yourself in front of somebody. . . . When you walk into a new organization, then you want to present yourself in a way that you want them to think about you all the time. And be consistent in your behavior and be conscious about what that is you're trying to do.

Penny, Bolsa, and Atta valued their awareness of the organization, powerful people in the organization, and the "rules of the game" that would help their career progression. Atta vetted her organization before she joined it to ensure it valued diversity. She described the vetting experience:

> I spent time at lunches and dinners with the managing directors and . . . got exposed to the business. . . . I had had some knowledge about . . . the kind of people, . . . when I was 19 years old, when I first got exposed to them.

Atta came to the following conclusions based on her vetting process:

> Almost every person that I met . . . was a little bit different than the last person I met. . . . Translation in my own mind was that, therefore, there were a lot of different equations that equal success. . . . It wasn't so much racially different because I didn't meet that many folks of color as I went along the way. . . . And so, again, translation in my mind was, a lot of different equations that equal success, I probably could go there and do well.

Penny came to her own conclusions about the financial industry and alluded to how she felt she would be accepted as a Black woman in leadership:

> The financial services industry . . . which is predominantly White male. And dealing with people who don't—dealing with men who have never dealt with women before in senior leader roles [is] very awkward, very difficult; there's no clue, absolutely no clue.

Penny had thoughts about "others" and their tolerance for diversity.

> There are people who get it, who [are] further down the diversity path, and then there are other people who are like, "Well, she's just a big baby," and when she doesn't get her way and it's all because she's a Black woman.

Similarly, Atta shared her thoughts about some perceptions of Black women, that they "come through the door . . . angry Black women." Similarly, Bolsa suggested, "Those people have a blind spot to the things that we do and the things that we like in our hometown, our community."

The participants believed others had false or inaccurate perceptions and assumptions about Black women. Bolsa referred to some perceptions as "tags" that identified Black women before they began professional careers:

> When we come in the door, . . . we've got our head wrapped, one earring on, maybe we're smoking a cigarette and a baby here and a baby there, and we're too big for the clothes we have on, and we're yelling at somebody. And they tag us or box us in and . . . I don't like being put in the box. And I tell people, you know, the minute you walk in you're in a box.

Bolsa also suggested how others perceive Black women's success:

> I think it's because, you know, sometimes people look at your success, and if you did something really great, as luck. The second time you do it, they're thinking, "We need to pay attention." The third time, you know what, it ain't luck anymore. That person can do it three times, without failure, then they've got something. Most other people don't have to go through three times. We've got to go through at least three times before people don't believe it's an anomaly.

Additionally, Bolsa explained: "It's not discrimination, outward. It's bias in terms of you comparing yourself to how others seem to operate and you comparing yourself to how others seem to get things done or to get work." Similarly, Atta concluded:

> So the only difference you could see between you and others is the color of your skin. And unfortunately, that's the thing that you're going to think of as the reason

why you're not getting the key client, or the reason why you're not in the informal circles, or the reason why you're not getting access to that senior manager.

Bolsa shared how she thought she was perceived. "I'm a mother and I'm a housewife. That translates into, 'She can't get the key project, she can't work late at night, don't give her something hard, . . . [it's] weekend work so let's not give it to her.'"

Penny perceived how she was stereotyped. "Every time something doesn't go my way I throw the race card out." Penny discussed how you need to be aware of the organization's tolerance level:

> I've talked about the risks that you take when you do want to stand up and you do want to give feedback in the moment and the risks that you take as an individual and a professional. . . . You have to be very careful—it's something you have to really think about and determine whether or not it's worth the capital—the political capital—that you want to invest.

The participants understood the value of "other" awareness and perception management in the organization. Atta suggested the consequences if you don't know the politics of the organization. "When you don't know how to define the politics, how to recognize the politics, and therefore how to play the politics, then yeah, that may definitely cost you some time and it may cost you some money." Bolsa shared the importance of understanding politics, game rules, and communication change and the need to stay on top of things like "buzz words." Changes are part of the game. Atta warned Black women to stay on top of "our game":

> I do think your game has to be tight. And you know, we tend to feel like we don't have as many chances to make a mistake. And unfortunately, I kind of subscribe to that. I do think we don't have as many chances to make a mistake. . . . You don't have as many opportunities to fail as somebody else might and still have an opportunity to be successful.

Bolsa referred to the integration of the individual and professional identity process as "doing the dance," and Atta referred to it as "playing the politics" and being "on top of your game." Atta, Bolsa, and Penny realized that while they had salient core values across their lifetimes, some things had to change, including their own and others' perceptions.

Awareness of self and others guided the assimilation and adaptation processes. Bolsa suggested that as Black women, "We have to work twice as hard when we get into this building. . . . We have to work harder—it's on the softer things, it's not on the—we know the job." Atta also suggested leaving the "race/gender card" at the door:

> When you kind of grow up with that mantra, at least for me, I certainly didn't take it on as extra baggage. You know, that if you're kind of telling me that's kinda how it is, that's how it is. And I certainly didn't grow up with a feeling of resentment about it.

Bolsa noted accepting the fact that "unless your name is on the building, you've got to go with the flow. . . . You've got to be careful how you walk."

Penny believed adaptation was inevitable in professional identity integration. "I think that we are lying to ourselves if we tell ourselves that we don't have to adapt and change to the circumstances that we're presented with."

Bolsa noted that the game may have one set of rules for new employees and another set of rules for those with seniority, even if you are a Black woman.

> In this industry you've got to wear the uniform. Uniform ain't dreadlocks, okay? I can wear dreadlocks now because I'm in a senior role. I've already shown that I can do the job, so I'm past the gate. But that's not how you start in that position. I'm not going to wear earrings bigger than my head, okay? I'm not going to stand in the position that looks like somebody from a rap movie. . . . You have to assimilate. Right?

Again, Atta figured, "Okay, but the new organization already has a perception. . . . So it makes me much more conscious of what I'm putting out there and actively managing that." Atta said she asked questions:

Who are you? What do you want to put out there? Now what do you want them to think? So, who are you going to be day one, and what are your three adjectives as you walk in day one, and how are you going to manage those? Okay, what do you want to manage towards? . . . Now that's what you want to manage for.

Atta role-played to make her point:

When you don't know, you have to put it out there very early on that you don't know. And I think you should ask a lot of questions because that's the only way that you're going to find out. . . . You can do the tactic that I'm going to take: "I don't know anything. Y'all tell me." And I will be asking a whole bunch of questions.

Atta shared another example,

I tell people all the time that if you have the opportunity, ask for the promotion a year before you think you're ready. . . . You know, the first time I didn't get promoted, . . . I had to stop and think, "Okay, what happened? What did I do?"

Bolsa used some subtle tactics to learn what she didn't know about the politics and the job, by "paying more attention to the water cooler conversation, taking more value in chit-chatting in the hall for 5 minutes and getting to know a job, realizing that you need to go out of your work group to know more people."

Additionally, while Atta believed that there was not much tolerance for Black women to make mistakes, she also believed the identity refinement process was "sort of trial and error. Experience refines it. That's what—that's what I think really sort of refines your identity." Atta also noted about herself, "The raw . . . is still very much here. And now she is somebody that I celebrate and I put up front now, strategically." Bolsa

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explained, "You kind of go back to all the things your mother told you and say, 'Okay, that's my value system; now I have to apply it every single day that I come to work.'"

The participants shared some examples of additional personal values and changes. Bolsa mentioned her experience taking on the identity as the "breadwinner" in her family.

> And then I remember, literally, worrying about, Okay, if I'm the breadwinner because my husband is staying home, I don't know how long that's going to be for. You know, you don't plan these out—you know, I better start to have a little more confidence in myself because this is it. There is no turning back and I have more to lose if I don't make it than I have to gain.

Bolsa also shared, "I'm not finished parenting, I'm not finished being a wife, I'm not finished being a grandmother, I'm not finished helping my mom in her later years. . . . You want to maintain a balance so you don't lose it." Bolsa described one daily practice, "5:00, you watch. I'll jump out that window if I have to, to make it downstairs quick." Penny described how she relieved the stress of a rough day by sharing a phone conversation she had with her husband: "I really had a hard day. I am standing in the middle of Bloomingdale's trying on a pair of $285 shoes. I'll call you later." Penny described this as "retail therapy." Penny talked about a general "survival" strategy:

> I would say that in order to survive—in order to even thrive—you have to adapt to whatever your environment is. And I, quite frankly, think that how people show up in the workplace or in the outside depends on who they are and what they're comfortable with.

Penny shared another example. "I have certain particularities about my schedule. If somebody puts like 15 things on my schedule, I'm like, . . . 'No. I can't do that.' . . . I could physically do it, but I'm not doing that." Adaptation was not portrayed as the only option or a "take it or leave it" ultimatum. Bolsa acknowledged, "There is no manual that tells you how to be a wife, a mother, and a businesswoman." Identity integration required

adaptation and adjustments according to the individuals, the positions, the situations, and the personal values. Adaptation led to empowerment.

Personal Empowerment: Managing Agendas

Atta said, "I am vocal; I believe in speaking up when things aren't right. I believe in owning your power and owning and exercising your voice. It is important that you do that." Atta, Bolsa, and Penny shared examples of empowerment because of and in spite of personal identities, notably, the "color of their skin" and their gender. The three participants influenced the lives of thousands of "women of color," "Black" women and White women through diversity and similar multicultural venues. Atta said Sponsors for Equal Opportunities recruited her as they sought "top Black students from the best schools in the country" to "change the face of Wall Street." Penny believed there was no shortage of leadership and managerial opportunities: "There's a lot of opportunity to succeed, and I want to make sure that that's what happens. . . . There was an opportunity to potentially take on some managerial responsibilities." Penny said that as a Black woman and senior manager, she had become more "visible" in her organization and she was a "role model" to Black women. As noted later in this chapter, this visibility had to be managed by Penny to sustain effectiveness in her primary professional role. This evoked the reference to Martin Luther King Jr. again as he became a "moral leader, public intellectual, archetype and even superhero" (Roberts, et al., 2008). Bolsa also recalled, "I do believe I got the job—as a management development associate—because I was a Black female. Even though they didn't say it, I do believe I was an affirmative action hire." Penny said some of the opportunities and subsequent successes were attributed to her own "blood, sweat, and tears," and some opportunities were because of

"luck" and being "in the right place at the right time." Atta also noted that timing was a key to some opportunities.

> Timing does matter when you make a move. So that's the first big lesson. . . . That was another big 'eureka' moment for me, because that's when I realized that you've got to ask for what it is you intend to have.

While there were opportunities attributed to race, class, and gender, there were other reasons the participants reached the success they defined for themselves. In one situation, Bolsa suggested,

> I don't think I got the job because I was Black. I do believe it was because I was successful in technology and I had a lot of previous successes. . . . So I can't point to, "Well, she's Black; give it to her." No!

Bolsa also shared another experience of her unlikely success in an "old boys club" situation.

> He sent out a memo to everybody saying, you know, "[Name] is going to take on my role, . . . VP, . . . is going to take my office," and I realized, "Wow, this guy sees in me stuff that I don't even see myself in." Right? Because he gave his job to me instead of his—I don't want to use the word *cronies*, but his guys.

Penny acknowledged some team achievements in addition to individual achievements and opportunities. "I think our team has had an opportunity to be successful because of the people around me. And I think I've done a pretty good job of picking some of those people." Penny shared that having a supporting cast at home mattered, too. "And then having a husband who's not too much of a pain in the butt. And two good kids."

The participants demonstrated that they came into the professional identity integration process with some experiences and confidence, but they also knew it meant additional responsibility. Bolsa shared how that meant change for her.

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I realized at that point, "Wow, now I'm really going to have to be responsible." Because I'm responsible for people: how much they get paid, who gets fired. I can determine how many cars are in their garage and what school your kid goes to, the clothes you wear on your back. That scared the life out of me. And I think it's from that moment on I realized, "You know what? This is not—we're not playing anymore; this is the big league, so I better own up to it."

As the participants adapted their individual identities, as they changed perceptions, they became empowered and realized increased responsibility. They also realized they were integrating their personal and professional identities and acknowledged how "others" facilitated their processes.

