

6-2007

# Navigating Barriers of African American Male Administrators: Manifesting Mechanisms for Career Advancement in Mainstream Institutions of Higher Education

Orlando Lewis  
*National-Louis University*

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**Navigating Barriers of African American Male Administrators: Manifesting  
Mechanisms for Career Advancement in Mainstream Institutions of Higher  
Education**

**Critical Engagement Project**

**Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Education**

**Department of Adult and Continuing Education**

**By**

**Orlando Lewis**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First I want to thank God for placing his armor around me as I proceeded through trials and tribulations of completing my Critical Engagement Project (CEP). God made it possible for me to write and provide the words of wisdom and awareness to create positive social change.

And, I need to credit my Primary Chairperson, Dr. Gabriele Strohschen for truly being there for me and for caring about my welfare. Gabriele focused on my adult learning and development needs while uncovering my learning style which enabled me to complete my CEP. You epitomize what it means to be an adult educator. You sacrificed yourself in many ways and have paved the way for my success.

Likewise, I must thank my Secondary Dr. Thomas Heaney for being supportive through the valleys and peaks of my journey that sparked the meaning of adult education. I would approach Tom and acknowledge his guidance because there were times he would light a fire in my soul and elevate my understanding of Adult Education.

And lastly, to Dr. Ervin V. Griffin Sr., my Tertiary, I offer unending gratitude and praise. You have always been inspirational and present while I was pursuing this doctoral degree. I appreciate you for your vigorous guidance and support shared in making my dream of earning and obtaining a doctoral degree become reality. You have shown me the importance of receiving the highest degree possible in education and its proper use in administration and in the development of students.

I would be remiss if I did not express special gratitude towards the entire faculty: Dr. Scipio A. J. Colin; Dr. Elizabeth Peterson; Dr. Rande Lawrence; and Dr. Stephen

Brookfield for their knowledge, wisdom and support in advancing my knowledge base for social change.

To my cohort members, I cherish you for the time we spent getting to know who we really are, and whom we are becoming. I especially thank Jacqueline Callery for the engagement in constant dialog that kept me on my feet and the sharing of information at crucial times that gave way to a dark path; Cynthia Butler who I have come to call my sister; and Tania Giordani (study buddy) for our time at Lake Geneva spending long nights and early mornings in the computer lab.

I am thankful to have family and friends as part of this journey. You have understood what this journey was, and have supported me in my absence for not spending as much time in fellowship and brotherhood. To all THANK YOU!

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wife Carol Lewis for always being supportive and having my best interest foremost. Throughout this journey you have never wavered or presented obstacles to prevent me from obtaining my goal of earning this doctoral degree. You have selflessly sacrificed your time and energy in making this dream a reality. I am grateful to have you and I love you.

To my children Tyler, Anthony, and Lindsey, for your patience as you have traveled this journey with me. The sky is open for you to spread your wings and fly high. Always shoot for the moon and if you fall you will be amongst the stars. Perseverance is the key to life and success. Don't let anyone or anything turn you around or stop you from achieving your goals in life. You are the masters of your faith and the captains of your souls.

This study is also dedicated to my parents Eva and Forrest Lewis for their strong belief and support for their children to obtain as much education as possible. Your guidance and support throughout my life has enabled me to reach this pinnacle of higher education. Your input of wisdom during our car trip from Illinois to New Orleans generated the creativeness and impetus that began the data analysis process of this study. I am very grateful to have you as loving and wonderful parents.

To my ancestors, who devoted their life and work towards eradicating inequities, and oppression which opened the doors for present and future African Americans to work in higher education administration, this is for you!

## Abstract

The overall goal of this qualitative case study was to provide information to African American males regarding barriers they are challenged to navigate for career advancement at mainstream institutions of higher education. I utilized semi structured interviews to: (1) determine what barriers face African American male administrators in higher education that prevent advancement to executive positions; (2) identify and detail ways in which African American male administrators successfully navigate the barriers and; (3) identify coping mechanisms and support systems to aid African American men to navigate the identified barriers.

I identified three themes of barriers that reflect the route of the African American male experience in higher education administration. The first barrier is limited and limiting opportunities, the second, institutional racism, and third, invisibility. These three identified themes of barriers evidence how African American male administrators, regardless of their degrees and experiences, are placed in designated positions and how mainstream institutions are oppressive in their color-blind practices of inequity while allocating funds and resources. The description of these barriers shows how individuals of the dominant culture at mainstream institutions attempt to silence voices while perpetuating the non-existence of African American male administrators in the hierarchy of higher education administration.

Five themes of specific coping mechanisms were identified in this study. Mentoring and networking are the major coping mechanisms that play a significant role how African American male administrators are inspired and inspire one another to navigate the barriers for success.

The implications for mainstream institutions of higher education includes adult educators who can work with higher education administrators in articulating the importance and facilitating practice of inclusion for African American male administrators in the involvement of all facets of decisions made at mainstream institutions of higher education.

Recommendation for future research study includes studying the comparison of African American male administrator's experiences and degrees held to those of the dominant culture at mainstream institutions of higher education. The outcome would be to determine if there is equality in the selection and placement process in the hierarchal structures of higher education administration.



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## **CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION**

Who am I?

I am just one man. I am one who wears different hats in society and plays many different significant roles. My upbringing as an African American male in an African American family coupled with the cultural and psychological forces in US society has shaped my identity, philosophy, and profession. My exposure to mainstream society, the contributions of African Americans of yesterday and to our society today, as well as what I envision for tomorrow, will continue to form my identity.

I am reminded of the need for understanding, respecting and taking pride in my Southern/Midwestern upbringing as well as my ancestors' struggles. The constant reminders of my parents' life philosophies were expressed in their advice “ (1) to be safe and sensible, (2) to trust yourself, (3)to improve yourself, and (4) to respect others and they will respect you.” These are some of the principles that guide me. As Parker Palmer (1998) has stated, in the midst of that complex field of identity, identity is a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make me who I am, converging in the unfolding mystery of being human.

My philosophy of life continues to be developed by receiving a wide range of ideological expressions, truism, and catch phrases of inspiration as I grow and try to reconcile them. Examples of some of my truisms and catch phrases are “There are no problems, only solutions;” “There are no pressures in life, only challenges;” “Don't let nobody turn me back, or turn me around.” I utilize these ideas to penetrate the daily realities that I encounter and to uncover the inequities and oppression that may be underlying. For me, understanding life means knowing how my impressions and

interpretations of my experiences are embedded within my thought processes and how they create the biases that are unique to me. My philosophy of life is based on examined morals, values and ethics that lead me to transformative learning.

My work is in the field of higher education, where I also follow those beliefs about life, and what has been instilled in me. I have been involved in higher education for twenty-five years. For seven of these twenty five years, I have been a student. The balance of my experiences eight teen18 years has been at various institutions of higher education as a staff member, adjunct faculty, and administrator. My work with students has influenced me as a teacher and as a practitioner to be cognizant of always possessing an open ear. It is imperative for me to maintain open communication at all times.

It has been my experience that students can usually tell if you are not open and receptive to their needs. Students are smart enough to decipher who is real, who is not real, and who is tuned into their needs. As a practitioner and teacher, there is the need for me to be honest with students while acting in the capacity of mentor or addressing their needs or concerns. As I teach, mentor, and address student's needs, I give inspiration as it had been given to me so students can work to overcome inequities and oppression. The primary purpose here is to awaken the truth within students so that they may act upon the truth in their current situation or reclaim that truth in the future that will affect their lives.

My views about research have drastically changed. As I have embarked upon this journey of enlightenment through this doctoral program, my research approach has elevated to that of qualitative inquiry. Before entering this program my method of research was basic, consisting of reading all materials with the intent to extrapolate the following: who, what, when, where, why and how and then write a paragraph on each,

with a conclusion. I have discovered that there are different research methods such as qualitative research that is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people. All information is appropriate for investigation. I have also discovered that, as a research scholar, I must be upfront with my personal biases, habits, and expectations that may skew interpretations when constructing knowledge.

Through my studies, I have become aware of my biases which have me looking more closely at issues of race, racism, and hegemony as I view the world through a critical race theory perspective. I am beginning to understand better that I construct knowledge based upon how I see my position in society. I must be direct about where I stand and what possible biases and prejudices might influence me. If I am in a classroom or acting in the capacity of staff or administrator, I must be cognizant of how my positionality may shape the classroom or learning environment. Of course, that is true as I have moved into my role as a research scholar and it is also true as an African American male professional in higher education administration.

As I conceptualized my Critical Engagement Project, I chose the topic: Navigating the Barriers of African American Male Administrators: Manifesting Mechanisms in Mainstream institutions of Higher Education for Career Advancement. I critically reviewed my lifelong educational experiences and reflected upon my attendance at Tennessee State University (TSU), a historical black college or university (HBCU). At TSU, I had the opportunity to be in the presence of African American male administrators with power and authority and was able to engage in many conversations. Conversely, when I attended graduate school and began working in mainstream

institutions of higher education, I came in contact with very few African American male administrators with power and authority.

I have observed African American males with advanced degrees and job experience relegated to staff and lower level positions. Having seen only a few in executive level positions in higher education administration, this became a concern and I simply asked myself, “why?” As a result, I investigated and uncovered barriers that hinder advancement of African American males who consequently must manifest mechanisms to successfully navigate barriers to elevate their careers successfully at mainstream institutions. This study lets us listen to the authentic voices of five African American male administrators that are affected by the problem!

#### Background

African American male administrators in higher education in the past and in the present have primarily been offered and have accepted designated administrative positions e.g., (Director of Minority Affairs, Director of Multicultural Affairs, Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, etc.) that lack power and authority. Prior to the 1970s, African American male administrators working at mainstream institutions of higher education were practically non-existent. It was not until the late 1960's that African American male administrators began to receive administrative appointments to work in mainstream institutions of higher education.

Smith (1978), states “Following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King and the subsequent riots in April of 1968, through about the end of 1972, educational institutions were faced with the necessity of hiring more blacks to serve in various capacities” (p.323). As a result of the riots and pressures from the African American

communities with potential threats of violence and in conjunction with the possibility of the federal government withholding funds from mainstream institutions who employed few African Americans, mainstream institutions acquiesced and appointed African American male administrators to their staff. These appointments of African American male administrators came through coercion by the federal courts and systemic efforts to appease the African American community and students enrolled at these institutions.

Of major significance was the creation of newly designated administrative positions for African American males that usually entailed the management of federal programs and services on campus which correlated directly to the recruitment and retention efforts of African American students to attend mainstream institutions of higher education. Mainstream institutions of higher education granted administrative responsibilities to African American male administrators in few new line and staff positions within the organizational hierarchy in return for federal funding. African American male administrators held minuscule new line and staff positions. They were primarily responsible for the management of federal funds or compliance tasks with federal regulations. The majority of African American male administrators were placed in staff positions rather than line positions in higher education administration to provide oversight for African American students and federal funding received from the government.

As Brown (1997) points out, line positions are those positions that carry power and authority and are situated in the formal administrative hierarchy of the university. African American male administrators were not part of the higher levels of the university and were usually placed in staff positions that carried no real power and authority. The

prime responsibility of African American males in staff positions was to advise and represent the interest of the minority students and staff in governance. Placement of African American males in designated staff positions that operate out of the periphery of power and opportunity has hindered career advancement of African American males to executive levels in higher education administration and are a testament to environments of oppression and institutional racism.

Since the 1960s, there is a false perception that African American male administrators have elevated their careers in all administrative capacities at mainstream institutions of higher education. According to Brown (1997) there has been a substantial increase in the number of senior-level African American administrators at mainstream institutions. However, Brown contends that “this increase conveys a partly false perception, and that perception leads one to believe that the goal of higher education racial equalization has been achieved” (p.92).

A study at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., entitled “Roles and Activities of Senior level African American Administrators at Majority Institutions” (cited in Brown, p. 92), reports that eighty percent of the senior-level administrative positions held by African Americans in the more than two hundred mainstream institutions of higher education surveyed are in Student or Multicultural and Minority Affairs. Brown (1997) further discussed that racial equalization has not been achieved because only twenty percent of African American administrators serve in academic and financial affairs capacities classified as hierarchal line positions within the organizational chart that carry power and authority at mainstream institutions of higher education.



African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education are, indeed, challenged with navigating the barriers for advancement to executive levels in higher education administration. It has been a practice of mainstream institutions to recruit African American male administrators to serve in the few line and staff positions that only involve African American students or other programs affiliated with minorities.

Mainstream institutions of higher education have utilized hegemony in racist and oppressive manners supported by federal funding to appoint few African American male administrators to positions of power and relegate other African American males to staff positions. In order for African American male administrators to advance in higher education administration, the barriers to advancement representing in such ploys must be uncovered and mechanisms must be identified for African American male administrators to navigate their careers successfully at mainstream institutions.

#### Statement of the Problem

This study emerges from a concern of whether or not African American male administrators in higher education, who serve in administrative positions (Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors, and Coordinators) at mainstream education institutions, can overcome barriers that prevent advancement by manifesting mechanisms to help navigate those barriers and elevate their careers successfully. African American male administrators in higher education, specifically at mainstream institutions of higher learning are constantly challenged to prove their professional ability within the dominant culture in U.S. society.

While the recent visibility of African American males working at mainstream institutions of higher education may give both the layman and the non-minority professional a firm belief that the representation of African American males has increased significantly, specifically in administrative positions is an aberration. A recent report from the Digest of Education Statistics entitled “Digest of Education Statistics 2005” succinctly points out that there were a total of 186,505 executive/administrative/managers throughout the country and only 7,147 or 3.8% were African American male administrators in higher education in the winter of 2003-2004.

The aforementioned statistics show that African American male administrators are significantly under-represented in the make up of administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education. Moreover, the majority of African American males working in higher education at mainstream institutions are relegated to staff positions in the organizational structure. African American male administrators are also placed very poorly in the organizational hierarchy in mainstream institutions of higher education which alone creates barriers which prevent African American male administrators from advancing to executive levels.

African American male administrators must navigate the perceived barrier that they are equally represented in the field of higher education administration, specifically at mainstream institutions of higher education by non-minority professionals. Placement of African American male administrators is usually in staff positions with minute budget and supervisory responsibilities and is not visibly recognized as important to the campus community. They must navigate the barrier of constantly proving their self worth and abilities within the dominant culture of higher education for their career advancement.

## Purpose of the Study

The overall goal of this research study is to provide information to African American males regarding the barriers that they are challenged to navigate for career advancement at mainstream institutions of higher education.

The specific purposes of this study are:

1. To determine what are the barriers facing African American male administrators in higher education that prevent advancement to executive positions;
2. To identify and detail the ways in which African American male administrators successfully navigate the barriers and;
3. To identify coping mechanisms and support systems to aid African American men to navigate the identified barriers.

## Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it will inform African American male administrators in higher education of the barriers they face as they navigate through the mine fields of careers in higher education administration. It will identify how racism manifests itself, prevents advancement and attempts to silence the African American males' voice. The importance of this study is that it will illustrate the ways in which African American male administrators deal with barriers by applying their knowledge and internal strengths to navigate these barriers for advancement. The study will advocate and generate representation of African American males as role models for African American students on mainstream campuses and to make space to amplify the African American male administrators' voice in higher education administration.

This study is significant for African American male administrators to understand a number of issues related to negotiating the higher educational administration maze:

1. The need to identify and aid in problem-solving regarding barriers for advancement in higher education.
2. The importance for future African American male administrators to receive appropriate mentoring and training so they gain the equal information for purposes of uplifting and improving conditions of African American male administrators as a community and in higher education.
3. There is a pressing need for African American male administrators to recognize and strongly utilize this information while developing strategies and commitments for advancement. This is a vested community interest and must be enhanced.

#### Research Questions Guiding the Study

The research questions that guided this study reflect the thought and research process reached while uncovering the barriers and coping mechanisms that African American males utilize in order to advance in higher education administration. The research questions that guided this study are as follows:

1. What are barriers for advancement that African American male administrators face at mainstream institutions of education?
2. How do African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education identify barriers that prevent advancement?
3. What coping mechanisms and strategies do African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of education utilize to succeed?

4. What support structures and beliefs exist to increase, promote, and strengthen leadership skills for African American male administrators in these institutions and among their peers?

#### Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter two explores relevant literature regarding the historical plight of African American males in higher education, relevant literature of higher education administration, and pertinent literature regarding Affirmative action. Chapter three focuses on the Methodology and theoretical frame of the study. In chapter four the findings are presented. The final chapter, five, will discuss the analysis of findings, implications and recommendations for future study, and study reflection.

#### Definition of terms in the Study

**Mainstream institutions:** Institutions that have a majority of White Americans that represent the dominant culture.

**Critical race theory:** Movement that seeks to transform the relationship among race, racism, and power.

**Hegemony:** Domination by the ruling class, and unconscious acceptance of that state of affairs.

**Interest convergence:** Thesis pioneered by Derrick Bell that the majority group tolerates advances for racial justice only when it suits its interest to do so.

**Property interest in whiteness:** Idea that white skin and identity are economically valuable.

**Voice:** Ability of a group, such as African Americans or women, to articulate experience in ways unique to it.

**Color blindness:** Belief that one should treat all persons equally, without regard to their race.

**Andragogical:** Term by Malcolm Knowles that shows the strong link between leading and learning. It is the art and science of teaching adults.

## **CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW**

This review of relevant literature to the themes and sub themes of this study will provide a foundation for individual and group action. This study extends and refines knowledge in the area of navigating the barriers for advancement of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education and manifest mechanisms to navigate their careers successfully.

The review of literature encompasses the research purpose and guiding questions which examine the following: (1) historical plight of African American males in higher education literature that reported on the barriers African American male administrators' face that prevent career advancement; (2) relevant literature regarding challenges to affirmative action that create barriers to prevent advancement of African American males; and (3) pertinent literature that uncovers the inequities of higher education administration that is detrimental to the advancement of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education.

### *Historical Plight of African American Males in Higher Education Administration*

The number of African American male administrators in the structure of higher education administration at mainstream institutions is very limited. African American males from a historical perspective have navigated many barriers to achieve success in higher education and become inclusive in the mainstream administrative structures in higher education administration. The price paid has been astronomical in the past and present for the inclusion and advancement of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education.

Historically, African Americans have struggled against oppression and for justice for over four hundred years navigating barriers in the pursuit of higher education. In order to understand the navigation of oppression and inequity of African American male administrators working at mainstream institutions of higher education, we must assess the past to incorporate African American males in the political, social, and economic strategies in higher education administration for the present and future. The struggle against oppression according to Humphries (1994) began in 1619, when African Americans came to this country as slaves out of Africa. During the period of 1619 to 1850, little or no education was offered to slaves. If a slave during this period learned to read or write, the slave master would put out the eyes and cut off the hands. And if the slave was articulate, the slave master would cut the tongue out.

Education and the science of education were not to be tolerated by the dominant culture who at this particular time was the slave masters (Humphries, 1994). In spite of the barriers that African American males endured and the prospect of mental and bodily harm, the pursuit of higher education was continued and achieved by African American males, even during slavery. According to Harris (1992) African Americans risked the wrath from their owners and physical punishment at the hands of a slave breaker to achieve education. “And yet twenty nine African Americans, during the period of 1619 to 1850, managed to get baccalaureate degrees “(Humphries, 1994, p.57).

According to Slater (1994), nearly two centuries after a mainstream institution of higher education in the New World was established in 1636, no African American student had received a degree in any form from an American college or university. It was commonly accepted and a racist creed prior to and for many years following the



Revolutionary War, that literature written by the dominant culture thought African Americans were intellectually inferior and undeserving of education. The dominant culture maintained this belief according to the JBHE (2002)

Blacks were not considered educable at the college level. Driven by strong, prevailing shared values about the biological and cultural inferiority of the Negro, virtually all institutions of higher learning in the United States adopted a universal rule of racial exclusion. (p. 104)

Throughout most of the history in this country, this has been the normative thinking by unrelenting opposition. From segments of the planter aristocracy, politicians, clergy and ordinary citizens (Harris, 1992) who contributed to barriers of African American males seeking access to higher education and opportunities in executive level administrative positions at mainstream institutions of higher education.

Amidst the generally held belief that African Americans were not intellectually capable of getting a college degree during the brutal, oppressive nature and environment of slavery, a minute number of African Americans did manage to win admissions to colleges and universities (Slater, 1994). The first African American male to graduate from an American college was Alexander Lucius Twilight. According to the JBHE (2002) Alexander was born in Corinth, Vermont, in 1795. He was an indentured slave to a farmer but was able to purchase his freedom at the age of twenty. He graduated from Middlebury College in 1823. After graduation he became a teacher and minister. In 1836 he was later elected to the Vermont state legislature. Edward Jones, a native of Charleston, South Carolina, entered Amherst College in 1822 and graduated in 1826. He was the second African American to earn a college degree. John Russwurm, who

graduated in 1826 from Bowdoin College in Maine, moved to New York City and became editor of *The Freedom's Journal*, The first African American newspaper in the United States.

These above three African Americans are recognized for their contributions towards opening United States colleges and universities to African American participation in higher education. During this time African American males paid the price of his life to become educated. It is also noteworthy to include Lemuel Hayes, an African American male who fought in the Revolutionary War who received an honorary degree in 1804, from Middlebury College. They were the nineteenth century pioneers and early leaders who navigated barriers in pursuit of higher education and served in various professional capacities.

From the first acceptance of African Americans in higher education to the completion of degrees by African American males from mainstream institutions of higher education in the early 1800's, this tumultuous process of navigating barriers such as slavery, beatings and societal opposition and oppression has opened the door of higher education for other African American males that followed. According to Hrabowski (2004), Patrick Francis Healy was the first African American male administrator to hold a position of prominence at a mainstream institution of higher education. Dr. Healy was the son of a former Irish soldier and a domestic slave, born in Georgia in 1830. Dr. Healy attended Quaker schools in New York and Vermont, eventually earning his undergraduate degree from Holy Cross College in Massachusetts in 1850. Following his graduation he entered a Jesuit order and continued his studies. He was sent to Europe to study in 1858 because his race became a barrier in the United States. He was able to

navigate the barrier of his race and earn his Ph.D. in 1863 at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium in philosophy.

Hrabowski (2004) further details that Dr. Healy became the first African American male administrator at a mainstream institution of higher education by becoming the Perfect of Studies (chief academic officer) at Georgetown University in 1868. Dr. Healy served as the twenty-ninth President of Georgetown University from 1873 to 1881, thus, securing him a place in history as the first African American male administrator and chief executive officer of a mainstream institution of higher education.

According to Humphries (1994) from 1865 to the early 1900s only 1,195 African Americans received undergraduate degrees. He further specifies that of those degrees earned, 195 were earned at Talladega and Oberlin, which were abolitionist schools. The remaining 1,000 degrees earned were from the newly found historical black colleges and universities that were founded before the 1900s. Anderson (1998) states that “educational opportunities for African Americans existed on a separate or segregated basis” (p.261). African Americans attended what was then known as the private Negro Colleges or the public colleges for blacks, what are now referred to as Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) that was established after the passage of the Morrill Act of 1890. As a result, African American male administrators were relegated to serve at historical black colleges and universities since the inception of Lincoln University in 1854, until the desegregation policy of 1954, when the Supreme Court ruled separate but equal was inherently unequal and affirmative action was established. It is a sad testament that there are challenges and criticisms of these policies and that there has been little significant change of inclusion and advancement over the past one hundred and fifty years for

African American males serving as administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education in spite of affirmative action efforts.