Relationships: Mentors, Sponsors, and Other Relationships

Self-reliance and independence did not preclude strategically pursuing, forming, and using relationships and networks during professional development and identity integration. Relationships continued to be valued saliently in the participants' lives. The participants acknowledged how various types of relationships and roles were valued in their professional lives. Atta and Bolsa both shared how they still sought their mother's input for some decision-making. Atta's mother still advised her to "weigh it" and "figure it out." Bolsa's mother encouraged her not to be "herded" and to not check the "Black" box. Their mother's roles in their lives guided their professional relationship styles and values. Atta suggested that "people of color" might have difficulties building relationships:

I think [it] happens to a lot of folks of color, and I can't say whether it happens more to women than to men, but if you extend yourself to ask for some help, early, and it is rebuffed, or you walk away feeling dumb for having asked, or whatever, then that makes you retreat even further and you don't seek out help, and that hurts you.

Atta also noted,

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And you don't see a lot of senior people, necessarily, of color, extending
themselves and making it easy, in my mind, for, you know, younger folks to ask
for that help and therefore get that skill earlier in their life about managing those
politics and managing those situations.

Bolsa suggested that you need a network of people, and she warned of the

problems you might have if you don't face that reality.

You haven't figured out the importance of accessing those informal networks. . . .
You just think you come into work and do your job. . . . You do not come into this
business and just do your job. That's going to last you maybe 6 months.

Bolsa shared examples of two people who helped her "connect the dots":

He gave me access to things that [I could get] no way on my own, . . . pulled me
up [so that] I would have that network. It would have been impossible, totally
impossible. . . . As I'm looking back at it and say I'm connecting the dots. When
it was happening—you know, you're in it so it's hard to tell the story because you
don't know the end yet, right? But those are the two men, I'll tell you, from day
one. The best things that ever happened to me were those two guys.

Penny and Atta suggested they had peer networks for different purposes. Penny

said, "Yeah, I had other people who were mentors, other than my bosses. People who like

had oversight. A couple of Black people . . . who, you know, we sort of all reached out to

one another." Penny described the relationships, "The mentoring piece of it is there's so

much informal mentoring that goes on, there's so much of sometimes just putting your

arm around somebody and saying, 'Hey, you're doing a great job.' . . . I've done some

pretty good connecting with people." Similarly, Atta referred to her "success team,"

describing an example of the success team role.

She would be the person I would call and if I would say, "Well, I want to go and
tell them this, and this is what I'm going to say. . . ." And she said, "Oh, no,
you're not going to say that because . . . that's who I laid bare to." She would say,
"Ah, you *sound too threatening* there," or "Oh, that sounds like you're afraid," or
"Oh, that sounds too—way *too emotional*." You know, those sorts of things. So
she would be the person that as I got older in my career—so sort of 5, 6, 7 years

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old—she would be the person that I would try a lot of things on. So a lot of the first years was sort of trial and error.

When asked about formal mentoring relationships in her professional positions, initially Bolsa replied,

> Never had it. . . . I never experienced . . . any mentorship, . . . never used the word *mentor* to describe myself or had anyone until I came to this job, . . . and somebody said to me, "Who are your mentors?"

Later, as Bolsa reflected during the interviews, she commented:

> He was the guy that looked at me, followed me, gave me things, and I didn't know, because he never advertised, he didn't say, "Look, I'm putting you up for this job, I'm giving you this promotion, I'm your mentor." We never talked like that. . . . I can look back and say, "You know what? That was a mentor for me." He was a corporate sponsor; he was a friend. Meanwhile, every day that I went to work I looked at him as my boss.

Bolsa said this mentor was a White male and she also described two other relationships with White men. "You know, I learned visionary skills from him, . . . principles of leadership. . . . I learned client interaction: how to manage projects, you know." Bolsa described another relationship.

> He's also the one that put me up for Black Achiever Award, when I became an MD [managing director]. He understood my whole life balance; . . . and he was a White Italian—but he and I had the same mindset on how to run a business.

Bolsa expressed her mentoring preference. "I don't want any structure to it." Bolsa also laughed and admitted she had no formal mentoring "training." But she said, "I could have used some."

Atta recalled one Black woman she met as soon as she joined her organization, and she described the woman as "the most prominent Black woman that had been in the business for a period of time that I had seen at that point." But Atta believed very

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strongly, "You can *survive* a very long time in your career without a mentor." Atta stated how she embraced the concept of sponsor relationships:

> I write a lot about that . . . and I give a lot of speeches about this, as you know, where I talk about the whole mentor vs. sponsor thing. . . . That's why I'm so vocal about it now. Like I said, everybody is writing about it. Because you didn't hear the word *sponsor*. And I had been talking about this for years and now I see everybody talking about it and writing about it. I'm like, "Yea, they got the message."

When asked to distinguish sponsors from allies, Atta used a colorful analogy:

> Because the sponsor is actually expending capital. The ally may or may not spend their capital, but they could be aligned with you, they could be supportive of you, they may choose to spend some capital, behind the scenes. But that behind-the-scenes expenditure of capital is much cheaper. They're not really putting anything at risk, right? They're kind of testing the waters. They might tell people that they're aligned with you, but they don't necessarily go put it on the table. That this is, "Okay, this is the *horse I'm riding* and I need y'all to get on the *horse* with me. I need you guys to ride." And that's really what a sponsor does.

Penny remembered a valuable lesson a boss taught her about "sponsoring" relationships. "Know your borrower. . . . You really need to know who the person was and what were their credentials and what was their credibility."

Bolsa believed from the first day that "you've got to have mentors" to help with those skills. Atta suggested that for Black women, "sponsors don't come easily. A lot of the times you have to ask for them." The shortage of Black women sponsors and mentors presented challenges because of the perceived responsibility attached to the senior leadership roles and value placed on altruism, giving back, owing someone, and relationships, which were salient factors in the women's lives. Primarily, the impetus of the shortage of mentors, sponsors and role models is often attributed to the matching factors such as age, race, class and gender factors linked to common value assumptions in the mentor and the protégé relationships (Allen, Kim, & Jacobson, 1995; Blake-Beard,

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2001, 2009; Kram, 1983; O'Neill & Blake-Beard, 2002). But the participants were adept in alternative-seeking for their development.

Simultaneity of Personal and Professional Responsibilities

The participants discussed challenges they perceived were specific to Black women integrating individual and professional identities. Some challenges were specific to Wall Street professionals. Atta, Bolsa, and Penny made specific assertions about the challenges of being senior Black professional women in the financial industry. They noted certain objectives and perceptions contributing to the challenges (Table 5-2).

Generally, the participants indicated that they learned from some experiences that having a Black woman mentoring a Black woman would be ideal, but there were challenges to making this approach practical and effective. Bolsa said one Black woman applicant highlighted on her resume that "she was successful in increasing *deficiency*." Bolsa understood that what the applicant tried to communicate was not exactly articulated correctly. Bolsa also believed many negative perceptions about Black women were based on "what people see on the news at night." Bolsa gave two specific examples:

> It's those stupid little things . . . that just reinforce that we shouldn't be in this business. And that's the kind of—those are the two things that no one will ever tell you in this business. No manager, no White guy, no Hispanic guy, . . . the only person I could tell . . . what I just said is another Black woman.

Table 5-2
Simultaneous Objectives and Challenges

Objectives	Challenges
• Being "authentic." "I won't let anybody take my soul." "The raw . . . is still very much here. And now she is somebody that I celebrate and I put up front now, strategically."	• "Assimilate," "adapt," change. "It's too difficult to lie about who you are every single day; you're going to fall, you're going to screw up." "Me, to a fault."
• "Voice be heard." "Get . . . point across." "I am vocal; I believe in speaking up when things aren't right. I believe in owning your power and owning and exercising your voice. It is important that you do that."	• "Angry Black woman." "Ah, you sound too threatening there." "Big whiny Black girl." "A big baby."
• "Fair," "affirmative action."	• "Black girl, you're going to always have to be better than." "Helped me build my own personal resources." "Twice as hard . . . now I know why. . . . We have to bear the burden of teaching others, that's all." "Level of subjectivity that exists in all of our worlds."
• "Trial and error." "Experience refines it, . . . refines your identity."	• A Black woman "can do it three times, without failure, then they've got something." "You don't have as many opportunities to fail . . . still have an opportunity to be successful."
• "Don't ever rely on anybody, especially a man." "Be independent."	• "Women—Black women—need a lot of help."
• Do "not take the 'race and gender cards' with them."	• "Discrimination," "challenges or obstacles that I've had to overcome [that are] probably both race and gender related."
• "But you can't move up within an organization without the sponsor."	• "Sponsors don't come easily [for Black women]. A lot of the times you have to ask for them."
• "[Being a] Black woman in my business is also very much a responsibility, . . . as a role model."	• "Not a lot of other places for them to go to have that conversation in openness and freedom, without fear of being judged." "The only person I could tell . . . what I just said is another Black woman." "Sometimes it can be time consuming." "It's hard, in this job, . . . getting a woman of minority the leadership jobs."
• "You're at least making sure that you've asked the right questions to pick the right person for the job that you think you have open for the long run."	• "Howard University and Wharton . . . And if I take a leap and I hire this one—this one has already run the lap once, he knows how fast to run the lap; this one's trying to figure out, 'Where's the—where does the race start? What do I have to do?'"
• "I didn't want to carry the race or the gender around as a burden, as an extra thing to carry, if you will, and to worry about."	• "Did I meet people along the way that I thought I had an issue, because my plumbing was different than theirs? Yeah. Did I meet people along the way that, you know, I thought carried baggage about, you know, who I might be as a Black person or as a Black woman? Sure. . . . So they slowed the acceleration down a little bit?"

Bolsa asserted how she viewed her role as a senior Black professional woman:

We have to bear the burden of teaching others, that's all. And even the young people who don't understand this dynamic, like we have to make sure they understand what's happening to them. You've got to be prepared when you get into the world; that's all. You may not like what you see, but at least you know it's coming.

Bolsa argued for new employees: "You've got to have mentors." Bolsa understood the value of "knowing somebody senior" to avoid so much "trial and error."

About the simultaneous responsibilities, Penny recalled when she was promoted into her current senior position, "The first year . . . I became this like very visible, very high-level senior leader. I was on everybody's diversity to-do list. So I was all over the country being . . . poster child and to the detriment of not paying attention to my business." Penny acknowledged, "I think being a Black woman in my business is also very much a responsibility . . . role model." Penny confided that quite frankly "it can be time-consuming and heart-breaking." Penny shared an example:

I've got a young woman who is an African American who I recruited. . . . She has her M.B.A. . . . So I recruited her and relocated her up here and 2 years later, she's not done it. And it's breaking my heart. And I'm working so hard to try to find her another position because she's really good with people, she's excellent in project management—things like that—but she can't close business. And you would never have known that.

Similarly, Bolsa shared that she received a call from the human resources manager requesting Bolsa to talk to an intern described as a "very bright scholarship recipient, going to go to Wharton. . . . And the reason why no one else could tell her what I was going to tell her was because no one could." Bolsa described the conversation:

I said, "Hey, so and so, how are you doing, how is the work going?" And she goes, "Oh, it's great. I really enjoy it here." I said, "You know, you are really doing a great job." And I said, "Could I give you some advice?" And she said, "Sure, what's going on?" I said, "Wearing a Doobie on the trading floor is like a

White woman wearing rollers in the office." "I get it." And I said, "I'm not here to embarrass you, but your hair is not combed. You can't come to the trading floor of one of the largest companies in the world in the summer hoping that we're going to give you a job after you get out of grad school if you look like that. Have a nice day."

(a "doobie" scarf is a silk wrap used primarily by African American women to wrap their hair around their heads to make it more manageable. It is not culturally correct for Wall Street.)

Bolsa shared how difficult it was for a Black woman in her professional role. "It's hard, in this job, . . . getting a woman of minority the leadership jobs . . . by forcing people to have numbers." Bolsa discussed one scenario:

> You know, some managers would come to me and say, "Look, we've got a scenario here: we're going to let five people go. Three of them are African American. I'm giving you a heads up." And I do believe in this job I do have the power to say, "Take them off the list." And it's hard for me to say take them off the list because I'm just perpetuating the problem.

Bolsa's problem didn't appear to be ambivalence about letting go versus not letting go but the issue was empowering the managers to take ownership and make well informed decisions. She didn't want to push an edict down on the managers but she wanted them to think about the consequences of their action or inaction. Bolsa was empowered in many situations and in this one she said, "You better make a strong commitment to make sure they get apprenticed, they get the right clients, they get the right work, . . . whatever is missing for them. And you have to invest as much as you can in these people to make them successful." Bolsa admitted, "Sometimes it hurts me, . . . and I can't let on because it's not fair." In contrast, Penny shared, "You know what? I am not the spokesperson for all that is wrong in terms of color or race or gender." Their core values may not have differed, but Bolsa and Penny's professional role differed.