### *Challenges to Affirmative Action*

Mainstream institutions of higher education have been defiant and have instituted barriers in their practice to hire and advance African American male administrators in higher education administration regardless of affirmative action requirements and the desegregation policy of 1954. Eatman (2000) suggest that many educators and legal scholars were hopeful that the landmark Supreme Court ruling in the Brown vs. Board of Education (1954) was the remedy for the problems of educational inequality. In essence, this particular ruling became one of the most costly and challenging ruling for social change in higher education because it challenged the status quo and liberal ideologies of the dominant culture. Thus, higher education found itself in a dilemma. On one hand it feels that despite the intentions of affirmative action, the program represents a threat to its independence and, at the same time, it recognizes that a failure to comply with new policy could place it in financial jeopardy as well as violate the value of equal opportunity to which, in fairness, it must subscribe (Steel & Green, p. 414, 1976).

The desegregation policy of 1954 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (under Title VII) has been challenged and criticized by the dominant culture since their inceptions, and as a result, have created barriers for acceptance and equality of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education. According to Moore & Wagstaff (1974) Affirmative action is considered by many white males in the academic community to the *enfant terrible* of all governmental involvement in higher education and is to be resisted at all cost because it threatens their independence to hire

and fire who they choose without any repercussions, thereby maintaining their status quo. African American males are challenged by the dominant cultures barrier of resistance regardless of their qualifications and have relied on this vehicle of affirmative action to gain administrative ranks at mainstream institutions of higher education.

The significance of an affirmative action policy or program is that it seeks to rectify past or present discrimination that has been placed on minority groups and women who are not prevalent in the dominant culture. Steele & Green (1976) states “as an outgrowth of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the federal affirmative action program represents American society’s recognition that it is composed of differing racial, ethnic, and sexual groups, and that its institutions, in fairness should reflect that composition” (p.413). Steele & Green further reasoned that the underpinning of affirmative action programs is based on past discrimination that have prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of color, race, religion, gender, or national origin that has caused a disproportionately low representation of minorities and women in all facets of society. African American male administrators working at mainstream institutions of higher education have been and are currently discriminated against by the dominant culture and are represented excessively low in higher education administration regardless of intentions of affirmative action programs.

The history of African American male administrators’ educational opportunity and advancement in the United States and higher education administration has been plagued by the barrier of social oppression: denial, limitless political debate, and inconsistent legislation. For example, Rai & Crizer (2000) suggest that the first major revolutionary act to end discrimination against African Americans, which is one of the

foremost goals of affirmative action, was the banning of slavery in 1865 by the thirteenth amendment of the Constitution. The thirteenth amendment represented an extension of the liberal thought that was incorporated in the Bill of Rights. The Fourteenth (1868) and Fifteenth (1870) amendments were meant to decrease discrimination against African Americans which made them citizens of the United States and granted African Americans the right to vote. He further illustrates that regardless of those laws which gave the appearance of bringing equality to African Americans in areas such as education, making contracts, and filing lawsuits, the barrier of social oppression and denial was enforced by members of the dominant culture because they were not ready for a major change in race relations.

Limitless political debates and inconsistent legislation relevant to affirmative action has been in continuous motion. Anderson (1998) states “the posture of American society towards Blacks has ranged from denial of educational attainment during slavery, and after the civil war, to separate but “equal” education following the passing of the Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court ruling of 1896” (p. 261). Anderson further says that the Plessy v. Ferguson decision legitimated racial segregation in every aspect of African American life, but more importantly, it uncovered the occurrence of educational racism and discrimination within the United States that propelled forward the civil rights movement towards strengthening affirmative actions policies.

According to Moore & Wagstaff (1974) the historical roots of affirmative action can be found in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (under Title VII). Developed from this act was an executive order (No. 11246) issued in 1965 President Lyndon B. Johnson, and later, and later, No. 11375 in 1967 that mandated equal employment opportunity by

federal contractors and subcontractors and employment under federally assisted construction contracts regardless of race, creed, color or national origin. Both of these executive orders were designed to guarantee that institutions provide equal opportunity for minorities and women that received federal funding through contracts.

Affirmative action has not been swift and effective in securing African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education that receive government contracts. Affirmative action is a very tedious process and has many layers. Tierney (1997) says “when a contractor (e.g., a university) enters into an agreement with the federal government, the contractor must develop, implement, and document a plan of affirmative action” (p.168). In addition, the organization must outline the kind of progress that has been made with regard to the hiring and promotion of the target groups. This has caused internal conflict to the status quo at mainstream institutions of higher education by challenging the traditional power in the departmental structures of colleges and universities. The challenge to dominant culture has been to determine how African American male administrators can be hired and integrated into mainstream institutions without discriminating against members of the status quo.

The challenges to Affirmative action in eradicating barriers for recruitment and retention of African American male administrators have not been fully realized. Affirmative action has been a corrective measure and a dilemma for African American male administrators to utilize as they navigate the barriers that prevent advancement at mainstream institutions of higher education and manifesting mechanisms to succeed.

According to Moore & Wagstaff (1974) affirmative action has been a corrective measure that is utilized in an effort by the federal government that established guidelines to insure that the institutions of higher education which receive federal funds will include minorities and women among their applicants for faculty and administrative positions. Order No. 4 of February 1970, and its revision in December 1971, from the Department of Labor was used as a corrective measure that finally got the attention of the academic community. The order outlined affirmative action requirements and supplemented them with guidelines. Essentially, Order No.4 declares that the government finds women and minorities underutilized in specific occupations (Goldstein & Smith, 1976). The order as a corrective measure threatened to withhold federal funds of institutions which did not develop affirmative action plans to recruit and hire minorities and women.

African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education must navigate barriers and dilemmas that challenge affirmative action from academician's beliefs. Traditionally, they respond negatively to affirmative action policies and programs by looking for ways to omit leadership and reasons for policies and programs to fail. Affirmative action is challenged to navigate the barrier of academicians who did not assess and evaluate what could be done; rather, they have accepted tradition as a commandment and they worked strenuously to keep it. Words like quota, phrases like conflict of interest that described competition among minorities and women, we can't find qualified African Americans (Moore & Wagstaff, 1974) are tools that have and still oppress Affirmative action so the dominant culture can maintain its status quo in higher education administration.



Affirmative action was instituted to eliminate the relics of past and current discrimination and its applicability purpose should be utilized for individuals who were traditionally excluded from mainstream institutions of higher education. Affirmative action advocates for those who are represented in such minute numbers. They should be sought, encouraged, and given opportunities at all levels within the administrative hierarchy of higher education. Further, affirmative action should ensure and remain vibrant in the advancement of African American male administrator's career structure within reasonable periods of time. The vehicle of affirmative action is only effective if it is enforced by the federal government.

#### *Structure of Higher Education Administration*

This section explores barriers to African American male administrator's placement and advancement in the structure of administration at mainstream institutions of higher education. The literature supports commonly held beliefs among African Americans in the U.S. that African American male administrators in the structure of higher education administration at mainstream institutions of higher education have never been fully supported. Harvey (1999) states "By and large, the culture of higher education has not been proactive or energetic in terms of identifying, advocating, and supporting African Americans to aspire to positions of leadership." (p. 3). Thus, African American male administrators have been placed strategically in the structure of higher education administration to fail.

Harvey (1999) further expounds that the resistance to affirmative action policies and practices by mainstream institutions have been slow in the promotion of diversity in higher education administration. As a result, African American male administrators have

been represented sparsely at the senior administrative levels in higher education at mainstream institutions. Members of the dominant culture in opposition to Affirmative action policies and diversity programs have zealously attacked existing programs. Unknowing to them, affirmative action policies and diversity programs are of interest to the university in terms of federal government mandates and compliance that have appeased mainstream institutions and African American males in administrative positions. Mosley (1980) reported the fact that many African American faculty, administrators, and students are at mainstream institutions of higher education because of past and present discriminatory practices and because of the legal requirement that previously “closed doors must at least appear to be open” (p. 301).

Affirmative action and diversity programs were created and are intended to bring about inclusion in all facets of American society. These programs and policies were also created to promote awareness and diversity of different cultures specifically, in higher education. Lastly these policies and programs aim to level the playing field for African American male administrators. Due to the unwillingness of mainstream institutions to embrace enthusiastically the power of reason to transcend the barriers of prejudice, racism, and discrimination they do not support the inclusion of African American administrators in the real power structure of academe. “Thus, the success of African American administrators and their elevation to high-level positions in these settings remain rare occurrences” (Harvey, 1999, p. 3).

In order to become fully cognizant of the structure of higher education administration and the placement of African American male administrators strategically within the hierarchal structure, Sagaria (1988) research has provided the foundation and

net workings of administrative mobility patterns and processes in higher education administration. These administrative mobility patterns are entrenched in the occupational labor market of four-year colleges and universities, and are classified as specialty markets. Each specialty market is delineated by diverse training and skill requirements and jobs functions in the specialty areas of academic affairs, student affairs, and administrative affairs. Each specialty has specific tasks and responsibilities attached. The objectives are based on and are dependent upon the work and progress of the institutions statement of aims or mission statement. These administrative tasks are set forth in twenty-five functions of internal administrative tasks and duties which must be performed (Faulkner, 1941).

1. Formulating the statement of aims and objectives of the institution
2. Formulating policies concerning the educational work of the institution
3. Executing the legislative enactments of the institution
4. Exercising judicial powers over personnel
5. Advising the legislative bodies of the institution
6. Presenting the needs and opportunities of the institution to the various groups which are interested in the success of the institution
7. Maintaining amity and unity of purpose in the institutional personnel and constituency
8. Building the institutional budget
9. Executing the institutional budget
10. Recording academic facts
11. Supervising schedules of classes

12. Supervising educational and administrative research
13. Administering the library organization
14. Administering curriculum construction and coordination
15. Supervising extra-curricular activities
16. Selecting officers of administration
17. Selecting instructors
18. Improving instruction
19. Studying and adjusting staff compensation
20. Supervising admissions
21. Supervising guidance programs
22. Administering graduation regulation
23. Supervising financial aid to students
24. Supervising the living arrangements of students
25. Supervising placement of students and former students

Each of the specialty areas of academic affairs, administrative affairs, and student affairs, are charged with one or more of the above tasks, duties, and responsibilities.

Student affairs administration is the only specialty within institutions of higher education that the vast majority of African American male administrators maintain positions of authority. Their responsibility is to augment the academic mission of the institution by placing theory into practice by providing students with programs and services to generate well rounded citizens. According to Harvey (1999) a significant portion of African American male administrators are located within the students services arena, serving in the departments of student affairs, minority affairs, and affirmative action positions, than

are found in the academic affairs or financial affairs areas. Upward mobility in regard to advancement to presidencies suggests that the chances are slim if they are not serving in positions with the academic or financial areas.

Academic affairs are an administrative specialty unit in higher education administrative structures. These departments formulate policies concerning the educational work of the institution. According to Dingerson, Rodman, & Wade (1982) academic affairs positions have responsibility of shaping the institution. The major goal of the academic affairs unit is for the chief academic officer to oversee the academic responsibility of the institution. This is done by hiring assistant and associate vice presidents, academic deans, unit deans, and assistant and associate deans. The chief academic officer has the responsibility to ensure that the faculty is organized as to optimize its ability to make education decisions and carry them out. In higher education administration, those working in academic affairs are usually considered for promotions to the executive level by climbing the ladder for advancement most often from professor to chairman, to dean, to vice president, to president (Moore & Sagaria, 1982).

#### *Relegation in Higher Education Administration*

Since the desegregation policy of 1954, the Supreme Court ruled separate but equal was inherently unequal. This meant desegregation for mainstream institutions of higher education, especially in the south, were mandated to open enrollment to African American students. Prior to the 1954 ruling Humphries (1994) states that only 50,000 African American students were enrolled in higher education in the USA. The desegregation policy became a priority of mainstream institutions which meant they were responsible to recruit African American students to meet the federal government's

mandate. Suddenly the principle of desegregation became a priority. According to Humphries (1994) mainstream institutions of higher education that were reluctant to accept African American students began to create programs designed to increase their enrollments of African American students, and by 1970 there were nearly 470,000 African American students attending institutions of higher education in the USA.

Hale (1975) contributes the challenge for social change to the phenomenal increase of African American students attending mainstream institutions of higher education in the earlier years standing as a monument to student protest, demonstration, confrontations, and the riots that disrupted educational institutions in the 1960's. It was in this same decade following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King and the subsequent riots in April of 1968, through the end of 1972, that mainstream institutions of higher education were faced with the social pressure of hiring more African Americans to serve in various capacities (Smith, 1980).

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King had a dual impact on mainstream institutions of higher education. Cunningham (1992) posits the first of this tragic and devastating act "forced" mainstream institutions of higher education to face the fact that there was a need to hire African American administrators. According to Smith (1980) this need was generated from pressures within the African American community with the threat of more violence. Additionally, the federal government threatened to withhold federal funds from institutions that did not comply with affirmative action policies. Subsequently, mainstream institutions of higher education hired African American male administrators, but the purpose and reality of these appointments were relegated to "designated" positions that only served the needs of minority students.

The second impact suggested by (Cunningham, 1992) after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King was the result of massive recruitment efforts by mainstream institutions of higher education to increase the number of African American students on their campuses. Mainstream institutions of higher education began to design and develop programs and policies that would meet the needs of this new population of African American students. It was in the best interest of mainstream institutions of higher education to hire African American male administrators and serve students of color (and other minority groups). These efforts enabled mainstream institutions to become beneficiaries of funding from multiple entitlement programs and services from the federal government that enhances the institution.

In the process of recruiting African American students to attend mainstream institutions of higher education, African American male administrators were hired as an integral tool to aid in the specific design and development of programs relevant to African American students. This act was accomplished to comply with the criterion for affirmative action expansion of federal government funding on college campuses. The federal government had been a prominent player with a significant role in the growth, design, and development of programs, policies, and services in the evolution of higher education. Scollay (1982) contributes this rapid expansion of the federal government's presence on campus to the concept of "expanding access", which has created line and staff positions charged with the responsibility for the management of federal funds or compliance with federal regulations. Mainstream institutions of higher education worked in conjunction with the federal government who was viewed as "contractors".

Affirmative Action legislation programs are part of the “expanding access” of federal government funding and have contributed to the increase of additional African American male administrators in the structure of mainstream institutions of higher education. Mainstream institutions that are involved in receiving earmarked federal government funding for Affirmative Actions programs also receive additional funding for support staffing and administration positions. As a result, African American male administrators are appointed and relegated to designated position such as, Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Minority Affairs, Title III coordinator (Institutional and programs) and Directors of Upward Bound/Special Services/Talent Search(The TRIO, Special Programs for Disabled Students (Scollay, 1982).

African American male administrators have not been fully accepted and included in the structure of higher education administration because they have been given minute authority with administrative tasks from the objectives of mainstream institutions of higher education. Mainstream institutions have placed African American male administrators in designated positions, and according to Smith (1980) have been the responsibility to administer programs and services for students of color (and other minority groups) but have not been given the power and authority in the formal administrative structure of the institution commensurate with that responsibility. African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher learning are small in number; too many African American male administrators have been placed in positions but refused and denied power to make them effective (Tucker, 1980).

In summary, there has been a scarcity of literature published that addresses the experiences of African American male administrators who serve in administrative



positions at mainstream institution of higher education. This review of literature has focused on the historical plight that African American male administrators endured to become educated with hope that they will achieve the opportunity to provide programs and services to the next generation of African Americans. The literature findings have addressed the challenges, trials, and tribulations of affirmative action policies for inclusion at mainstream institutions of higher education that are still being debated by members of the dominant culture. More findings have focused on inequities and downward relegation of African American male administrators' placement in higher education. "Here they strive in the wings but not on the center stage. Rarely are blacks found in influential academic or administrative positions" (JBHE, 1997, P. 18).

## **CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides a description of the methodology and theoretical framework that served as the guide for this study. The purpose of this study is two fold. The first is to determine what are the barriers facing African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education that prevent advancement to executive positions; and second, to identify the paths African American male administrators successfully navigate the barriers. Moreover, this study will also identify coping mechanisms and support systems to aid in navigating barriers to succeed. This investigation is designed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the barriers for advancement that African American male administrators face at mainstream institutions of higher education?
2. How do African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education identify barriers that prevent advancement?
3. What coping mechanisms and strategies do African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education utilize to succeed?
4. What support structures and beliefs exist to increase, promote, and strengthen leadership skills for African American male administrators in these institutions and among their peers?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework undergirding my study is Critical Race Theory (CRT). I utilize critical race theory as way to name my own reality and the reality of my participants within a theoretical framework. Critical race theory holds that race lies at the very center of American life. CRT is a movement that consists of a collection of activist and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship between race,

racism, and power. CRT activist and scholars question the order and foundation of beliefs, values, and ethics that American society has bestowed on non-dominant cultures. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) suggest that CRT question the very foundations of liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law. The critique of the above foundations is based on the failure through the “the rule of law” and “equal protection” that has generated historical inequities, racism and oppression that African Americans (and other minority groups) have experienced from the dominant culture in American society.

CRT began as a movement in the law and has since expanded beyond that discipline. According to Ladson-Billings (1998, p.10), “Critical Race Theory is, thus both an outgrowth of and a separate entity from an earlier legal movement called Critical Legal Studies.” Ladson-Billings also contends that CRT became a logical outgrowth of discontent of the legal scholars of African Americans when Critical Legal Studies failed to include racism in its critique of mainstream legal ideology do to its stance of U.S. society’s meritocracy. CRT has expanded as a movement in education and involves an activist dimension that advocates for understanding hegemonic social oppressions, thus making efforts to eradicate aggressors of hegemony while making a way for positive social changes.

Critical Race Theory has its origins in the mid-1970s when a number of lawyers, (specifically, Derek Bell and Allen Freeman) who are the founders of the movement, activist, and legal scholars became frustrated with the slow advances of the Civil Rights era of the 1960s. Many legislative gains that were made in the Civil Rights era had stalled in the 1970s and in some cases were being rolled back. CRT has been built upon

critical legal studies and incorporates the critique of triumphalist history. Minority groups benefited, essentially, from the self interest of elite whites as they achieved legislative triumphs. The dominant culture (and other groups) have benefited from the struggle of African Americans to attain their due rights. Any legislative triumphs that African Americans made paved the way for others.

Critical race theory has grown to what Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado & Crenshaw (1993) delineates as six unifying themes of the CRT movement:

- Recognizes that racism is endemic to American Life.
- Expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and meritocracy.
- Challenges ahistoricism and insists on contextual/historical analysis of the law. CRT theorist adopts a stance which presumes that racism has contributed to all contemporary manifestations of group advantages and disadvantages.
- Insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing the law and society.
- Is interdisciplinary and eclectic.
- Works towards the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression. (p. 6).

I began by applying the above six unifying themes that delineate the CRT movement. Next I synthesized my findings to discuss the role in the construction and maintenance of social domination and subordination that is present in the administration of mainstream institutions of higher education. Throughout this study, I have focused on the following four critical race theory concepts that were significant to my unit of

analysis relative to the findings in this study: 1) Color blindness, 2) Interest Convergence, 3) Whiteness as Property Rights, and 4) Voice.

I utilized the critical race theory concept of “color blindness” to analyze the status quo and liberal ideology that fails to advance African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education. I critically examined the assertion of Delgado and Stefancic (2001) that CRT begins with a notion that racism is ordinary, not aberrational “normal science” (P.7), and because racism is so ingrained in the fabric of American life that it appears natural, and maintains the status quo of hegemony. I applied the concept of color blindness to the implications of adult education for African American male administrators relevant to career advancement in higher education administration.

I examined Gotanda (1995) arguments of the U.S. Supreme Court’s use of color blind constitutionalism that 1) sustains race as “formal-race” that consist of socially constructed categories where Black and White are seen as neutral and are unrelated to politics, skin color, ability, disadvantage, or moral culpability. 2) Assertion of the Supreme Court’s color blind interpretation of the Constitution legitimates and thereby maintains the social, economic, and political advantages that whites hold over other Americans (Gotanda, 1995, p.257). I utilized Gotanda’s arguments to critique the inequities generated by the status quo and liberal ideologies from the participants in this study at mainstream institutions in regards to African American male administrators in designated positions in higher education administration.

I applied the critical race theory concept of “interest convergence” to what Derrick Bell deems as serving two masters of integration ideals and client interest. Bell

(1995) suggests that the “principle of “interest convergence” provides the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interest of whites” (p. 22). I equate and utilized the first master of integration ideals that are entrenched in the concept of “interest convergence” to the how and why mainstream institutions of higher education hire African American male administrators.

I correlated the second master of client interest embedded in the concept of “interest convergence” which serves to benefit mainstream institutions of higher education by receiving financial funding from the federal government in exchange for hiring African American male administrators to service minority students (and other groups). Large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate this process because legislation and policies maintain the gains from the self-interest of elite whites (mainstream institutions of higher education) at the expense of blacks (African American male administrators) placed in a limited role in higher education administration (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001).

I utilized the critical race theory concept of “whiteness as property rights” as a way to illustrate how African American male administrators are limited and excluded by the dominant culture from the decision making process at mainstream institutions of higher education. Harris (1995) places whiteness in the broad historical concept of property as described by the classical theorist James Madison. She provides an example of his view that property “embraces everything to which a man may attach a value and have a right,” referring to all of a person’s legal rights. Whiteness is an aspect of racial identity and a property interest that subordinates African Americans based on the

property rights of race by elevating whiteness to an object of law to provide control over social, political, and institutional entities.

Voice is a concept of critical race theory that constructs the social reality for unique voices of color to be heard. According to Calmore (1995) voice is important, because of how voice is expressed, and how voices of color accentuate differences from the dominant voice. The “voice” component of CRT provides a way to communicate by naming one’s own reality by critiquing the status quo and liberal ideologies to site racism that the dominant culture masks in hegemony that they claim does not exist.

The use of voice and or “naming your reality” is a way that CRT links form and substance in scholarship. It is through the voice, one of the central tenets of CRT that recognizes the experiential knowledge of people of color that allows the experiences and lessons learned of those who have experienced discrimination speak with a special voice from experiences that have been framed by racism. I have listened to the responses of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education. Their responses give them a voice from their respective backgrounds and lived experiences that authentically speak to the dominant culture that deserves to be heard as my participants in the findings of this study.

Critical race theory is the lens that informs my study relative to the relation between race, racism, and power in higher education administration. I have selected and interviewed five African American male administrators from five different mainstream institutions of higher education. I have engaged these individuals in dialog and they have named and discussed race, racism, and power structures from their perspective institutions of higher education. I have examined my research participants’ responses

regarding the barriers that prevent advancement within the context of four concepts of critical race theory within this qualitative research case study.

### Qualitative Research

This study is a qualitative research case study. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to uncover the meaning of a phenomenon for those involved. According to Merriam (1998) “qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p.8). This research study follows the traditions of a qualitative research with a case study. A case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied.