Bolsa had specific professional responsibilities that afforded her more

opportunities and more experiences specific to professional identity integration,

mentoring young Black women and diversity. Bolsa's standpoint was, "Let's look at all

the HR practices. . . . Let's make sure they're fair. I'm not going to say because you're

Black you have to give this person a high-performing rating, because you've got to

produce no matter what." Bolsa drew upon her personal values in her professional role:

> You know, the one thing that keeps me sane about it is I have to say, "Okay, you know what? Integrity is a thing that you can't compromise. . . . If I ask the right question of these people—the managers—and based upon how they answer it, I'm convinced that they gave everybody the same test, the same time, the same—you know what?

> Bolsa shared examples of empowerment in her role. "Look, I am spending in my

budget, let's say $200,000, $300,000, $400,000, to help you recruit African American

people." Bolsa noted, "Senior people would look for me for advice now. Because I have

the title, I have the job." "You're not giving anything. You're at least making sure that

you've asked the right questions to pick the right person for the job that you think you

have open for the long run." Bolsa continued, "Look at resumes from kids at Howard

University and Wharton. . . . Who am I going to hire? This one. Right?" Bolsa qualified

the situation: it was a choice between how kids spent their summers, "Blockbuster, . . . a

store, a hospital." Bolsa shared that the "kid from Wharton . . . works in a hedge fund in

the summer, . . . works in a private banking unit." Bolsa's dilemma:

> And if I take a leap and I hire this one—this one has already run the lap once, he knows how fast to run the lap—this one's trying to figure out, "Where's the— where does the race start? What do I have to do?" And they don't understand the value of that. You know?

Bolsa and Penny described roles similar to "other mothering" (Collins, 2000a).

Penny shared her quandary about her 'feelings' and her values:

> I have a very, very close friend of mine who—I've been ducking her. . . . I didn't feel like investing the emotional energy. And that's where sometimes we have to kind of put our own needs aside and to be there for our friends, and particularly our friends of color. Because a lot of times there's not a lot of other places for them to go to have that conversation in openness and freedom, without fear of being judged. And I think that's critical.

Bolsa summed up her experiences, her stances and ambivalence toward being associated with "that class" of American Blacks:

> But not only until I was in this job I realized that people, women, Black women need a lot of help. You know, and I say, "I'm going to give it to you. I'm going to tell you the open-book test answers. Let's go pass this goddamn test here." I spend my whole day doing that. Telling people answers to the test. And I say, "Do not fail."

Atta, Bolsa, and Penny valued their uniqueness and their authenticity. They realized in choosing and experiencing their professional roles, it was difficult to separate who they were personally from who they were professionally. They were grounded and anchored by personal values and relationships that enabled them to overcome early socialization obstacles. These values were the core entities in their lives that transcended time and situations. These values helped them manage perceptions and agendas and empowered them to integrate their identities without jeopardizing the values that defined the "me" in them. Though the participants didn't appear to struggle with the ambivalence and "push & pull" (Bell, 1990) of simultaneously working in a white male dominant environment and living a Black middle-class woman's life, there was some tension. The responsibility of being a Black woman leader, a sought after minority role model, sponsor, mentor, speaker and poster child to fix all diversity problems required them to

maintain and manage complex identities, expectations and perceptions. The many roles tugged at their empathetic, caring yet task-oriented strings. Responsibilities came with the privileges and challenges of being the managers of their own visibility (Roberts, et al., 2008), agendas, perceptions, and networks.

Conclusion: Understanding Professional Identity Integration & Simultaneity of Personal and Professional Identities

How does an African American woman experience professional identity integration and the simultaneity of multiple identities? Though it appears to be a continual, ongoing process and experiences continue to refine the process, the values that are core to personal identities are the key to identity integration. The participants consistently indicated that their integration experiences included perception management, authenticity, and explicitly or implicitly drawing on personal values in professional situations. Key values included independence, empowerment, and relationships.

While the elements of identity integration may sound familiar and universal across race, gender, and class identities, there were individual and intersectional race, class, and gender nuances that differentiated the processes. So like any "open book test," it's not as simple as it seems. It seemed Black women were aware of the "differences" but they were also aware of the opportunities. They became aware of the rights and equally aware of the responsibilities. Because they were different, they were empowered to make a difference.

The final chapter, chapter 6, presents synthesized and conceptualized conclusions for the research based on the original general purpose of this study, appropriately basing the conclusions on the empirical findings and the existent literature. The chapter

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highlights significant findings, identifies theoretical, practical, and methodological

contributions, and submits considerations for future research.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter culminates research inspired by my questions about African American women's identity, professional identity decision-making, and the factors contributing to effective professional identity integration. According to much empirical research, African American women still lag behind in equitable representation in professional leadership positions (Catalyst, 2008, 2004, 2002, 2001, 1999; Executive Leadership Council, 2008). The perceived reasons frequently trace back to race, class, and gender intersectional identities and the "matrix of dominance" (Collins, 2000a) position resulting from the intersectional identities. The purpose of this study was to learn how those "perceptions of reality" were experienced by exploring the lives of three African American women managing directors in Wall Street banking. The study was guided by three primary research questions: How do African American women understand their intersectional identities? How do African American women experience professional identity integration? How do African American women experience simultaneity of intersectional identities?

The study was framed by intersectionality, which has traditionally landed African American women in positions with multiple oppressions based on their biological and social race, class, and gender group identities. Often, these social identities are defined by stereotypes limiting professional opportunities and personal success for marginalized minorities in traditional "White male" majority professions, e.g., Wall Street banking. Consequentially, this study was expected to explore the gaps between perceptions of intersectionality and the reality of professional identity integration.

Summary of Findings

Five major findings emerged from this empirical study. The first two findings summarize answers to how do African American women understand their intersectional identities?

First, the participants had "common and different" individual understandings of intersectional identities. Understanding occurred in the context of geographic location (south, north, and island) and family culture of origin, through intersections of familial storytelling about ancestral experiences; relationships (maternal influences); shared and lived experiences; and advice (being self-reliant, working twice as hard, figuring it out). The understandings produced common but different values.

Second, the participants had common and different functions, factors, and identities. Common strong mothering ties and different mothering styles were impacted by mother age, perceived socioeconomic class, regional culture, perceptions of race, and mother's work experience, as well as by different maternal styles and levels of intervention in problem solving and decision making and common influential values, such as resisting victimization, independence, self-reliance, education, individualism, and altruism. While adopting the individualism, there was a simultaneous ownership and agency in the social group identity demonstrating the "personal identity" anchored by core values and interdependent complex roles and parts (Hitlin, 2003). While maintaining knowledge of and respect for past and familial perceptions of race, class, gender and core identity values, there were responses to changes in personal frames by freely responding to relevant cues (Sacharin, et al., 2009).

The third and fourth major findings answer the question, how do African American women experience professional identity integration?

Third, the participants had common and different personal relationship values, which defined their professional relationship types and values. Maternal dependencies determined the value placed on mentoring relationships. Mentoring relationships were based on similar perceptions; subjective mentoring needs were based on negative group identities, perceivably race, class, and gender-based issues (e.g., Black women handle issues or problems relevant with the social identity stereotypes). A different value was placed on mentoring, with the style of mentoring based on mothering relationships, attachment styles, and ties seen in mother-daughter shared experiences in problem-solving (e.g., daughter autonomy versus daughter dependency on mother during adolescence and preadult years). Differences were also based on culture and the daughter's lived experiences with different types of oppression. Additionally, professional identity integration was dependent on a network of people and relationships including spouses, mentors, sponsors, role models and allies.

Fourth, identity integration (i.e., personal and professional) was informed by the level of empowerment and agency defined by age, time, or seniority and individual values and experiences. Values were functions of how situations were experienced and the values were trans-situational. Maternal-daughter relationships were critical factors in value formation. Identity integration was dependent on hierarchical salient values that may or may not show direct correlation with race, class, and gender and may also include other factors (e.g., maternal relationships, region of origin, types of oppression

experienced, and age when they were experienced). Common values that emerged were autonomy, independence, agency, authenticity, credibility, and integrity.

The fifth major finding answers the second research question and the third research question, how do African American women experience simultaneity in their intersectional identities?

Fifth, simultaneous authenticity and perception management took place in the professional identity integration processes based on the understanding of personal identity. Common core values were salient across personal life spans and participants' experiences; social group identity perceptions and stereotypes shaped and defined perception management processes. The intersecting race and gender identity stereotypes were the purpose for directed perception management to change the impression of social group identities yet still maintain group identity association. Yet, social group identity associations weren't necessarily the highest rated values. Additionally, social group identity associations perceivably defined the perception and impression management processes. Race/gender identities dictated ongoing processes to continuously prove credibility in the profession.

Research Conclusions

Intersecting Modes of Understanding

Intersecting modes of understanding (e.g., historical, cultural, experiential, social, relational, and contextual factors) (Goodnow, 1990) are functions of our understanding of our personal identities, our social identities, and our values. This study's findings are congruent with Collins' (1990) arguments that multiple patterns of "knowing" inform emergent lifetime self-identification processes. This has also been indicated in

"traditional" feminist theoretical literature (Belenky et al., 1986). Information from these channels was filtered by the participants and the receivers to determine what applied to their lives and to inform the whole "stories."

Much early knowledge and advice came by way of storytelling, primarily through family relations (i.e., family immigration, adoption, family business). Maternal and paternal relationships were critical in the believability and credibility of the stories. The maternal relationships and their associated credibility and authenticity were demonstrated through saliency in some direct or indirect form over time. Collins (1990) asserted that some understandings are products of dialogue, congruent with Skeggs' (1997) argument that listening to and hearing others is important in the production of knowledge. This is true in this study, as various forms and styles of the relationships were demonstrated. Different styles of relationships, different shared and lived experiences and events (McCall, 2005) refine, confirm, and validate what is learned, and individuals filter information differently to form identities and salient threads across their lives.

"Life span" portraits demonstrate how identity information emerges, changes, and manifests over lifetimes of experiences, exposing how influential relationships combined with experiences impact understanding and meanings of personal identities (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Individual lived experiences also transform unconsciousness to consciousness of self-defined values (Collins, 2000a). The individualistic self values are products of the various streams of information that require complex means of understanding by peeling back layers of information, "connecting the dots," segregating truth (realism) and untruths based largely on constructionism (Gressgard, 2008). This was evident in this study as the participants made their own meaning of their mother's advice

(such as being self-reliant and altruistic) and made sense of the basis for the advice and life experiences. Multiple attributes inform truth and perceptions (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Stryker and Burke (2000) asserted that identity positions are based on multiple internalized roles, identities, and perceived social positions (Smith, 2007; Parsons, 1937). Merchant and Willis (2001) and Collins (2000) suggested that storytelling, dialogue, experience, and accountability inform the understanding of "who we are" as individuals and groups in the context of reality. These forms and processes of understanding were evident in this research describing "how" the methods influenced the persons and their resulting *values*, which are similar until the multidimensional informants are examined as well.

Personal Relationships

Relationships are very valuable, influencing experiences, personal identity formation, socialization, professional identities, and professional identity integration. First, the mother-daughter relationships informed the early socialization experiences and helped form the initial core participant *values*. This is consistent with many articles of literature and research, including works by Hayes and Flannery (2002), Parker and ogilvie (2003), Townsend (2008), and Wharton and Thorne (1997). Though some literature simply points to familial relationships (e.g., paternal, maternal, spousal and other immediate family relations) (Carby, 1982; Collins, 2000a), it is evident from this study that the paternal relationships had considerably less influence on the more critical early socialization processes, behaviors, and core salient *values* (Hayes & Flannery, 2002; Hitlin, 2003; Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Wharton & Thorne, 1997). The maternal relationships were directly and indirectly informed and impacted by maternal

socioeconomic class, gender, and race perceptions redefined by the maternal figures, with values influenced by the perceptions and other salient maternal values.

The relationships were influenced by the maternal conveyance of security and attachment and understanding of how strong ties should be formed (Berson, Dan, & Yammarino, 2006; Kahn, 2001; Towler, 2005; Manning, 2003; Wharton & Thorne, 1997). This influence directly and indirectly impacted the style of handling early socialization and integration events (McCall, 2005), e.g., problems with discrimination and issues in perception management. Independence, autonomy, or armoring (Bell & Nkomo, 1998; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003) were defined by maternal influences, which were defined by intersections of class, region, culture, and maternal lived experiences, especially the mother's independence and work experience, among other informants. Wharton and Thorne (1997) segregated working-class mothers (e.g., those in the teaching roles) from the middle class. Yet, other studies have posited the class distinction by other factors including education, salaries, professional titles, and supervisory responsibilities (Wharton & Thorne, 1997). In contrast, this study redefined the constructed definition of class by maternal influences that set the tone and value of professions, such as teaching, as middle-class professions (Skeggs, 2004). Some studies distinguish that mothers in professional roles are likely to have daughters who are in professional roles as well. Additionally, the strength of ties between mothers and daughters is often based on whether there are other female siblings, whether there are biological or nonbiological mother-daughter ties, and whether the mother is much older or sickly (Wharton & Thorne, 1997). The relational class deconstruction and the sibling

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and biological factors clearly informed the different mother-daughter ties between the participants and their mothers (and grandmothers).

While many correlations are possible and have been researched, in this study the maternal "security blanket" and "armoring" styles and degrees were informed by familial cultural values, regional locale, and perceptions of forms of oppression. It should also be noted that in some studies, the influence of the factors and some resulting values were "color-blind" when Black and White races were compared (Wharton & Thorne, 1997). Hitlin's (2003) personal identity model uses the race factor in contrast to some early studies and in some aspects found no race factor differences.

In this study, there appeared to be different "shades of Black" (Cross, 1991) illustrated through awareness of the "light-skin" shades of two mothers, likely influenced by mixed-racial maternal backgrounds but without noticeable differences in outcomes, especially in values. One noticeable race difference and salient *value* was attributed to Caribbean-American versus non-Caribbean African American cultures; additionally, South and North American family cultures and environments informed experiences (Johnson, Cabral, Mueller, Trub, Kruk, Upshur, Diaz, Marrero, Heyde, Thoma, Rodriguez, Cione & Fraenkel, 2010). These cultures and environments informed values and race and class identities particularly. Additionally, the participants perceived they were the focus of their mothers' attention, not because of the nonexistence of siblings, as Wharton and Thorne (1997) suggested, but primarily because of shared experiences that informed personal values.

As noted in chapter 5, family norms and standards were prone to differ based on different cultures, political economic position and intersectional race, class and gender

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identities (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). This assertion was demonstrated in this study through role-switching, spousal relationships where the husbands were prominent and consistently positive, nurturing family influences in the wives' personal career development. The husbands' role took on different forms, especially in families with children where the husbands were stay-at-home fathers. This has not always been a typical nurturing and caring role advocated by Black fathers, even those who were unemployed (Carby, 1982; Joseph & Lewis, 1981). Joseph & Lewis (1981) asserted that a disproportionate number of Blacks are economically challenged negatively impacting the ability to care for their children. But typically, Black family members provide nurturing support for the children. Having family members familiar with dynamics of racial discrimination was the best source for child-rearing and resisting racial oppression (Carby, 1982; Collins, 2000a). In this study, the parents chose to have fathers care for the children when given a choice of having an outsider, an au pair. The father / husband agreed to support his wife's career by filling the nurturing role. The continuity of family values was shared by the husbands while the women participants contributed to outside professional organizations and positive social change in society. This role-switching may resemble women who have abandoned their gender role as mothers and wives yet it only creates more complex identities the women chose to navigate and they excelled in those multiple roles. They managed perceptions of their integrated identities.

Personal Core Values

Personal core values informed by maternal and spousal relationships and shared and lived experiences were anchors of personal identities. The social group race, class, and gender identities didn't always directly factor in the core salient values that were

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formed. Core values anchored the identities, congruent with Hitlin's (2003) personal

identity theory, which bridges self and social identity factors, not just race, class, and

gender. Individualism, independence, family, education, credibility, and resistance to

victimization were common highly rated values and factors that defined and were defined

by intersectional race, class, and gender identities. The resulting personal identity also

included roles that were defined by the intersecting values and identity factors (Hitlin &

Piliavin, 2004), as shown in Figure 6-1.
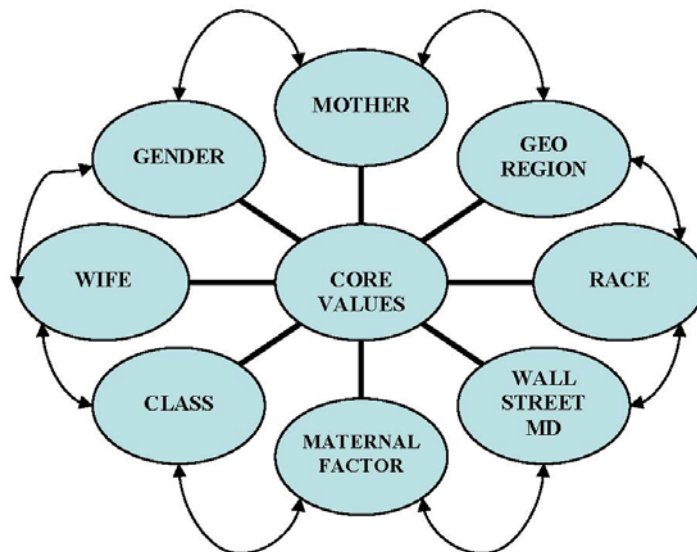
Figure 6-1. Post-empirical conceptual framework model: Personal identity.

Race, class, and gender identities are referred to in the context of differences and

domination (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a; Gressgard, 2008; McCall, 2005).

In this study, while these identities were acknowledged, they were not consistently

defined as core, salient factors that were the basis for decision-making, professional

identities, and identity integration styles. Values were the core, salient factors, and they

were defined by a variety of factors, such as region of origin, perceptions of social class,

maternal relationships and values, maternal work experience, immigration experience,

and culture. Individuals prioritized and changed values based on common and different experiences and images they felt they needed to put in the forefront in situations. Consistently, in this study, the participants tended to factor in values first when making personal and professional decisions and did not base those decisions solely on race, class, and gender but on authentic personal identities. This conclusion suggests that considering nuances within the homogenous intersectional oppressed or privileged group is valuable (Crenshaw, 1995b, 2005; Gressgard, 2008, Holvino, 2005; Hurtado, 2004; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). Such nuances inform broader and deeper perspectives, departing from the dyadic perceptions in the "matrix of dominance" (Anderson & Collins, 2007; Collins, 2000a) that informs many intercategorical intersectionality studies (McCall, 2005). Gressgard (2008) simultaneously recognized the social construction of the essentialist race, class, and gender intersectional identities and the postmodernist contribution of relativism and events to create difference (Crenshaw, 1995a,b).

Across the homogeneous group, there were similar salient "Black women consciousness" (Collins, 2000a) *values*, such as independence, self-confidence, self-definition, and resistance to dominance, oppression, and victimization traits and behaviors. Yet the consciousness was informed by different understandings of race and class and different maternally lived leadership experience. The race differences within were consistent with Cross's (1991) reference group orientation and "race-qualified" differential definitions, which contrast with similar race assumptions when making comparisons between races. Race understanding was informed by multiple factors in this research, such as region, culture, experiences, and relational comparisons over time. The

participants' lived experiences, values, and understanding were solidified or sometimes changed.

Through the participant experiences that were shared, it can be concluded that one's perceived position is based not solely on the three social factors of race, class, and gender but on the nuances that result from many factors informed by and informing the salient values (Hitlin, 2003; Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). Though the personal identity was based on individual factors and values, there remained common and different group identity associations based on unique experiences. This stance based on individual identities composed of core values demonstrated that people don't just passively land in positions but have active voices and agency in their destined identity position consistent with Shields' (2008) assertion. She implored the hybrid exploration of difference within and between traditional intersections and not judging one's position on race, class, and gender intersecting identities.

Professional Relationships

The styles and types of professional relationships correlated with participants' early relationships, primarily maternal relationships and experiences in accordance with the mother-daughter literature (Townsend, 2008). Positive relationships have been key components in organizational effectiveness (Ragins & Verbos, 2007; Ragins & Kram, 2007). Mentoring relationships take on multiple forms, most commonly mentor-protégé but also peer-to-peer and group mentoring. In the workplace learning literature, Olesen (2001) described maternal relationships and childhood as feeding and "nourishing" experiences (p. 293) in the organizational environment. As indicated in an earlier section, maternal relationships informed armoring and attachment styles (Bell & Nkomo, 1998;

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Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Townsend, 2008), which have been traced from personal to professional relationships and back.

During the study dialogue and while reviewing data across individual participant lifetime experiences, professional "other mothering" (Collins, 2000a) resembled examples of the participant mother-daughter relationships. For example, in this study when relationships manifested in maternal decision-making for the daughters, this correlated with noticeably more value placed on mentor-protégé relationships for effective professional identity integration. If the participant experienced more independence and autonomy as a child, she appeared to place less value on the mentor-protégé relationship and more value on peer-to-peer, informal, and sponsoring relationships. Peer-to-peer relationships also coincided with salient childhood and adolescent friendships outside the families. These are evidence of the levels of attachments and attachment styles experienced in early relationships, as noted in the attachment and mother-daughter relationship literature (Berson et al., 2006; Kahn, 2001; Towler, 2005; Manning, 2003; Wharton & Thorne, 1997).

The mentor-protégé and sponsorship relationship matching processes have been identified as the major factors predicting professional development effectiveness in the relationships (Blake-Beard, O'Neill & McGowan, 2007; Blake-Beard et al., 2006; Hayes & Flannery, 2002). As shared earlier, some prior studies have shown that matching of race and gender in the mentor-protégé relationship might be more effective based on shared demographic history, experiences, and open dialogue in "trusted" relationships (Blake-Beard et al., 2006; Townsend, 2008; Johnson et al., 2010). This conclusion is evident in this study, as the participants suggested that there are race- and gender-based

development needs to be addressed in the mentoring relationship that are best handled in a "like" race/gender mentor-protégé relationship. But additionally, the study demonstrates mentoring relationship effectiveness is dependent on the expectations and the delineation of the relationship functions (Kram, 1983) including sponsors or role models.

In this study, sponsor-type professional relationships were strongly suggested for career advancement, perception management, and integrity and credibility confirmations. But, since there were few "like" race/gender sponsors in influential roles, cross-race/gender matching were meaningful. Sponsoring roles facilitated continual feedback about the identity images behind closed doors and at the table in the promotion and assignment decision-making processes (Roberts, 2005). The maternal-daughter relationship was not as influential in sponsoring based on the delineation of functions (Kram, 1983). Same race and gender were less likely in sponsor relationships than in mentoring relationships especially in white male-dominated senior leadership environments (Allen, et al., 1995). Common hierarchical values were placed on sponsorships, resulting in alternative-seeking behaviors that resembled "manipulation of resources" (Stryker & Burke, 2000) experienced to overcome earlier socialization barriers. Ayvazian, (2003), Cole (2008) and Rothenberg (2004) suggested that stratifying boundaries for effective coalitions and building outside networks have negatively impacted social, group, and family relations (Wharton & Thorne, 1997). Biculturalism (Bell, 1990; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003) and multiple consciousnesses (King, 1988) have caused psychosocial ills, but to the contrary, the study participants drew upon their

individualistic values, resourcefulness and a network of people including their husbands to make professional relationship decisions.

Professional Identity Integration

Professional identity integration informed by salient, transsituational values based largely on maternal relationships, interactions and shared experiences informed professional socialization and integration experiences. The maternal relationship *values* mentioned earlier in this chapter were primary drivers in this study, and this is consistent across psychological, relational, social, and feminist identity bodies of literature (Belenky et al., 1986; Berson et al., 2006; Johnson et al., 2010; Manning, 2003; Towler, 2005; Townsend, 2008; Wharton & Thorne, 1997). The relationships informed both common and different secure relationship styles; understandings of race and gender identities; independence and self-reliance; advice; and self-definitions (Brewer, 2001).

Maternal work experiences were motivating factors for the types of advice given to daughters to handle situations, and this was seen as a factor in daughters' professional integration experiences. This was seen in how they valued mentoring relationship interventions (Wharton & Thorne, 1997) and leadership. Additional experiences supplemented some of the maternal relationships and experiences, confirming or changing later integration experiences. But many values—such as education, family, individualism, altruism, and resistance to victimization—remained salient and were demonstrated as participants chose and valued mentoring intervention.

The salient values transcended personal and professional integration processes. Individualism was a distinguishing value across the participants and was salient within the individuals' lives as they portrayed very authentic characteristics in all of their roles.