Qualitative research is based upon the philosophical assumption that reality is constructed by individuals in interaction with their social worlds (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Thus there are many realities relative to this study of uncovering the barriers that African American male administrators face in their social worlds that prevent their career advancement at mainstream institutions of higher education. Qualitative research is vast in descriptive data. Merriam & Simpson (2000) write,

Qualitative researchers are interested in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The overall purposes of qualitative research are to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, to delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making, and to describe how people interpret what they experience (p. 98).



The main objective is the understanding of the phenomenon (Barriers) of interest from the participant's perspectives (African American male administrators), and not of the researcher. This is sometimes referred to as the emic, or insider's perspective, or the etic, which represents the outsider's view Merriam & Simpson (2000).

According to Merriam (1998) the qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. The qualitative researcher acts as a human instrument to mediate data and is responsive and adaptive to consider the total context of the phenomenon. The researcher as a human instrument for data collection and analysis has the ability to be sensitive to the participant's experiences and context of the phenomenon. The researcher is allowed to clarify and summarize any data or check with research participants for accuracy of interpretation. The researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis influences the overall design of the study and impacts the methods used and how the findings are interpreted.

The researcher forms categories which have been clearly obtained from the data. The qualitative research strategy builds abstractions, concepts, hypothesis, or theory rather than testing theories that have been established. Qualitative research is the appropriate method to utilize if there is little knowledge about the problem because it allows the researcher to investigate and gain access to the rich, thick description of the studied phenomenon. Researchers use an inductive approach to gather data by going into the field with the intent to discover the meaning of a phenomenon that lacks theory, or if existing theory of the phenomenon does not adequately explain the phenomenon of those involved (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). The researcher in qualitative research spends a

substantial amount of time in the natural settings of the study, often in intense contact with participants (Merriam, 1998).

I selected a qualitative research focus for this study of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education because the philosophical assumption is that reality is constructed by individuals in interaction with their social worlds. I wanted to become cognizant of the barriers that African American male administrators have experienced from their perspectives and how they made meaning from those experiences. With knowledge and understanding ascertained from African American male administrators who have experienced and navigated barriers to advance, I hope to provide knowledge and facilitate African American male administrators in their design of navigating barriers for career advancement in higher education administration.

#### Research Design

The qualitative research case study is the most appropriate design for manifesting barriers that African American male administrators face at mainstream institutions of higher education that prevent career advancement. According to Merriam (1998) by concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity, in this particular case, barrier for advancement, one can uncover the interaction of significant factor characteristics of the phenomenon. The goal of a case study will provide a holistic description and explanation (Merriam & Simpson, 2000).

According to Merriam and Simpson (2000) the case study is an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as individual, group, institution, or community. This case study focuses on ascertaining intensive description and analysis of African American male administrator's actions in higher education as

they seek ways to overcome barriers for advancement in higher education at mainstream institutions. The qualitative research case study draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned from the single case.

I utilized qualitative case study as my research design to illustrate the structures of the research, and to show how all major components of the research project function together in an effort to address the central research questions. Yin (1994) suggest “the design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions” (p.19). Research design can be thought of as the structure of research that utilizes purpose as a mechanism to constrain all of the necessary parts in this qualitative research case study. I utilized the purpose of the qualitative case study research designs to inquire toward understanding what is important about the case within its own world, as I uncovered the barriers that African American male administrators are challenged to overcome.

I chose qualitative case study as my research design to demonstrate to the reader that the overall plan of this study is sound and that as the researcher; I am competent to undertake the research, capable of employing the methods collected, and sufficiently interested to sustain the efforts necessary for successful completion of this study (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The research design was used as a “blueprint” of research in this study, dealing with at least four problems: what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect, and how to analyze the results (Yin, 1994), while in the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting experiences of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education. The “blueprint” develops

the case's own issues, contexts, and questions to generate and learn about the thick descriptions ascertained through data collection strategies.

This case study focuses on the barriers and coping mechanisms that African American male administrators experience during their careers in higher education. Based on the authentic voices of five African American administrators in higher education, it richly describes their lived experiences and seeks to extract common elements. These elements are further analyzed to provide insights that can be applied in everyday practice as adult educators seek to address the barriers and possibly teach coping mechanisms.

#### Data Collection Strategies

The strategies of data collection in qualitative research case study involves the researcher to collect data, impressions, beliefs, and feelings from the participants' perspectives that are related to the phenomenon being studied in order to systematically reach conclusions (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). The purpose of data collection in qualitative research case study is to understand the data collected from the participants' perspective of the phenomenon that clearly represents the behaviors, and events.

It was my purpose to ascertain and understand the experience of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education. I was particularly interested in the spoken words of those African American male administrators who had been silenced or ignored and was able to hear them through the concept of storytelling that is embedded within critical race theory. Once these African American male administrators had an opportunity to describe their experiences the constructed knowledge could guide African American male administrators in the design of overcoming the barriers for career advancement.

The data collection methods I utilize in this qualitative research case study were the techniques of recording the data of specific questions asked through interviews and field notes. According to Marshall & Rossman (1999) “qualitative in-depth interviews are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories. The researcher explores a few general topics to uncover the participants view but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures the responses.” (p.108). I conducted interviews to come face-to-face with the research participants. I wanted to hear the meaning of the participant’s experiences, thus learning what and how each African American male administrator felt and thought about the barriers they face as African American male administrators.

Field notes were utilized to capture nonverbal information such as the interviewee’s body language and affect in addition to words. I utilized field notes beginning with each interview, and entered the time, place, and setting. I wrote the field notes directly into the question guide under relevant questions. I utilized interviews and explanatory comments to write a descriptive narrative describing what happen and what was learned.

I employed the format of the general interview guide approach, which is intended to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee (Patton, 1990). According to Merriam (1998) interviewing conducted in qualitative investigations is more open-ended and less structured. Participants in the less structured format may define the world in unique ways. An interview is a useful way to get large amounts data quickly (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.108).

I conducted the general interview guide approach interviews with five African American male administrators from five different mainstream institutions of higher education. I was able to draw upon the same general areas of information from the participant's perspective experiences on the barriers that prevent career advancement. I allowed the participant to voice their own concerns and to let the information that was given reflect the participants view and not of my own. I conveyed the attitude that the participant's views are honored, valuable, and useful by maintaining direct eye contact as I spoke to my participants and acknowledged responses with the nodding of my head as to indicate that the information received is honored, valued, and useful to this study. African American male administrators participated in a one to two hour open-ended interview. Selected interview participants were asked to participate in a one to two hour follow-up interview if there was any additional needed information or clarification of significant points to strengthen this study.

#### Participant Selection

According to Merriam (1998) the nonprobability sampling is the method of choice for most qualitative research. Merriam further states "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and, therefore, must select a sample form which most can be learned" (p.61). Thus, the most appropriate sampling strategy is called purposive. The task of the researcher is to consider where, when, whom, and what to observe.

The selection participants for this study was purposeful in that I selected five African American male administrators working in the capacity of (Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors, and Coordinators) from various mainstream institutions of higher

education. The African American male administrators ranged from thirty to sixty- five years of age. The African American male administrators were recruited by referral from colleagues in higher education, in person, via email and phone. The African American male administrators are currently employed at mainstream institutions of higher education and possess a minimum of a master's degree.

I have engaged these individuals in dialog and they have named and discussed race, racism, and power structures from their perspective institutions of higher education. I lastly examined my research participants' responses regarding the barriers that prevent advancement relative to the relation of race, racism, and power in higher education administration.

#### Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of generating a clear understanding ascertained from data. The process of data analysis involves amelioration, selecting bits of data that are representative of the phenomenon, interpreting what participants have stated and what has been read by the researcher to shape accurate and meaningful conclusions.

According to Merriam (1998) "data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (p. 178). The overall purposes of data analysis in qualitative research relative to the description and interpretation of data are to achieve an understanding or findings that are the rich, thick descriptions, the words, which explain the data and persuade the reader of the trustworthiness of the findings.

Data analysis is simultaneous with data collection. Data analysis began as I started analyzing the first interview, the first observation, and the first document accessed in order to answer the questions raised in my study. I began to ponder what will be included and what will be left out from the pages of data collected for the study. I contemplated about how I would make sense from the data in order to generate validity of findings.

Merriam (1998) asserts that data are compressed and linked together in a narrative that conveys the meaning the researcher has derived from studying the phenomenon. I was able to engage the data analysis process of making sense from the data by utilizing an inductive research strategy. I condensed and linked my research participants' interviews to transmit insights that began the process which constituted the findings of the phenomenon. This began as I started analyzing the recorded data from transcripts.

#### Analysis of Transcribed Data

The primary means of data collection were audio taped and then transcribed from semi structured interviews of five African American male administrators from mainstream institutions of higher education. The interviews lasted from one to two hours. I began organizing the data by reading and analyzing each interview more than once so that the data became familiar in personal ways. Clarification, restatement, and explanation were solicited in the initial and follow-up interviews that allowed for the analysis of data as I listened to the tape recording of the interviews and reflected upon the elicited responses from my participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).



Upon receipt of the participant's transcripts and before the initial reading process of my participant's responses, I reviewed my theoretical frame, the purpose of my study, and the questions that guided my study to assist in the process of keeping the study in perspective. I began to reflect on the events and quotes that resonated from each participant transcripts. I was able to critically reflect on our conversations and the pieces of data focusing on the barriers that African American male administrators face at mainstream institutions of higher education. I began to contemplate and pay close attention to how I would begin to reduce the data to effectively and efficiently produce the findings.

Moving beyond the initial reading I began to formalize my data by identifying and constructing categories or themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of beliefs that linked African American male administrators and their perspective settings. Merriam (1998) states "devising categories is largely an intuitive process, but it is also systematic and informed by the study's purpose, the investigator's orientation and knowledge, and the meanings made explicit by the participants themselves" (p. 179). Category construction is data analysis in itself that utilizes units of data that are identified and linked from the participant's responses which are literally placed into groups relative to the same commonality.

Category construction began as I read and reread through my first participant's transcript. While reading through the transcript, and editing my field notes, I made notes in the margins of the transcripts. During this process, I wanted to ensure that I extrapolated the units of data that were potentially relevant and significant to my study.

I analyzed each word and bits of information from my first participant's transcript while adding notes and comments in the margins relative to the barriers facing African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education. I reviewed and grouped the notes and comments about the units of data made in the margin of the transcript and posted the groupings on a flip chart.

I engaged in the constant comparative method of data analysis by continuously comparing units of data from one participant's transcript to another. Searching for recurring regularities or patterns in the data, I reduced the units of data and then sorted and linked those units of data to create categories. In the process I began to discriminate more clearly between the criteria for allocating data to one category or another (Merriam, 1998). If a participant did not identify or express any barriers that other participants had in recurring regularities or patterns of data, or that reflected the research questions or purpose of the research, the difference was noted.

As I compared and analyzed the sorted and linked data that created categories from one participant transcript to another the meaning of categories began to emerge. The noting of patterns expressed by the participants that were evident in their settings, my study's purpose, my orientation and knowledge, identified the salient, grounded categories of meaning held by the participants from their environments (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). I began to interpret and understand the barriers that were reflected through the experiences expressed by the participants that were generated through the analysis of data.

When categories and themes developed and the coding was well under way, I evaluated what was believable and likely to be true of my interpretations of the categories

and themes through analyzing the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In the process of evaluating the validity of themes I compared categories and searched for possible relationships.

My interpretations strengthen as I searched for alternative explanations of the data. I reflected upon my research questions that guided my study. I challenged my interpretation of the categories and themes as I searched for negative responses that developed, changed, or eliminated existing categories. As a result, modified categories began to solidify as related concepts began to explain and critically identified the categories relevant to the barriers facing African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education.