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They also employed their personal agency avoiding being coerced or pressured to conform. Hitlin (2003) noted that social identities inform perceptions, and this has been evident in and about the African American woman group identities. In this study, this was illustrated through stereotypical perceptions and misconceptions, e.g., "angry Black woman labels" (Bell & Nkomo, 1998; Cuadraz et al., 1999; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). In this study, individualistic values were prioritized, but association with intersectional groups and cognizance of negative and inaccurate subjective perceptions were maintained. The women excelled in perception awareness and management for their own personal sake and for the sake of the social group identities they embraced. This prioritization of individual and group values demonstrated the harmonious integration of multiple strong identities reducing and managing incongruent values through "frame-switching" (Sacharin, et al., 2009, p. 276). This integration had the appearances of compartmentalization of identities and traits but the assimilation they experienced was managed by the women, a testament to their strong support networks and their personal agency. There was also some evidence the participants utilized some peer and other developmental mentoring relationships for transitioning or "trying on" roles and situational responses. This is somewhat consistent with Ibarra's transitioning (2005a & 2005b). The group-related identity factors became a primary focus of negative perception management. Inaccurate perceptions, not necessarily negative, were the focus of individual-based perception management, which is defined as the ability to influence the beliefs of self and others by conveying accurate understanding and depictions (Russell, 2001). Perception management is integral in the impression management process (Roberts, 2005). Hitlin and Piliavin (2004) asserted that values are a primary function of

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perceptions, and many core values are associated with race, class, gender, and sexuality group memberships. A salient element and goal was maintaining core group values that informed integrity and credibility consistent with leadership literature (Russell, 2001) and authentic distinctions (Roberts, 2005).

One conclusion of this study is it was more important for the participants to distinguish themselves and their individual credibility (Smith, 2007), while the group attachments and altruistic values prompted awareness and management of group perceptions. Roberts' (2005) impression management and image construction work demonstrated the value of social identity impression management, giving examples of negative identity discrepancies manifested in some "real" events and in "guilt by association" as well as individual distinctiveness. This study's participants didn't disassociate or distinguish themselves from their race, class, and gender groups but instead, influenced by self and altruistic values, worked to construct positive self and group images. This is consistent with Roberts' (2005) social recategorization/assimilation behaviors not decategorizing or deconstructing race, class, and gender categories but distinguishing their realities (Gressgard, 2008). As a result of the participants' choices, simultaneous multiple visible roles were managed to achieve personal career goals and to affect positive social group images. Just as Martin Luther King Jr. (Roberts' et al., 2008) strategically chose his group associations, timed his visible presence and focused on his own development, so did this study's participants. They didn't struggle with the "push and pull" interplay of bicultural minority/majority associations (Bell, 1990) yet it is safe to say they maintained multiple authentic personal identities. The integration process is one that does, as Sacharin, et al. (2009) note, evoke conflicting feelings when there are

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multiple strong associations and low levels of integration. There were some signs of ambivalent feelings about the professional roles and perceived group responsibilities as leaders in the professional roles.

Identity salience informs the image reconciliation process, yet authenticity and credibility are outside of the loop in Roberts' (2005) model. This study's findings suggest that these latter elements are integral in the cyclical ongoing impression and perception management processes. Values are subjective and hard to observe (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004), but authentic values were identified in this study as drivers in professional impression management decision-making and personal career success. This success was dependent on continuous and consistent proof of credibility and authenticity in nontraditional professions, requiring continual subjective and objective feedback from different types of professional relationships. This is thought to be primarily attributed to the intersectional race/gender identity.

In professional leadership, where there is sparse Black women representation in mentoring and sponsoring roles, the few Black women filling these professional positions play dual roles as benefactors and beneficiaries throughout their careers. The ability to manage agendas and be influential agents for change was commonly embraced in this empirical study. But, like the premise behind the emergency oxygen mask instructions on an airplane, where one takes care of oneself before helping others, it is more beneficial to ensure that the personal perceptions and image construction are secure first so that they are valuable to self, groups, and the organization.

Theoretical Contributions

The research conclusions suggest common theoretical contributions in several areas: intersectionality, professional identity integration, impression/perception management, diversity, and developmental network relationships. The contributions are linked in their common searches for predictors, informants, and antecedents for effectiveness, not perfection, and the common denominator appear to be values.

Intersectionality and Professional Identity Integration

By formally adopting an "intersectionality" framework in this study and exploring the identity properties of seemingly personal and professional homogenous groups, the intracategorical intersectionality theory (McCall, 2005) was effective in identifying significant outsider within common and different motivations, behaviors, and values. Differences within race, gender, and class intersections were explained by other significant, salient intersecting identity informants. Some individual elements intersected with race, class, and gender social identities and other emergent identities to make full meaning in a more accurate portrait. These elements may not instantly resemble remarkable identity achievements, but they demonstrate evidence of additional mutually defining intersecting relationships that constitute another level of different valuable and salient meanings. These conclusions broaden the number and scope of identity "observables" (West & Fenstermaker, 2007) and non-observables that define us, how we became who we are, the unrealized unique personal and professional identity informants and positive social identities.

The factors and intersections that emerged from the study are not just additional categories of "needs," inequities, oppression, or negativities, though some traditional

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intersectional identity categories are not fully exhausted and should still be explored, researched, and addressed. Less positive feedback about the perceptions of intersectionality demonstrates that "women of color" are a "Black woman's" conceptual attempt to provide evidence of multiple oppression and victimization. Additionally, some ethnographic and anthropologic studies tend to highlight negative aspects of research subjects and experiences (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

This study strongly illustrates a more heterogeneous vision of intersectionality theory to "explain" individual positions, correct negative perceptions, and explain positive identity integration processes. The focus of this effort is not to "predict" behaviors but to realize additional individual, group, and organization success through more accurate perception management and the leveraging of diverse resources. By diverting attention away from comparisons in normative intersectionality research and focusing on differences (and commonalities) within, we are able to unlock "deadly embraces" of intersectional research and monetary resources (Hurtado, 1989) locked in negativity. Intracategorical intersectionality (McCall, 2005) releases the resources and simultaneously achieves "positive social change" on multiple levels by focusing on values. In this study, familial, maternal influences from different backgrounds, cultures, and geographical regions were manifested in common and different socialization and professional identity integration processes and integrated identities. Emergent leadership, socialization, and perception management traits were traced like 'breadcrumbs' back to the root causes and root values. Valued mentoring relationship skills and innovative and resourcefulness skills were salient, and these factors demonstrated that the intricategorical intersectionality (McCall, 2005) framework is a viable universal strategy.

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Conceptually, though used within a small homogenous study sample, the contribution demonstrates leveraging intersectionality universally because values are universally positive (Hitlin, 2003). Hitlin and Piliavian (2004) also suggested that future sociological research in the field of values should be conducted 'within' homogenous groups, and this suggestion is discussed later in this chapter.

Impression/Perception Management, Diversity, and Mentoring

The study begins to fill some theoretical gaps related to impression and perception management, diversity, and mentoring. Researchers and theorists have developed frameworks focusing on social and/or individual identity practices and behaviors based on the target audience perceptions. If perceptions are largely based on values and there are common links at and across identity intersections, then values should be a function on both sides of perception and impression management equations. Promoting values in a hierarchy of "predictors" and "matching" factors will answer calls in the mentoring, diversity, and impression management literature to rely on these factors to increase the effectiveness of the processes, behaviors, and relationships in the organization.

Many of these values trace back to early internalization and socialization experiences in the formation of identities, where effectiveness is demonstrated and therefore duplicated. Their saliency across lifetime events will not always and may never be blatant or observable initially. But this study indicates that the values are distinguishable over time and patterns become observable. They are remarkable upon observing relationships and looking as far back as the first mentoring relationship, mothering, and tracing it through career development and psychosocial relationships that worked for the study participants because of the associated values. They are also repeated by individuals

based on experiences but cognitively adopted to situations. Some situations require other

relational functional elements, such as sponsoring and role modeling. See Table 6-1 for a

distinction between career development relationships, functions and attributes. Yet still,

values are largely core in the effectiveness of all relationships.

Table 6-1
Developmental Relationships

Concept	Attributes	Consequences/Questions/Value
1.Mentoring		
- "A senior person in the organization who takes a special interest in the junior person's career. The mentor cares about development of the junior person. Emotional attachment exists between the mentor and the junior person" (Downing, Crosby, Blake-Beard, 2005)	**Psychosocial Functions**: Acceptance; Role-Modeling; Acceptance & confirmation; Counseling; Friendship	Holistic genuine concern, trusted relationship and trusted advice. Empathy and personal counseling
	May or may not provide practical help; May or may not be part of the "mentored" person's work organization.	Not necessarily expectations for specific job and career advancement opportunities. Mentor not responsible for practical side (unless agreed upon between partners). Delineation of relationship expected outcomes.
- Guide who gives emotional help (Thomas, 1991) - Mentoring Functions (Kram, 1983)	**Career Functions**: Sponsorship; Exposure & visibility; Coaching; Protection; Challenging assignments	Additional alternatives for mentoring if the "matches" are not available in the organization. Wider range of mentoring opportunities.
2. Sponsoring		
- "A senior person in an organization who helps a junior person. The sponsor is in a position of power, which allows him or her to give instrumental help such as sharing information with the junior person, giving prac-tical advice, showcasing the junior person" (Downing, Crosby, Blake-Beard, 2005).	Sponsor and sponsored do not [always] have an emotional relational (at least not in the context of the sponsoring relationship)	Keeps the context of the relationship objective and provides credibility versus personal favors or partisan unsubstantiated, unfair sponsorship. Task and business relationship remain intact.
	Sponsor knows the attributes they advocate about the sponsored person and the match of those attributes with the requirements in the situation	Ability to "go to back" with accurate information and correct/confirm perceptions, illuminate positive images, obtain "fits" in assignments, or promotions.
- Guide who gives "prac-tical" help (Thomas, 1991)	Sponsor does communicate with the sponsored person and provides feedback.	Improves the sponsored person's opportunities to change and be more effective.
3. Role Modeling		
- Role Model is "A senior person who inspires others … with whom one identifies emotionally and whom one would like to emulate" (Downing, Crosby, Blake-Beard, 2005).	May or may not be aware of the admiration or impact on others. May or may feel an emotional attachment.	Negative attributes of a role-model should be distinguished from those attributes to be emulated. Responsibility for modeling success & failure should be assumed but by whom?
	May not be active in the same career, profession or organization as the others being impacted. May or may not be generationally senior to others.	Emulated or modeled characteristics can be leveraged in others' career and professional growth. Role modeling can be far-reaching. All ages can be role-models for different ages.
4. Alliances		
-Ally is "A member of the dominant group in the organization or society who works to dismantle any form of oppression from which she or he receives the benefit" (Ayvazian, 1995 - in Rothenberg, 2004)	Behavior is intentional, overt and consistent	Saliency and trustworthy relationships across visible boundaries. Intentions are pure.
	Allies take responsibility to bring about positive social change.	Accountability in the dominant group; Positive Social Change
	Facilitate empowerment of people targeted by oppression.	Empowering the oppressed to overcome oppression & empowering the privileged to recognize invisible privileges and undeserved privileges (privilege at the expense of others)
	All are relationally and contextually privileged and oppressed.	

Values are more specific salient identity entities, sometimes replacing, clarifying,

and/or highlighting positive traits in otherwise negative universes. As we consider

identities and forms of identity integration, the common denominators for individuals, groups, and organizations is "positivity." Thus, the focus on values in the theoretical and practical equations may help everyone achieve a very high rated element on every list, equity (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). This may bolster the universal usage of intersectionality theory, add more complex differentiating factors to diversity, and increase the informing factors that legitimize and "predict" professional identity integration and career advancement practical behavior.

Practical Implications

The study has practical implications in the realms of professional identity integration, impression/perception management, and diversity and mentoring strategies.

Value Assessments

Values have been traced to distinctions and differences in socioeconomic groups and identities. Perception management and impression management behaviors have been employed by persons, organizations, industries, societies, and countries to correct misperceptions, reconcile differences, and illuminate positive identities and images. This study focused on the personal, group, and profession levels (i.e., organizations by default). As the participants have acknowledged in this study, perception management and impression management have been ongoing processes in their careers, but the initial entry into professional positions and decisions to move up and over have required assessment and comparisons between their own personal identity and values and those of the targeted position, profession, and organization.

A value self-assessment and professional value assessment would be practical and useful. Actions, attitudes, and behavior are some indicators of values, but doing a formal assessment of self and professional values may uncover or facilitate the discovery of whether the target is a fit or not. From the organizational perspective, a value assessment would be beneficial for hiring decisions and even major movement decisions within the company. Hiring and lay-offs are expensive, so it would be cost-effective to use a tool for this purpose. Additionally, as of 2010, the Wall Street industry is on the mend from the 2008 / 2009 economic downturn and so are the perceptions about working or doing business with Wall Street. Accurate group and organizational identity positions and integrity are as important as personal integrity and position. Practices to collect information within all levels and outside of the organization are meaningful.