Deriving and making meaning from the categories became a focal point of inquiry. Miles & Huberman (1994) states “from describing to explaining the analytic progression it is usually hard to explain something satisfactorily until you understand just what the something is” (p. 91). I engaged in the development and utilization of a data display for the purpose to explain and keep track of themes that emerged in my data. The data display enabled my data to come alive. It presented me with a visual presentation and information systematically, that allowed me to engage in sound conclusions of the data and take needed action. I was able to visualize a full set of data in the same location that assisted in the process to systematically answer my research questions.

My layered analysis began as I was able to utilize the data display to view my participant’s responses that were generated into congruent themes. I then viewed these themes that were the participant’s experiences relative to the identified categories that identified the barriers facing African American male administrators. I was able to view,

apply and explain how my theoretical frame had an impact upon my findings in the categories. I began writing the findings that were produced by valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner as they informed the purpose and questions that guided my study.

### Reliability and Validity of Findings

As a qualitative researcher, my quest is to understand the meaning of the process or experience that constitutes the knowledge that is gained from the research participants. I have investigated and ascertained the barriers held by my participants and how they make sense of their world relative to higher education and their gained experiences in the world of higher education. Therefore, it is my responsibility to hold steadfast that the findings reported through my interpretation of my participant's experiences are believable and trustworthy.

In order to ensure that my study is reflective of the participants that I studied, I utilized internal validity by asking how my findings correlated with reality. This question of reality is based upon my understanding that qualitative inquiry assumes that there are multiple, changing realities and that reality is constructed by individuals (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). In this case, my research participant's reality of shared events assisted in constructing knowledge for this study through the interview process.

As the primary research instrument of data collection and analysis, I provided each participant with an informed consent – Participant Form. The form outlined the purpose of the study, provided a description of their involvement, and their rights as a participant involved in the study. I was able to interpret the realities of each participant directly through observations and interviews. I understood the perspective of my

participant's as they expounded upon the barriers that they face at mainstream institutions of higher education during the interviews. I created a conceptual framework that enabled me to present a holistic interpretation of my participant's interpretations of reality to ensure that the study is reflective of the participants studied.

### Triangulation

Triangulation utilizes multiple methods, multiple sources of data, or multiple investigators to enhance the validity to confirm the research findings. Triangulation is the process that utilizes various perceptions to simplify the meaning and to verify repeatability of an observation or an interpretation. Triangulation also serves to identify different ways that the phenomenon is being viewed to clarify meaning (Stake in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

According to Mathison (1998) Triangulation is necessary to utilize multiple methods and sources of data in the execution of a study in order to withstand critique by colleagues. Utilizing multiple methods and data sources enabled me to become conscious about my clarity and validity of the way I communicated the holistic understanding of my research participants. I welcomed critique from colleagues and my research participant's to strengthen interpretation of data and interpretation of experiences as part of the process of completing of my study.

Denzin (1978) discussed at length triangulation, outlining four types: data, investigator, theory, and methodological to confirm emerging findings. I engaged in the data investigator research method that encompassed the use of a variety of data sources to detect and explain the impact that triangulation had upon identifying the barriers facing African American male administrators.

I used the methods and data sources of observing body language and facial expressions during the interviews, reporting rich quotations, narrations, and details recorded data from participant's interviews via in-person, or by telephone. I utilized demographic information of each participant to ascertain their rich experiences and barriers that prevent advancement. I read and analyzed transcripts, edited and viewed my field notes, reflected upon the quotes, and reviewed my theoretical framework to solidify the validity of my study.

### Member Checks

Member checks are an invaluable strategy utilized to ensure validity in qualitative research. Merriam & Simpson (2000) suggest that member checks involves the taking of data collected from the research participants and the tentative interpretations of these data back to the participants from whom they were derived, asking if the data is accurate. The process of member checks allows for the participants to review materials to ensure that the findings correlate with reality.

Member checks are significant to the study and more importantly to the participants involved to act as a checks and balances system to reflect the honesty and trustworthiness of both the researcher and the research participants. My participants became involved in these checks and balance system when they agreed to complete an informed consent – Participant Form and provided an interview for this study. After the completion of my participant's interviews, I provided each participant with a copy of the transcription from the tape recorded data for the clarification, additional comments, or omissions to reflect the validity of my research participants.

Member checks played a significant role of stimulating conversation about how each participant may have felt relative to any of the research questions asked.

Conversations allowed for the opportunity to check with members concerning any questions or clarify any misconceptions that I may have interpreted during the interview process. The conversations allowed each participant to have their own unique voice heard and interpreted correctly to reflect their true reality.

Member checks assisted in the process of clarifying my observations that I noted in my field notes. Through conversations with my participants, I asked participants about certain movements in body language or facial expressions that were noted in my field notes relevant to a certain question asked. My participants were able to strengthen my interpretation of my field notes which enabled me to capture their perspectives and realities.

### Reliability

Reliability asks the question, if the removal of subjectivity was taken from the researcher, can the data stand alone to establish reliability of the study to be confirmed by another? Qualitative research does not claim that the findings of one study will replicate that of another study. According to Merriam (1998) reliability “refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated” (p.205). The replication of Reliability is a problem in the social sciences simply because human behavior is ever changing and encompasses many people’s experiences valued the same that may produce vast interpretations of the same data.

According to Marshall & Rossman (1999) suggest, positivist notions of reliability assume an unchanging universe where inquiry could, quite logically be, replicated. This

notion of an unchanging universe is in direct conflict with the qualitative interpretive assumption that the universe will constantly be constructed and that the concept of replication is itself problematic. It was my goal not to control the research condition and allow my research participants to expound on their own lived experiences, thereby ensuring that the study is reflective relative to reliability.

As a qualitative researcher I have taken the following steps to ensure that my research participants are reflected in the construct of dependability that takes into account for the changing conditions in the phenomenon and the changes in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). First, I have focused on describing and explaining my research participant's environments and the interrelations as they occurred naturally. Second, I created an audit trail. According to Merriam & Associates (2002) "An audit trail in a qualitative study describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (p.27). I have kept thorough notes and have discussed each design decision, while keeping a running record of my interactions with the units of analysis as I engaged in analyzing the data and the rationale for others to inspect. Finally, the collected data is well-organized and in retrievable form, so that if my findings are challenged or if another researcher wants to reanalyze the data it will be available. In the final results, reliability rests with others that if given the data collected, the results will make sense and are consistent, dependable and will maintain transferability.

Transferability in qualitative research can be taken from an image or an example of one situation and transferred to another. According to Merriam & Associates (2002) it is up to the reader to determine the extent to which findings from a study can be applied



to their context. This will enable other individuals or consumers to apply to their own situations or settings from these research findings through rich, thick description.

According to Merriam (1998) rich, thick description consist of providing enough description so that the reader is able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether the findings can be transferred. Individuals in society look to other examples as a means by which to guide or explain their own experiences as well as events of particular phenomenon that impact their lives.

From the rich, thick description ascertained in this research, the reader or African American male administrators can personally reflect upon the interpretation of others experiences, patterns, events, or quotes that they can relate to in their own lives. It is my hope that African American male administrators can utilize the rich, thick description found in this research to overcome the barrier they face for advancement in higher education administration.

#### Researcher Bias

According to Merriam (1998) articulates that “In a qualitative study the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data and, as such, can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information” (p. 20). Therefore, as the primary instrument of research, my personal biases are interfaced within this research project. As a qualitative researcher I maintain certain personality characteristics that I have assessed for the reader to understand the perspective of this research.

I am an African American male administrator with nearly twenty years of experience working in the field of higher education administration. I have seen and

experienced the pit falls and barriers that I and other African American males in higher education have encountered that prevented career advancement. I have tried to recognize that the best way to proceed when conducting my research is to encourage the experiences of my participants to speak for themselves and not allow my own experiences to influence or bias the reported findings.

My biases have involved the member selection of African American male administrators from mainstream institutions of higher education. I felt that in the selecting of these men, I would be able to determine a greater meaning and perspective of their particular experiences to identify the barriers. I would then apply those barriers to my theoretical frame of critical race theory.

I have an abundance of tolerance for ambiguity that through my own interpretation of data and the interpretation of my participant's experiences creates bias within the study. Throughout the research process from designing the study, to data collection, to data analysis, I have reflected on what has been happening at each step of the way that may influence the investigation, as I exercise discretion and as I write my findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Overview**

In this chapter I present my findings of the data I have learned through interviews from five African American male administrators serving at mainstream institutions of higher education. I will present this information that has been derived for the purposes of my study which are to: (1) identify the barriers that African American male administrators face as they advance in their careers in higher education; (2) identify the paths in which African American male administrators successfully navigate the barriers and; (3) identify coping mechanisms, support systems to aid in navigating barriers to succeed.

I identified three themes of barriers that reflect the route of the African American male experience in higher education administration. The first theme of barriers is limited and limiting opportunities, the second, is institutional racism, and third, invisibility. These three identified themes of barriers evidence how African American male administrators regardless of their degrees and experiences are displaced to designated positions and how mainstream institutions are oppressive in their color-blind practices of inequity in the allocation of money and resources. The description of these barriers shows how individuals of the dominant culture at mainstream institutions attempt to silence the voices and perpetuate the non-existence of African American male administrators in the hierarchy of higher education administration.

I determined that mentoring and networking are specific coping mechanisms that play a significant role how African American male administrators are inspired and inspire one another to navigate the barriers for success and to succeed. I identified five themes of

specific coping mechanisms. Therefore; I will present, in spite of the barriers, how coping experiences are vital in the navigation of barriers to advance and succeed in higher education administration.

### **Limited and limiting opportunities**

#### *Designated positions*

African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education since the early 1970's have traditionally been offered and accepted positions in designated positions such as (Director of Minority Affairs, Director of Multicultural Affairs, Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, etc.) in the hierarchal administrative structures. As Malcolm states "I think I pigeon holed myself very early in my career. I started in higher education sixteen years ago and I was the assistant to the director of the multi cultural center. That's what African Americans did in the late 80's; those were the opportunities for positions in advancement, you took positions that had designations as coordinators or minority recruitment, multicultural or diversity planning; those were the jobs that you took."

Frederick felt the same as Malcolm when he began his career in higher education administration as a Director of Minority Affairs. He felt that by accepting this position it was his only opportunity to begin his career and possible advancement in higher education administration. Frederick expressed his concern regarding his institutions low expectations of professionalism and proficiency from him as an African American male administrator.

Frederick states "at times these people were either racist or had stereotypes based on a small number of African American males they may have had prior interaction with

or if they had someone else that they had worked with before, that may for whatever reason, was failing or not up to par they thought all met that stereotype.” As a result, his administration had very little contact with him or the African American students on campus. Frederick suggested that the administration had a preconceived notion that by placing him in the designated position of Director of Minority Affairs would, in essence, appease the institution and provide the needs for the African American population.

Cornel reflected upon his beginnings in higher education administration. He states “when I finished my graduate program, the only type of jobs that was available to me was in housing and minority affairs”. Cornel knew that he could do more. He stressed, “At first I was applying for the counselor positions.” I had my Ph.D. when I was twenty seven years old, in Higher Education with a minor in Black studies in Junior College Administration. The jobs that I applied for, I had my doctorate, I had the opportunity to become a director at the age of twenty eight. Another African American male gave me that opportunity.”

Most of Cornel’s professional experiences have been at mainstream institutions of higher education where there have been few African Americans working on campus. Cornel suggested that he was alienated from his campus community and the administration as well. Cornel stated that there was very little social activity between him and his white colleagues on campus and as a result would spend much of his free time engaged in travel. He was not involved in any other decision making activities other than that of African American students, because, in most instances he was the only African American that held an administrative position. His only involvement working with other administrators within his campus community and administration was dealing with issues

and problems that only pertained to minority students and maintained limited scope of duties.