Additionally, the organizational value assessment would be helpful in mentoring and diversity programs (which fall under the same umbrella in some organizations). In mentoring, value assessments could help achieve effective mentor-protégé matching to avoid the pitfalls of "blind dates" (Blake-Beard, O'Neill & McGowan, 2007) which could be costly to the mentor, protégé and the organization. Also, as indicated in this study, some persons prefer peer-to-peer or group mentoring. Hitlin and Piliavin (2004) referred to studies suggesting that African Americans have similar values (e.g., family, education, hard work), correlating directly with their common race group membership. This is consistently argued in mentoring literature and other studies, but it will still be beneficial to perform the assessments for matching alternatives across boundaries, especially in professions where Black mentors are sparse. There may be similar values even more specific within and between the intersections that will be indicators for effectiveness.

Blake-Beard, O'Neill & McGowan (2007) suggest future research to identify more factors for matching. Identifying more intricate value assessments specific to mentor-protégé matching may serve this suggestion and may also help identify uncommon relationships that work in the realm of mentoring and other roles in the career development network.

Active Identification and Management of Impressions and Perceptions

As indicated in this study, social group members (e.g., African American women) often assume or are assigned the responsibility for perception management associated with negative group perceptions. Collective and partnership initiatives can be undertaken by diversity affinity groups to address perception identification and management. As mentioned, one of the major functions of perceptions is values. Using the intracategorical intersectionality (McCall, 2005) premise, undertaking assessments in the affinity groups to understand the values and discussing the perceived in-group values with the assessment results will provide a mirror into perceptions and reality. The affinity groups can compare notes, using 360-degree feedback to understand perceptions from outside as well.

The affinity group impression and perception management 360 degree feedback process is not limited to formal human resource and diversity areas in organizations. There are business line and functional area benefits, consequences and responsibilities based on inaccurate and accurate perceptions. So the perception management and impression management feedback processes may be more effective if they are conducted in those impacted functional areas as well as in the general organization. The managers and leaders in those areas are usually closer to the people and situations involved and

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they would stand to benefit from the perception and impression management processes. This concept represents a direction some organizations are taking toward decentralized human resource functions and ownership.

Instead of closed affinity group meetings for "like" group members, management should attend some affinity group sessions to have dialogue and share impressions. Discussions can then be held where responsibilities are shared to correct perceptions and impressions. In this way, the responsibilities for perception management and diversity issues will no longer fall entirely on the shoulders of the few Black women professional leaders. In Hood and Koberg's (1994) assertion that assimilation is the dominant party's responsibility, it is clear there is a reciprocal and shared responsibility for integration and identity perception management. This can be achieved if the walls of affinity groups are 'safe spaces' and intersectionality learning opportunities for outsiders. Diversity groups and organizations should be empowered partners to resolve problems, especially when the root causes may be shared. These are opportunities to create "positive social change" through addressing inaccurate organizational perceptions of socio-cultural groups, opening doors to using resources marginalized in the past. The process may also be supplemented with intersectionality diversity training.

Joint Efforts between Academia and Industry to Promote Diversity and Mentoring

The responsibility and actions leading to understanding values and perception management should be shared between industry and academia. Both would benefit from providing effective professional identity integration, mentoring, and inclusion for entry into professional roles. The research participants in this study indicated the task of finding mentors and sponsors for Black women is arduous and requires initiation by

Black woman protégés who don't have organic development networks. This empirical finding is similar to studies by Catalyst (2008, 2004, 2002, 2001, 1999) and others that attribute the barriers of success to a lack of mentors, sponsors and general career development networks (Downing, Crosby, et al., 2005). This is what Catalyst referred to as a "downward spiral" (2008, p. 5) plaguing women of color. In this study, the participants acknowledged the trend yet found alternatives crossing gender, race, class and organizations boundaries as suggested in some literature (Blake-Beard, 2009; Kram & Higgins, 2008). They also recognized their responsibility, as leaders, to empower others in their development and relationships.

Today, with the dynamics of the financial crisis and other adversities, organizations and industries may be in need of perception repair to attract, recruit, and retain the best talent out of school, within their organization, and in the industry. The question of reputation, value, credibility, and integrity is raised and becomes more than an individual and group problem. Relationships between academia and industry will help bridge theory, research and practice, using those "academia" tools and resources to educate, perform value assessments, analyze data, and pilot and implement change. This would be useful in assisting students and organizations with professional position matching, especially when skill set is not a problem. Having academia assist organizations with internal value assessments for various levels of perception management, mentoring matching, and diversity are a reciprocal valuable proposition.

Academic and industry partnerships to begin the mentoring, professional networking, and professional identity integration ahead of career placement decisions would be a great practical contribution. The students would learn from experienced

professionals about the corporate image and practice the process of impression

management in a "safe place," developing mentoring relationships in the process and

learning the diverse opportunities and the opportunities to leverage diversity by both

entities. The industries will learn about the opportunities the students are seeking and the

perceptions in a safe place for open dialogue. Extended developmental relationships will

benefit organizations by cutting down on orientation, assimilation, and the "getting to

know you" time period and provide more assurance that this expensive process will pay

off. The prospective employee also benefits from being able to try on organizational

culture through bipartisans. Both will realize opportunities to build and maintain

relationships and networks that might otherwise not be possible.

      Another practical implication would be to use larger venues, such as multicultural

events, to identify, initiate, and conduct mentoring training, activities, and workshops; in

the process, values can be identified that would be difficult to observe otherwise.

Traditionally, these events are well attended by "women of color," and trusted industry

professional leaders and executives make their authentic connections with women there.

There are opportunities to optimize the impact on a great number of people in a short

timeframe and possibly in a formal manner. While extensive, widespread one-on-one

individual mentoring may not be viable in these venues, group and collective mentoring

is highly impactful. Event organizers should consider using the venues more frequently to

facilitate one-on-one, peer-to-peer, and onsite group mentoring sessions. The event

should extend into an ongoing program with metrics that can demonstrate value for

individuals and for the organizational sponsors, which will likely increase the number of

sponsors. These venues are usually reserved for professionals, with limited or separate venues for academics and college students.

Academic and organizational diversity education, training, practice, and accountability should begin to engage in mutually relevant conversations and development related to values. Recent diversity literature and diversity practices in the workplace still indicate a focus on the traditional, observable diverse factors. This appears to be done to a fault at times, especially with race and gender, to the point where we often wonder why we haven't progressed further beyond discrimination. As noted in this empirical study, discriminatory assumptions were subtle but visible in the North and more blatant in the South. It will be beneficial to move beyond oppression-privilege dichotomies, biases, and categories, even as we stay aware of them, because we as a people have "not arrived." Infinite new and emergent categories of differences, inequities, commonalities, and opportunities lie in the exploration of values. When values are the topic of conversation, most people would say, "it's all good" no matter who's talking. Opportunities that emerge to develop conversations around values between and with diverse professions including academia will open access to sharing knowledge, developing common ties to values, and reciprocating through leveraging resources.

Contributions to Methodology

Portraiture methodology is befitting for the complexity of the intracategorical approach to intersectionality theory and research. Portraiture is a phenomenal research tool for "peeling the onions" of identities, discovering how experiences fit in the equation, and uncovering emergent identity informants formerly reliant on longitudinal life studies to accomplish the task (Hitlin, 2003; Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). It has been

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argued that longitudinal research is required to study values described as core, salient, and trans-situational. The empirical research in this research was accomplished using portraiture and life history and constant comparison tools. The study's original purpose was to examine within the experiences and uncover accurate personal identity factors that made a difference to individuals and were determinants in the professional identity integration process.

In a heuristic-like process, it became clearer that what had emerged were the common threads of values that were observed through dialogue but actually occurred over lifetimes. This process added meaning demonstrating how to use portraiture tools, including the voices of the researcher and contextual factors, to interpret findings and uncover normally unobservable values. The process was supplemented by in depth identity research questions and an interview protocol that "nudged" and if needed "probed" for the data to present the life experiences. Additionally, using the self-portrait process tested the interview protocol and increased the effectiveness fulfilling the purpose of the study.

One objective in the research interview process was to avoid probing interview questions on sensitive topics while ensuring an opportunity to obtain relevant data to promote emergent and accurate findings. By coauthoring the story and telling it over and over again, the emergence of saliency and authenticity, stable attributes of values, was possible. Permitting an audience to read the stories should foster an opportunity to connect via values in shorter periods of time. Recent intersectionality literature encourages hybrid research approaches to foster both/and within and between identity category exploration of life experiences. Previous and current research accentuates some

negativity and traditional oppression for Black women, which highlight "needs" versus positive opportunities and attributes. The art and science of portraiture fostered researching for the "good" understanding and allowing the "imperfect" to emerge (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). In this sense alone, the portraiture methodology and storytelling demonstrate effective attainment of intersectionality's objective to achieve "positive social change" (Shields, 2008) by extracting subjective data from the life experiences and broadening perspectives beyond negative assumptions and perceptions. Intersectionality and portraiture are rarely used together in empirical studies or are at least not formally addressed in these terms. Many intersectionality researchers, writers, and theorists have expressed that they were unaware of the portraiture methodology, so its usage here should be a "valuable" contribution.

Implications for Future Research

More research should be performed to understand how values can be mined from their dormancy (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004) from within and between intersectional identity groups. Results of such studies would benefit the areas of impression management (Roberts, 2005); intersectionality (McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008; Townsend, 2008); leadership (Parker & ogilvie, 2003; Richardson & Loubier, 2008); mentoring (Blake-Beard, 2003, 2005); professional identity transition/integration/framing (Ibarra, 2005a; Meyerson, 2001; Pratt et al., 2006); organizational behavior (Holvino, 2003; Parker & ogilvie, 2003); and values (Hitlin, 2003; Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). Such research would answer recent calls to identify antecedents, informants, and "predictors" to make effective and accurate individual, collective, leadership, and organizational decisions. All of these areas have been accustomed to behavior "observations" to determine what those

variables might be. Values are usually invisible and are more easily discernable after observing the independent variables, e.g., the resulting attitudes and behaviors (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). At times, research has not been attempted because of difficulty gaining access to individuals and data for extended, longitudinal studies (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). There are alternatives.

Future value studies to supplement directed research in the above areas might adopt the updated Personal Values Questionnaire to rate versus rank values, as suggested by Hitlin and Piliavin (2004), who quoted Schwartz. Ranking the values may force someone to give lower ranks to values with similar "value" and "saliency" for individuals, organizations, etc. (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). When adopting surveys to test hypotheses for value commonalities and differences within and between groups, some considerations should be kept in mind. The surveys should be followed by intersectionality training and studies to identify value origins, saliency, reason for change, and trans-situational properties (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004) and relevancy in professions. Strategically employing portraiture and life-history tools would be beneficial. Also, values are not visible and, at times, they are not conscious but must be interpreted and validated through interview dialogue and rigorous data analysis. The researcher should carefully identify any of their own biases, to avoid any intersectional assumptions that might affect the outcomes. Many prior professional and career assessments have found disparities based on race, class, gender, and ethnicity. These previous findings can drive studies and influence findings so they should be distinguished from the present study findings.

This segues into the future of intracategorical intersectionality approaches in concert with value studies in the realm of professional identity decisions. The original purpose of the current study was to identify differences within the intersectional race, class, gender, and professional group rather than across group boundaries (McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). Even within the small and seemingly homogenous group, the study produced rich findings. It is recommended to test for more intersectional differences within the group based on geographical demographics to learn about demographic correlations with individualist and autonomy values. Demographic integration and its impact on altruistic and individual achievement values should be studied to follow up on some distinctions in this study. A larger and broader sample should be used with more regional, ethnic, generational and racial representation to understand styles of parental/maternal attachment and values placed on the different mentoring styles and professional autonomy and agency. The expanded participant base would surely introduce differentiating factors but it would be of great interest to learn about the common factors, "invisible and unobservable" values that may be transient across many borders.