*Limited scope of duties*

In addressing the limited scope of duties that African American male administrators maintain at mainstream institutions of higher education, Smith & Tata (1981) suggest when African American male administrators are relegated in designated positions within the structure of higher education administration, they find themselves in situations in which their roles are ill-defined, their positions lack authority, and they make few, if any real decisions. The participants in my study confirmed this perspective.

Malcolm began his second job in higher education as the coordinator of minority recruitment at [a major university in the Midwest]. His second position was advancement from his previous position as an assistant to the director of a multi cultural center. Malcolm, states “again that is just what we did. They figured that blacks would better be able to address the marketing needs and wants of other African American students so they hired us to do only that.” Malcolm’s scope of duties was very limited, as he reflected, “I was the coordinator of minority recruiting; I was the one that was going to the HBCU schools to recruit.” Malcolm did not participate in any mainstream recruiting activities nor did he have any budget authority or responsibilities. He rarely came in contact with any other individuals besides persons of color and decided a change was necessary for his career advancement.

Malcolm was frustrated in that position and decided to leave the institution. He accepted a position as an admissions counselor at another mainstream institution of higher education which was virtually a lateral move and slight reduction in pay. He

states, “What I thought it did, it opened up and now it’s working with a more diverse population and more opportunities, or at least I thought by taking this position.” Malcolm was amazed that, once again, he was relegated in what seemed to be in a non designated position with limited scope of duties. He only addressed issues that were pertinent to minority students. He states “there were issues pertaining to minority students they would ask you about it, but when it pertained to everybody else they would ask other people about it.”

Malcolm expressed that African American males who work at mainstream institutions of higher education often find themselves in a predicament that in order to advance they had to move or relocate to another campus. In positions that consist of limited scope of duties Malcolm states “you are pigeon holed, but you are only capable of making decisions based upon that particular population and do not have the knowledge to look at the big picture.” Malcolm came to the realization that by accepting positions of designation that had attached limited scope of duties, he faced a career with limited opportunities. Malcolm articulated that what stayed with him even today was the pigeon-hole syndrome and not to allow himself to be limited in terms of career opportunities by focusing on positions that were earmarked for people of color.

Cornel acknowledged that he was also limited in his scope of duties when he accepted the position as the Director of Minority Affairs and Housing after finishing his graduate program. He succinctly states that “although these services are necessary for African American students, my only responsibilities were to request information concerning their living accommodations on and off campus.” Cornel did not have any other responsibilities such as the placement of students and limited involvement in the

development of programs and activities. Cornel's major job objective was to provide information to the administration regarding the needs and concerns of African American students (Cornel, personal communication, September 23, 2006).

*Lack of operational control of budget and resources*

African American male administrators have often been placed in designated positions with little or no control of budget or resources to effectively and efficiently maintain programs and services for which they serve. Additionally, the lack of operational control African American male administrator's possess increases the possibilities of failure and guarantees that their strengths will diminish. For example, Booker said "lack of resources is one of the major barriers I face. This in return prohibits me from doing my job effectively and sets me up to fail."

The above notation was experienced when Booker had a staff of only four part-time employees under his supervision and was responsible for a budget that consisted of eighteen thousand dollars. Booker's mainstream institution of higher education dictated that the allocated funding was sufficient to serve his department and institutions needs. Booker's mainstream institution of higher education restructured the budget for the institution and as a result, his department budget was cut.

Booker stated that "I have no staff and no budget." He further expressed, "that tends to tell me in my critical position as the person in charge of minority admissions, International students, as well recruitment for the college, I can't do my job. There is no way I can do my job with nothing." Booker is thus thrust into a position with no operational control of budget and resources for his department. His morale and talents are



strained and in the process is set up for failure by not meeting his job requirements of recruiting students from diverse backgrounds.

Malcolm expressed concern that he has also been in designated positions that have not granted him the opportunity to hone his skills in the area of operational management, i.e. budget and resources. Malcolm is fully cognizant that the barrier of being placed in a designated position with the lack of operational management authority suggests that in the minds of hiring committees, such would place negative judgment on his designated positions with limited scope of duties and deem him underqualified for positions of advancement in higher education administration.

Malcolm knows all too well that if he is not equipped with the experiences of having operational control of budget and resources that this would provide the reason for individuals in a hiring capacity to not grant him an executive level job in higher education administration. Malcolm gives an example of what he perceives as thought processes of individuals who are in the hiring capacity at major mainstream institutions of higher education:

If they hire people based on experience, you may have the years of experience, but don't have the experience at the director capacity, this would be the reason for them not giving you the job. When individuals on the hiring committees analyze the responsibilities of designated positions and the limited operational control of budget and resources, they will lean towards someone who has an overall perspective of the entire institution to provide leadership. Obviously, they will go with the person with the best credentials to lead that operation and, who will have the best credentials; an individual who has been in that position. Probably

someone with opportunity, most likely a Euro-American because the opportunity to manage budgets and to oversee large organizations.

### **Institutional Racism**

#### *Search and screening committees*

Martin states that recently his human resources department posted a job description for an executive level position at his mainstream institution. The major job requirement for this position was for a person with a Doctoral degree. Martin states, “I immediately thought to myself that I was not going to apply for this position, because I have a Master of Arts and an MBA, I do not have a doctoral degree.” Martin’s mainstream institution conducted interviews and based upon the job description requirements in its advertisement a Hispanic female emerged victorious. This institution did make her an offer, but rescinded the offer and provided the explanation that the institution did not need nor want that position in its higher education administrative structure. As a result, she was not hired.

A few months later, information regarding the same job description, but with a different job title and degree requirements were posted at Martin’s mainstream institution of higher education. Martin was curious because he had now met the job requirements and felt that this was an excellent fit and he could now move up the administrative ladder. Martin inquired about the position through the office of human resources. He met the specific requirements as stated in the advertisement, interviewed but did not get the job. A white female was selected through the interview process for the position. Martin stated that he was told by a human resource person “that the institution restructured the job title

and degree requirements for a white woman to be placed in that position. The institution wanted someone of that stature to represent the position and the institution.”

Malcolm discussed one of the most discouraging periods in his life. He was five or six years into his career when he applied for the coordinator of articulation at [a major university in the Midwest]. He was well prepared for the job by having been at [a major university in the Midwest] and currently working in higher education for six years.

Malcolm was interviewed by the community college administrators that he would be working with regarding to articulation agreements, as well as the staff at the University.

Malcolm states:

I got good reviews throughout the interview process. The director at that time asked me if I would go out to lunch with him. Now only two things can happen at that lunch, either you are going to extend the offer or you are going to explain why you didn't extend the offer and the latter is not what I wanted to hear. I think Orlando that I could have accepted not getting the position if someone was better qualified for the position.

The position was offered to someone that had less experience who worked at [a major university in the Midwest] that did not accept many transfer students. The emphasis on the position was that the person had to have experience working with the community college market and with transfer students. Malcolm expressed that maybe one percent of all undergrad students attending [this major university in the Midwest] where this person was employed were transfer students and yet it was perceived that the person hired had more experience working with the very market. The individual had only four

years of experience of working in the field of higher education as opposed to Malcolm's six years of experience working with the required student population.

Malcolm articulates "when I pressed the director as to what really was behind his decision, he said his hands were tied and that the committee and the university wanted to diversify the office." This diversification criterion was allegedly not of race but of class. The person that was selected in the position was based upon working at a prestigious mainstream institution of higher education and not of merit or experience.

Cornel is mindful that the barriers for his career advancement have been dealing with search and screening committees on college campuses. Cornel researches the institution before he applies and interviews to make sure that there are no internal candidates. Cornel is very weary about internal candidates for specific executive level opportunities and states, "you are in searches or there is an internal candidate that is also in the pool, what I do know if there is an internal candidate, I don't go for the interview. That is sending a signal that the campus is in with the internal candidate so I don't waste my time."

Cornel further illustrates that he was a finalist for a position with [a major university in the south] and that the chair of the interviewing committee was an African American male who was the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at that time. Cornel continued to reminisce and explained that a couple of years had passed and that the African American male who was the chair on the committee at that time had since moved on and became an administrator where he earned his undergraduate degree. He met the gentleman in the cafeteria at the one of his homecoming events and said "I will never forget this, he came up to me and said, Dr. Cornel you are not supposed to know this but

he said, if you were God himself, you would not have gotten this job because we knew who was going to get the job, the person on the campus.” Cornel then continued the point that search and screening committees usually have a perceived idea on the type of person they want, the ethnicity and the gender for specific executive level positions.

Frederick was told by an individual that served on a search and screening committee that he was not warranted for the job that he had applied and interviewed for because of who he was as a top administrator and he showed people that he can think and for that very reason made some fearful. Frederick states “I’ve noticed that I heard from other people that would tell me at times when I applied for jobs that you were the top person, but you would make the supervisor really look bad because if you could do what you have done at your level, people would turn to that person and ask so what are you doing?”

After this exchange, Frederick expressed that he often thought about what a person would want if he were his coach or director of whatever. “I would want people who would meet my need of where my weaknesses are and build a whole team, so I had a team concept. I look at where I am weak or where my areas of improvements and needs are, and want somebody out there that can fill that need and bring this to the search and screening committee and for them not to say oh boy if I bring this person in he won’t need me anymore because I can’t do this or that.”

#### *Lack of information*

African American male administrators have been placed in administrative positions only to be side tracked by not having the full or proper information to implement goals, objectives, and strategies to effectively and efficiently perform tasks

necessary for positive job results. Lack of clarity in actions planning procedures and a lack of coordination between levels of administrative communications provide unclear guidance that creates barriers for positive operational management.

Frederick had the experience of being in an administrative position and was not granted full details of information to complete duties to the best of his abilities. Frederick states, “I eventually moved into the circle of fully shared information, but early on it was the intent for others who were in power to see what I could do before I was a member of or nominated for certain committees or invited into certain meetings.”

Frederick, Martin, and Booker were faced with the barrier of not having full access and clarity to action plans from others who worked with them on projects within the university community. The three were challenged to perform tasks with a lack of coordination between levels of administrative communications directly from other policy makers and those in executive levels of administration. For example, in some instances the subordinates that worked for these African American male administrators attended different levels of administrative meetings and were granted access to pertinent administrative communications that was received from other department heads before that information was granted to the African American male administrators.

Subordinates did not share the information with their African American male administrators until a later date. When the subordinates did share the information it lacked clarity. As Frederick explained, “I could hear it from the lower level people who worked for me who were involved in the meetings. I never received direct communications from other department heads from those meetings unless I inquired.” If and when the levels of administrative communication and information were received

from subordinates it was very unclear and created confusion that aided in the process of delaying or not completing tasks on time.

Frederick expounded on the fact that subordinates, other policy makers and executive level members who did not share information within the university setting, had not just occurred at one particular institution. Frederick worked for at least seven other institutions of higher education prior and had witnessed this barrier of withheld information at other mainstream institutions. He has had discussions with other African American male administrators who are senior administrators at their respective institutions and they have shared with him some of those similar experiences that have happened to them as well (Frederick, personal communication, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006).

Booker was constantly confronted with possessing lack of information because he was not always invited to meetings that had an impact on his department. Booker's mainstream institution of higher education would have administrative meetings that certain levels of administrators such as directors did not attend. Booker describes his situation of having a lack of information to run his department with full vision, and said, "If critical information comes out of the meeting, the Dean doesn't forward it to their level then of course it is a problem. I don't think information is not shared as much because of the system in which we operate; you only know what you need to know to function, if you can function."