Additionally, future intracategorical intersectionality (McCall, 2005) studies might explain the situational impact of the 2007 to 2010 financial crisis and presidential racial changes on the sociodemographic make-up of Wall Street and other industries. Many values have been identified along racial/gender lines, and the professional demographic landscapes and associated inequities have been attributed to intersectional race, class, and gender identities. Intersectionality studies could be used to explore the value differences and similarities within and between intersectional groups and to

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understand other factors that impact professional and personal career decisions. For instance, double and triple oppressive conditions and family support, education, altruism, and independence values had been naturally associated with women of color. As professional demographic shifts of different race and gender proportions have followed the financial crisis, multiracial intersections of women may share similar family and gender role dynamics. The impact of values should be explored using value survey instruments and life history studies that might demonstrate more than just the recent event impact and may illustrate more similarities/differences across intersectional boundaries. Intracategorical intersectionality (McCall, 2005) studies testing across and within boundaries might illustrate emergent phenomena in contrast with prior assumptions and stereotypes and create new theory. While individual studies would be beneficial, it would be fruitful to study organizational values and the impact of events and demographic shifts as well.

Finally, the simultaneity of being an African American woman and filling other roles including consequential roles should be explored further. "Out of the box" researcher perspectives and "out of the box" 21st century relevant simultaneity of more empowered, agentic, autonomous and impactful positions, e.g. mentors, sponsors, and role models are relevant research opportunities. There are multiple, intersecting positional responsibilities that emanate from attaining prominent leadership positions especially, e.g. women in Wall Street Banking Managing Directors. The "new" tensions are produced while filling unpaid mentor, sponsor, role model and other corporate social responsibility roles and filling visible and prominent paid functional roles. There are

opportunities to study the influence and effective impact of individuals with effect impact

on socialization processes.

EPILOGUE

During this study, I learned and appreciated the breadth, the depth and the power of the dissertation experience. I may now be considered "well read" and knowledgeable in some practical and academic realms. Scary! After much toiling, resilience, dissertation committee guidance and patience and a great editor, some might even mistake me for a prolific, creative writer. But none of these outcomes mattered if I had not completed a few simple yet complex consequential tasks: unearthing the "good" that had been hidden in and from African American literature; presenting the truth about how to be authentic and "fit in" highly regarded Wall Street professions; completing not a perfect but an excellent work; making a difference in my life and potentially many other lives; and making my mom proud of me.

In this dissertation, I used Paula Rothenberg's *Anthology of Race, Class and Gender in the United States* (2004) to lay some of the theoretical groundwork for the complex intersectionality and simultaneity frameworks. Since 1983, Rothenberg has explored contextual, political and interpersonal intersectional differences, commonalities, inequities and privileges associated with race, class and gender. She was warned that she was swimming into unchartered waters as a White woman impassioned about understanding the issues and making a difference in this traditionally non-White area of interest. Rothenberg is a White woman of Jewish heritage. In Paula's book, *Invisible Privilege, a Memoir about Race, Class and Gender* in the U.S. (2000), she explored the privileges of her upper-middle-class Orthodox Jewish identity. In the *Invisible Privilege* prologue, Paula hinted and then later shared more details about the tension in her parents' lives as they were "struggling to *reconcile* their desire for upward mobility with their

commitment to retaining Jewish heritage" (Rothenberg, 2000, p.3). Her parents also encountered many perceptions of contradictions in their religious faith. Rothenberg and her parents had not abandoned their faith or their heritage but they were aware of the reality that problems associated with race, class and gender had not dissipated after the 1970's.

Paula maintained strong values especially regarding education and how education was a tool used to free the unreconciled and a tool to empower. Paula was intent on making a difference using her life and her profession in the classroom to increase awareness of everyday discrimination and other race, class and gender oppression issues. I thought to myself, how coincidental? Aren't these the same conceptual struggles and visions many African American women experience? Aren't these the same values and tools used by African American women and especially now, I know they were also used by my research participants. How much do Blacks, Whites and others have in common? What commonalities, differences and collective efforts haven't been explored because of inaccurate perceptions of reality, boundaries and territorial ownership of oppressions and privileges? Paula was an *outsider within* (Collins, 2000a). In many ways, we are all *outsiders within*, acculturated, socialized, assimilated yet authentic. If we'd only acknowledge that our values and visions are alike yet we realize where there are real inequities, we could collectively, positively affect change.

The power in this dissertation is in the portraits of *positive social change* which can and must be shared by a broader audience than Blacks, Black women and people of color. It should be referenced in interdisciplinary dialogue for many generations. In varied contexts, Atta, Bolsa and Penny illustrated how to effectively break the mold and

break the cycle of being on defense. The broke down visible and invisible barriers and boundaries and became powerful Wall Street banking Managing Directors. They used tools they began using as adolescents, tools that enabled them to gain control in situations by identifying and building their own skills and identities. Their tools emanated from varied experiences of oppression and negative inaccurate perceptions. Their maternal influences were not consistent with the traditional defensive armoring practices of Black women (Bell & Nkomo, 1998, Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003, Townsend, 2008), nor were their tools consistent with similar defensive *arming* practiced by other racial and ethnic groups (Costello, 2004). Offense was the best defense for them.

Bolsa, Atta and Penny managed perceptions with consistent personal identities, a network of strong relationships, including their husbands and foundations of strong values to achieve excellence. Their earlier experiences prepared them by giving them opportunities to *try on* behaviors, beliefs and values that withstood many tests over time. They exercised *agency* in their own lives and they empowered others along the way, Blacks and "others" from the North and from the South, rich and poor, men and women. They managed the interplay of the many complex challenges, perceptions, roles, identities and responsibilities. They embodied being themselves, role models, sponsors, mentors, mothers, wives, daughters, friends and Wall Street Managing Directors. Collectively and individually, they are trailblazers with their own unique footprints in the sand and they know there are footprints ahead of them and behind them.

The purpose of this study was to make visible the invisible privileges and to reconcile the otherwise "unreconciled souls" (Allen, 1992). I feel strongly that this has been accomplished, I've paved the way for others and I have made my mother proud.

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RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Co-Researcher Consent Form

GW IRB number: 080649

Principal Investigator: Dr. Andrea Casey   Telephone number: 703-726-3763

Sub-Investigator: Michele C. Scott   Telephone number: 973-677-7470

Sponsor: *not applicable*

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1) Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study under the direction of Dr. Andrea Casey (Department of Human and Organizational Learning), George Washington University (GWU). Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary.

2) Why is this study being done?

You are being asked to take part in this study because you are a professional African American woman who has achieved the level of managing director in investment or corporate banking who may have experiences of decision-making and choices influenced by your race, class, and gender.

The purpose of this study is to understand from the experiences of the three African American participants how race, class, and gender (as well as other salient factors) influence their professional identity decision-making process.

3) What is involved in this study?

If you choose to take part in this study, you will be subject to the following procedures:
1) Research interviews will be conducted in the locations chosen by the participants.
2) There will be at least three interviews, approximately 60 to 90 minutes apiece.
3) The interviews will consist primarily of inductive and reflective questions both directly and indirectly related to the race, class, and gender intersection of your identity and how the factors influence your professional identity decision-making. The questions will be answered through your sharing recollections, examples, and actual experiences.
4) A focus group (optional) will be conducted after the interviewing process with you and the other two participants in the study. During the focus group, there will be discussions guided by questions expounding on the results of the interviews. More in-depth discussions will be held about the topics of race, class, gender, other

identified salient factors, and professional identity integration. The focus group will help validate early findings from the interviews and may bring to light additional data.

5) The researcher will create a sketch and then a portrait based on the shared experiences, the context, and the history. You will be able to review the interview transcripts and the sketch and will be allowed to provide corrections.

6) The research will be published in a dissertation library where it will be made available to students, faculty, and the public as well. As a result of the study, subsequent articles may be written using references from the study, and references may be presented in publicly presented papers, presentations, and speeches. Your portrait and identity will remain anonymous in the original dissertation and subsequent references.

The following activities are specifically research related:
1) At least three 1- to 1½-hour interviews;
2) One focus group, up to 2 hours (optional);
3) Review of transcript and sketch, approximate 4 hours.

The total amount of time you will spend in connection with this study is: three 1-hour to 90-minute individual interview sessions. The interviews will be conducted at agreed-upon available times. A 1- to 2-hour focus group will be conducted after the individual interviews have been completed. Following the completion of the transcriptions and the individual portrait sketch, you will be asked to review them for accuracy. This will be accomplished, requiring 4 to 6 hours of your own time.

These are approximated, but you should be required to spend no more than 12 to 15 hours over the next several months to complete this study.

4) What are the risks of participating in this study?

There are no physical risks associated with this study. There is, however, the possible risk of loss of confidentiality. Every effort will be made to keep your information confidential; however, this cannot be guaranteed. Some of the questions we will ask you as part of this study may make you feel uncomfortable. You may refuse to answer any of the questions, and you may take a break at any time during the study. You may stop your participation in this study at any time.

5) Are there benefits to taking part in this study?

There are no direct benefits for the participants. An indirect benefit may be in the form of increased self-awareness of which factors influence your professional identity decision-making process, including race, class, and gender.

6) What are my options?

You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to. Should you decide to participate and later change your mind, you can do so at any time.

7) Will I receive payment for being in this study?

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

8) Can I be taken off the study?

The investigator can decide to withdraw you from the study at any time. You could be taken off the study for reasons related solely to you (for example, not following study-related directions from the Investigator) or because the entire study is stopped.

9) How will my privacy be protected?

If results of this research study are reported in journals or at scientific meetings, the people who participated in this study will not be named or identified. GW will not release any information about your research involvement without your written permission, unless required by law.

During the interview, first names only will be used. Following the interview, the researcher will listen to the interview recordings and transfer them immediately to computer and multiple backup devices as soon as the interviews are captured. The labeling of the recordings will not include names, but labels will include assigned values associated with the participant identifiable only to the researcher. The recordings will be transcribed by a third-party, nonpartisan transcribing vendor who will agree to nondisclosure. The transcriber will be required to sign a nondisclosure form. At the completion of the dissertation defense, all copies of the interview recordings will be destroyed.

During the focus group discussions, while we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of the discussion, we request that all present respect the group by not repeating what is said, outside the group.

10) Problems or Questions

The Office of Human Research of George Washington University, at telephone number (202) 994-2715, can provide further information about your rights as a research participant. If you think you have been harmed in this study, you report this to the Principal Investigator of this study.

*Please keep a copy of this document in case you want to read it again.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign below:

11) Documentation of Informed Consent

I understand the information printed on this form. I have discussed this study, its risks and potential benefits, and my other choices with _____. My questions so far have been answered. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study and my understanding that I can withdraw at any time.

_____   _____
Subject's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

_____   _____
Principal Investigator's Signature   Date

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

There are three scheduled 60- to 90-minute interviews. There is a possibility of an additional interview session to wrap up uncovered points or to collect more details. The additional session may be face-to-face but it may also be performed via telephone conversation. The face-to-face interview sessions will take place at the participants' discretion and in the place of their choice. The protocol will be driven by the results of the three scheduled interviews. The interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed.

Interview 1

Purpose: Getting to know you, your background, your history, both contextual and biographical, your perspectives, and early experiences with race, class, and gender.

1) *Tell me about yourself and your family.*
   a. *Probe*: Where were you born and raised? Where are you currently living?
   b. About your birth family? Maternal and paternal figures? Siblings?
      i. What type of work did your parents do while you were growing up? What are they doing now?
      ii. Describe your relationships with your parents.
      iii. How close are you? Family holidays, etc.?
   c. *Probe*: What about your immediate family? Children? Husband?
   d. *Probe*: How would you describe the influence your parents/family had/have on your life?
2) *How do you define identity*?
   a. *Probe*: Characteristics? Race? Class? Gender? Religion? Family? Birthplace? Profession?
3) *How do you describe your identity*?
   a. *Probe*: What makes you unique? What groups do you belong to or identify with? What identity traits are most important to you? How does it change in different situations, times, in the presence of others?
4) *Describe your introduction to being a girl/woman.*
   a. *Probe*: Who was influential in your understanding of what it meant to be a woman?
   b. *Probe*: Did you feel alienated because of your gender? Explain.
   c. What were your feelings about being a woman?
5) *Describe your introduction to your race.*
   a. *Probe:* Who was influential in your understanding of what it meant to be an African American?
   b. *Probe:* Did you feel alienated because of your race? Explain.
   c. *Probe:* How did you feel about your race?
6) *Describe your introduction to your class (level of wealth).*

a. *Probe*: How would you describe your class, and how did you become aware of your class?
b. *Probe*: Did you feel you were differentiated by your class? Explain.

7) *How were you introduced to your identity as an African American woman in whatever class you were in?*
   a. *Probe:* Who was most instrumental in this introduction?
   b. *Probe:* Describe how you felt about being an African American woman.
   c. *Probe:* Do you think you were treated differently because of who you were? How?

8) *Tell me about your childhood school experiences.*
   a. *Probe*: Where did you go to school? Public? Private? Integrated? Segregated?
   b. *Probe*: Extracurricular activities? Hobbies?
   c. What did you aspire to be when you grew up?
   d. Were your aspirations impacted by your race/class/gender? Explain.

9) *Tell me about yourself: College preparation and college*
   Probes:
   a. Where did you go to college?
      i. How did you choose the college and why?
      ii. Did being an African American woman in your class influence your college choice? How?
      iii. What was your major? Why that major?
      iv. What extracurricular activities?
         1. Any organizational affiliations? Why did you join?
         2. How did you spend your 'spare' time?
         3. Any African American / woman associations? Which ones? Did they have these organizations on your campus?
      v. What were your educational and career goals?
   b. Describe your most significant experiences in college.
   c. If you could relive the college experience, preparation, etc., how would you change it? Why?

10) *While growing up and attending grade school, high school, and college, what was your first recollection of racial/gender/class bias, prejudices, and discrimination?*
    Probes:
    a. How and when did the bias, prejudice, and discrimination occur?
    b. How did the bias, prejudice, and discrimination make you feel?
    c. How did the bias, prejudice, and discrimination change you?

11) *Describe the decision-making and choices made through your college years.*
    Probes:
    a. Who made the decisions in your household/family?
    b. Did you feel like you had an adequate voice in the decisions? Explain.
    c. When do you feel you were finally able to make important decisions regarding yourself?
    d. On what did you base decisions you were able to make?

   e. How much were you concerned about making a good impression or pleasing others? Describe some situations.

   f. What parts of yourself, your identity were you most willing to adjust, compromise, and change to get what you wanted or to "fit in"? Give examples.

   g. What parts of yourself were you not willing to change? Give examples.

   h. How did your race/gender/class influence decisions and choices made?

12) *To close Interview 1*:

   a. *Tell me about the most significant events in your life through college.*

     i. Memorable—happy event?

     ii. Memorable—not so happy event?

     iii. How did these events impact your life, influence decisions?

   b. *Through this period in your life, who or what has had the greatest influence on your life? How*?

   c. *If you had the choice to change anything up until this point (college years) in your life, what would you change?*

   d. *Do you have anything to add?*

This is a notebook for you to record any afterthoughts you may have after today's interview. Please, write them down and if you would like to share them at the beginning of the next interview, that would be welcomed. They may be helpful in the painting of your portrait. In preparation for the next interview: *We will discuss how you prepared for your work experiences and how you prepared for your career. We will discuss the path to where you are today in your career.*
Do you have any questions?

Interview 2

Purpose: to learn about the experiences in your professional career. While you have presumably achieved success, the road to success may not have been without extraordinary barriers. The purpose is to learn if this was expected success and whether success equals self-fulfillment.

1) *Do you have any notes, revelations you would like to share that you have written and/or thought about since our last interview? Please share.*

2) *Tell me about yourself—your career path to your current professional position. Describe your job experiences from college until your current position.*
 Probes:

   a. How did you learn about the positions?

   b. How were the interview processes? Give some examples.

   c. How were you hired?

   d. What about the organizations? The race/gender/class make-up? Give examples.

   e. What were the professions, jobs, and functions?

   f. How did you develop and progress in the organizations?

   g. What were your expectations?

    i. Were you doing what you wanted to do?

    ii. Were you doing what you expected given the job description?

  h. Did you have a formal mentor?

    i. Race/gender of the mentor?

    ii. How was the mentor chosen?

    iii. How would you describe the relationship?

    iv. How did the mentoring relationship factor into your development, project and promotion opportunities?

  i. How did you feel about the growth opportunities for you?

    i. How did the organization facilitate your growth?

    ii. How did you facilitate finding your own opportunities?

  j. Do you think the opportunities would have been different if you were not an African American woman in whatever wealth class you were in? Explain.

3) *Describe your interview or promotion experiences.*

 Probes:

  a. *How would you describe how fairly you were treated in interviews*?

    i. Did you perceive bias/discrimination in the interviewer? Explain.

    ii. Did you perceive bias/discrimination in the organization? The profession? Explain.

  b. *What was your perception of the targeted positions*?

    i. How did you perceive any barriers to attaining the position?

    ii. How would you describe the changes you perceived you needed to make to fit the position?

     1. To what did you attribute the perceptions and the changes? Race? Class? Gender? Race/class/gender factors?

     2. How did you handle identity conflict in these situations?

  c. *Describe how you prepared yourself and positioned yourself for major career moves.*

    i. What research did you perform on the profession or position?

    ii. What research did you perform on the organization?

    iii. What networks or organizations did you join?

    iv. What assignments (special) did you take on?

    v. What relationships, alliances, or sponsorships did you seek?

    vi. How did you learn who the decision-makers, interviewers were and what they were looking for?

    vii. Describe how you prepared by making any decisions to change your behavior or traits to make an impression.

4) *Describe how you make major career-related decisions and choices*?

 Probes:

  a. What personal factors do you take into account? Why?

  b. What professional factors do you take into account? Why?

  c. Whose influences do you consider? Why?

  d. How do you prioritize the factors in your decision-making?

  e. How much does being your "whole" self matter in your professional career?

   f. How does your race/gender/class and culture play a role in decision-making and choices?

   g. What other factors are significant/salient in your decision-making?

   h. Describe some of the significant decision-making experiences.

     i. What impact did they have on you? How did you experience the tension and conflict between personal and professional identity?

     ii. What has been your most significant learning experience in career decision-making?

5) *Describe the culture of your current organization.*
  Probes:

   a. Does it foster diversity? How?

   b. How is an African American female managing director accepted there?

   c. What is the racial/gender make-up of your staff?

     i. Prior to taking over the position?

     ii. Currently?

6) *In your professional positions, have you experienced conflicts that you perceive are race/gender/class related? Describe the experiences. How did you respond to the experiences?*

7) *Describe the most significant events in your professional career.*

8) *If you had the opportunity to change anything about your professional career and the path to your current position, what would you change? Why? Describe how you would change it.*

You have your notebook. If you have any afterthoughts, please, write them down and if you would like to share them at the beginning of the next interview, that would be welcomed. They may be helpful in painting your portrait.

In preparation for the third interview: During the third interview we will discuss the general experiences that may have influenced your identity as an African American woman. We will also discuss how you balanced your life and your decisions.

Do you have anything to add or any questions? Thanks so much.

Interview 3

Purpose: General, theory—intersectional (race, class and gender/simultaneity [multiple group membership]) experiences will be discussed not in terms of the theoretical terms but using directed questioning. An interview wrap-up.

Note: Reviewed significant points from previous interviews. They will drive some probing questions in this interview.

 1) *Do you have any notes, revelations you would like to share that you have written and/or thought about since our last interview? Please share them.*

 2) *Do you have any questions at this point*?

 3) *How do you define/describe success*?

a. How do you measure your professional success?
b. How do you measure personal success?
c. How do you describe your success as an African American woman? Professional woman?
d. Do you feel you are successful? Why?
e. Does it matter to you if others believe you are successful? Why?

4) *Generally, how do you think your race/gender/class have made a difference in your life?*
   a. What discrimination? What oppression?
   b. What opportunities? What advantages? What privileges?
   c. What choices and decisions made?

5) *Do you think your life experiences would have been different if you were not an African American woman in your class(es) of wealth?*
   a. Childhood experiences?
   b. College experiences?
   c. Career experiences?
   d. General life experiences?
   e. Decision-making experiences? Choices?

6) *To what extent do you believe race, gender, and class challenges are within your control? Provide examples.*

7) *Describe experiences when race, gender, and class made a difference in your opportunities to achieve your career goals, life goals.*

8) *Do you feel you had to work harder than others just because you are an African American woman, to attain the same professional positions? Explain.*

9) *Have your career goals differed from your life goals? How?*
   a. Generally, if they differed, how did you strike a balance and reconcile differences?
   b. How have you made decisions when your career or profession has conflicted with your personal life? Describe some experiences.
      i. How has this process changed over the course of your career?
      ii. What influences these decisions?
      iii. How has being an African American woman caused a conflict? How have you made decisions in these instances?

10) *Based on your experiences and the lessons you learned, how would you suggest an African American woman approach professional opportunities and decision-making?*

11) *Today, how do you describe your identity?*
   a. Has this changed over the course of our interviews? How? Why?
   b. Describe your most significant experience as an African American woman in your class of wealth.
   c. How would you suggest or what advice would you give to someone about learning about their identity as an African American woman?

12) *Do you have anything else to add or any questions?*

That is the end of the formal interview process. As noted in the consent form, in addition to the formal interviews, I may request additional conversations to add clarity to your

responses. I may need to get a deeper understanding of a specific situation or answer additional questions as a result of the analysis of the information you have provided.

Also, as discussed in the consent form, we will have a focus group with all three research participants. The focus group logistics will be coordinated and scheduled according to the availability of you and the other participants. The focus group discussion points will evolve out of the individual interview topics but will be done without my divulgence of individual interview answers.

Thank you so much for sharing your experiences during the individual interview sessions.

SAMPLE PARTICIPANT INVITATION EMAIL

From: Michele Scott
Sent: 10/01/2007

To:

Subject: Doctoral Dissertation Research: African American Women Managing Directors

Hello _____,

I hope you don't mind my direct contact via email. I had a conversation with _____
regarding my doctoral dissertation research. I mentioned I was interested in you as a
dissertation research participant. She shared your contact information and said to mention
her name when I contact you. Also, _____ has agreed to be a participant and she
indicated I should use her name as well in pursuit of your candidacy.

I am a Vice President at Deutsche Bank – Cash and Trade Operations. I am also a
doctoral candidate at the George Washington University – Executive Leadership Doctoral
Program (ELDP). My dissertation research explores the integration of individual and
professional identities. Given my sociocultural background and my professional
experiences, I have chosen to study the experiences of three African American women
who are managing directors (or the equivalent) in Wall Street banking (investment,
corporate or retail).

You are one of the candidates I am considering for the research. After hearing you speak
in a multicultural women's venue, I thought you would be an excellent research
participant choice. Therefore, I am requesting a brief conversation with you to discuss
this opportunity, the requirements, the timeframes, and the responsibilities. I could only
fathom the hectic schedule you have, but I hope this will not deter you from considering
participation. I am very flexible and willing to accommodate your schedule. May I
schedule a call with you through your administrative assistant?

Sincerely,

Michele Scott, VP, SCPM

APPENDIX D:

LETTER OF CONFIDENTIALITY: TRANSCRIBER

        I have been hired to transcribe the digital recordings of the dissertation research interview sessions. I agree I will listen to the recordings, transcribe them, and prepare the transcript maintaining the confidentiality of the participants. I will not identify the interviewee (participant) by name in the transcription.

        I will prepare a copy of the transcription solely for the use as a backup for the researcher. This copy will be identified only by the researcher's name and anonymous code. Upon request from the researcher, I will destroy the copy. The original recording file will be destroyed.

Please provide your signature below to indicate you have read and understand this form and consent to transcribe recordings for this study.

_____   _____

Transcriber Name   Date

_____

Transcribing Company Name

_____

Researcher Name

APPENDIX E:

LESSONS LEARNED

The research has been beneficial, yielding significant and "valuable" results, and it also produced learning to be adopted in future research processes.

1. Use the project mindset, with set tasks, expectations, timeframes, "dedicated" resources, a defined scope, and smart, holistic goals.

2. Simplify the process with constant reminders of boundaries, a structured and documented roadmap and audit trail, and consistent operational definitions.

3. Keep references and data in a manageable, cataloged, and accessible form with categories, keywords, and quote references.

4. Understand committee styles, expectations, contributions, motivations, and schedules early. Though there are life changes, take these aspects into account when working with them as individuals.

5. Remember and continuously refer to the school's dissertation requirements and schedules and share them with the committee, especially those outsiders within.

6. Since much time might elapse over the course of the dissertation process, continuously refer to prior chapters as additional chapters are completed to ensure cohesiveness and to decrease major draft changes at the end.

7. Create mental and documented checklists during the in-depth interviews, where dialogue or monologues might dominate large chunks of allotted time.

8. Be aware of the sensitivity associated with life history studies when creating written accounts. This may be the first time someone's life has been presented in

this format, and it may be shocking. Have more conversation regarding how data will be presented.

9. Be confident and open during the process. Designate regular, agreed-upon checkpoints. Don't procrastinate in follow-up out of fear.

10. Keep a personal diary of the experience.

11. Employ an editor early for early tips to produce "easy read" output for the committee throughout the process for effective content feedback.

12. Don't go the process alone. Regularly engage in conversations with "someone." It can seem quite lonely sometimes.