Martin was concerned that his limited information of what was happening at his institution was having a detrimental effect upon his department. Martin was not invited to action planning sessions; and administrative levels of communication were muffled. Martin was also confronted by others within his college community regarding issues

relative to his departmental duties and responsibilities. Martin was unaware of major issues relative to the institution and other partnerships on or off campus. Martin states, “This was of interest to me because I had not been involved in any level of administrative meetings and lacked the information to respond competently.”

#### *Acceptance of ideas or trust*

Achieving the respect of staff was Frederick’s major barrier in gaining acceptance of ideas and trust. He noticed that many of his white colleagues expected him to perform the same tasks in the same manner as his former predecessor. Frederick stated that he felt that he was under great scrutiny and had to constantly show and prove his work in order to survive and gain respect from the dominant culture.

Frederick stated that “at times my staff did not follow my leadership”. He would spend much of his time explaining to staff about why certain tasks were imperative to the department functions. Frederick shared that he wasted a vast amount of time explaining to his subordinates that he understood issues relative to their job responsibilities and the importance for his staff to meet the mission and vision of the department as well as the institution. Frederick expounded that he constantly suggested to his subordinates to following through on their particular tasks and for his staff to not be concerned with any other person’s duties and responsibilities.

Frederick was not accepted for his ideas and his subordinates did not fully trust him and move to a position of understanding his ideas and leadership. For example in meetings, Frederick was always questioned regarding his recommendations and other questions that he presented. He further illustrated that if someone else asked the same questions, then the questions were discussed. As Frederick states:



Always being questioned or having another white male counter part or even sometimes a subordinate make the same statement you have made and others say, that is exactly the point we were trying to make became frustrating. The point that was stated by me or another black male in the meeting much earlier could have progressed and moved the group forward, but because of who was or was not the messenger mattered.

Martin has been in meetings where he can read body language and analyze through conversation when he was invisible in a room. He expressed that “it is interesting when you are in a world where you are the only person of color, and when people are talking and the lead person is looking at the people like them and not looking at you when they talk.” When superiors asked of his opinions in meetings, Martin states, “you have to jump in and tell them because you will not be asked again.”

Martin is sensitive to the fact when he is ignored. He has been so accustomed to non-involvement in conversations that he knows how to interrupt and say “since you haven’t asked me and I am a part of this meeting, I like to share with you my thoughts; all of a sudden they realized, it’s like Ralph is the invisible man but he is still very much pervasive everywhere.” Martin provides the example that it is very much pervasive here and any other places you go to. In meetings they recognize you and the moment you are walking down the street, you become the landscape, you become a telephone pole, or a tree.

Martin would have a supervisors meeting every Monday with the department head of [a major university in the Midwest]. Four other individuals including myself would march into his office. Martin states “this is where he would talk to them and skips

me and talk to them, and kept only talking to them. After a while I would say a few things about something that he would come back and ask me about, but he would never ask me anything of substance or at the very least something very minor.”

Booker’s administration challenged his ideas, trust and acceptance through personality conflicts. Booker had to persevere by adjusting to the personality of his supervisor. Booker said “failure to do the extreme and loose your job; or the lesser would be not to get the resources needed in order to do your job, or be held back just for that type of situation.” Booker is fully aware that personality conflicts are very important and the adjusting to your superior’s personality and knowledge of how far to take them in expressing your desires is extremely important. When I asked him to explain more, Booker told me “failure to know that and going beyond or pushing their button the wrong way could cause you serious headaches throughout your work experience there.”

The hindrance of Booker’s ideas, trust, and acceptance from those who are in power of his advancement in higher education administration is generated from the fact that he tends to speak his mind and “be too truthful about a situation when in fact it is better to not say anything and let things happen as they may; that is not my personality and it is not how I do things.” Booker offers the following example:

You have to be a part of the girl/boy system and failure to really buy into that will always be a hindrance; you will always be held back. People want to feel like the higher executives are in charge whether they are right or wrong, they want to feel that way. If you come in and do anything to disrupt that feeling, you will become a marked person. At times I have had a difficult time buying into the good ole boy buddy system because I’m straight forward and I do my job well and you should

at least respect me enough to at least allow me to express myself in the betterment of the organization.

### **Invisibility**

#### *Non-involvement on committees*

When African American male administrators come onto a college campus, too many individual and institutional adjustments are set into motion (Moore & Wagstaff, 1974). Few African American administrators serve on campus-wide committees. When I asked Cornel about his involvement with campus-wide committees his response was “by non-invite or non-involvement we have no participation in the plan of actions, we have no voice of concern, no voice of reason, and no contribution to issues that occur on a college campus.

African American male administrators receive no mentoring or networking that is gained through the settings of campus-wide committees. Cornel is even more explicit: “Just being an African American male, some people are not comfortable with us because they have not worked with us, gone to school with us, so is it a possibility whether or not you are able to be part of the leadership team and allow people to be comfortable around you and not have certain types of mannerism.”

Frederick and Martin understand that their non-involvement in memberships of certain committees or if they are not offered to be part of certain studies or research projects will silence their voices. Martin states “not being on some of the committees is a major handicap and has thus rendered me invisible because they do some things collaboratively; they bring in information from the faculty as well as from the

administration and various other groups. I just have not been part of many of those campus-wide committees.”

Frederick states “I think if I’m not allowed or thought of to be given campus-wide duties or tasks, then I would not be given wider-campus observation and visibility.”

Frederick was not searching for leadership status, or to be the individual that was so insightful. He was seeking solutions for whatever the issue was at that particular time and wanted to share ideas and be involved on campus- wide committees to help perpetuate progress. Frederick indicates that non-involvement on campus-wide committees prohibits participation that takes place in a university culture where other individuals have the opportunity to view you as a thinker and doer.

#### *Solitary work*

African American male administrators are challenged to navigate the barrier of alienation from working with other departments at mainstream institutions of higher education. Sometimes this alienation may take place within their office or their unit of administration. They are hidden in small numbers among the huge number of white administrators to isolate and manipulate their administrative actions. Martin states “For so long in [his administrative capacity] I worked independently even though it’s a team. As much as the word team floats around, there is not much team effort; it boils down to you pulling everything together.”

Martin expounded on the fact that his position began in one office and has been relocated to another. When Martin arrived in his new office location which was on the third floor of a building that was not visited by many, the administrator in charge “did not know how to get it started.” As a result Martin revamped his job description. He did not

have any budget responsibilities and found himself with no administrative support, thereby working in solitude to complete tasks.

Frederick's office was also placed in a location that was not connected with the other administrative offices. Frederick states "the majority of times I work here by myself because my office is located off the beaten path that I rarely receive visitors which includes students." His office location was often hard to find due to lack of direction and visibility. Frederick and his staff on a minuscule level participated in unit administrative meetings and other campus-wide committees that were not conducted in his area, thereby keeping his location invisible.

Frederick's administrative unit places an enormous set of responsibilities for a select student population that his office must render services. Frederick is sometimes overwhelmed and is vastly inundated with work that he has no spare time to participate in on campus-wide committees. Frederick is concerned and has spoken to his supervisor and said "the less I get invited to those types of planning committees, the harder it will be for me to get that other audience to recognize the work I do and the contributions that I can make. I am so inundated with my own work, that I may have to do a lot of solitary work and not involved in a lot of collaborative work, so that means a lot less people I will see to show the merit of thinking and the way I work."

#### *Non-Institutional Advancement regardless of Experience and Degree*

African American male administrators are challenged to overcome the barrier of non-institutional advancement regardless of their work experience in higher education administration and degrees held. At times African American male administrators may have had to accept a lesser position that they are overqualified for in order to remain in

higher education administration. They are relegated to lesser roles and responsibilities thereby making them invisible.

When I asked Frederick about his non-institutional advancement regarding his experience and degree's held serving in a position or accepting a lesser position that he was overqualified for to remain in higher education, he provided the following example:

I was in an executive level position at [a mainstream institution in the Midwest] and due to the reorganization of the administrative structure; I was placed in a lesser position within our administrative organizational chart. There was another individual that was my equal on the executive level that was not of African American descent that was granted a higher position. She only held a bachelor degree and did not have the amount of experience that I had. This same institution went through a second reorganization and again, the institution did not take into account my qualifications and experiences for advancement. I was overlooked and placed in another staff position.

Frederick provided the above example to confirm that his institution did not honor his potential, skills, experience, or degrees that were necessary to promote him or to allow him to perform in the position that he was hired. The institution utilized the excuse of institutional reorganization to demote this African American male administrator, thereby making him invisible.

Malcolm spoke of the time when he was confronted with the barrier of non-institutional advancement regardless of his experience and degrees held. Malcolm has been higher education administration for the past thirteen years. Individuals that he began with who are not of African American decent have all advanced to higher levels of

administration both within and outside of his institution of higher education. Malcolm has critically reflected on his career and the other opportunities that are available for advancement.

Malcolm was in a lower level management position and with his experience and degrees that he holds, has watched as others inside his office were elevated to other positions within the University. Malcolm had been passed over for various advancements throughout the University. He states “the barrier to advancing at that time seemed to be the skin color because there was still the glass ceiling; the people who were in position to still make the decision were still the dominant culture, they were still the department chair persons, the president, they were still the provosts, they were still in higher positions to make diversity a reality of a fallacy.” Malcolm came to the realization that he was ready for promotion, but had not been promoted. He was solicited by peers, colleagues and superiors to speak forthright on issues about his particular department throughout the country but yet he was not in an advanced position of higher education administration.

Martin was a career changer. Prior to martin entering the halls of academia, he ran a successful small business and had a career in K-12 education. Martin accepted a position in an admissions office working with individuals who were in their late twenties and very early thirties. The workers as a whole were very inexperienced in dealing with the population of high school students and career changers.

Martin revealed during our interview that the institution that he worked for hired a president and while engaged in a general conversation, Martin shared with the president that he ran a successful small business. After the conversation with the president, Martin

stated that the original job that was offered three weeks earlier, working in admissions office was restructured. The new president of the institution and administration expressed that martin was not a good fit for the admissions position and in order for him to keep a job and stay in higher education; he accepted the relegation of responsibilities by working in the book store.

Martin felt the stereotype and racism from the institution and stated with “my communication skills, I knew the level, I knew what to speak of as well as the people changing careers, and I could converse with them. That did not seem to come across to the new president, he wanted a certain image portrayed in the admissions office and I didn’t fit that image. I didn’t fit that image color wise, I didn’t fit that image age wise; as a result he extended a position of running the bookstore because I had owned a business before. At a retail establishment he felt that I would be an asset at running the business but little did he know that was the last thing I wanted to do, I did not want to do that.” Martin spent the next couple of months in this lesser position and maintained limited scope of duties, thus making him invisible.

### **Coping mechanism**

African American male administrators are challenged to cope with the difficulties that they face in order to advance their careers in higher education administration. They are subject to feelings of tension and stress as they navigate the barriers at mainstream institutions of higher education. They find ways to alleviate the stress that they experience and gain a greater understanding of the environment and move to a more functional means of managing stress.



### *Professional Development*

When Frederick was a director of minority affairs, he would focus on changing negative stereotypes and ill personal self perceptions that others may have held, into positive self representations. He would utilize the coping mechanism of self development by attending professional development workshops, writing, submitting, and presenting papers at conferences while participating in collaboration of studies and research, as he says “that’s very important staying active in my field.”

Frederick would seek and identify with someone who was well received in his particular area and use this person as a benchmark. He did not to necessarily engage this person in competition, but utilized this person as a motivation tool to remain head and shoulders in work performance. He would find and emulate the positive skills of individuals whom he admired. For example, if he noticed how someone’s memo or research papers were written, he would engage those individuals in dialogue to seek advice for his self development. Frederick constantly strives for improvement and says “I have a high standard in that I am very demanding but demanding more of myself than I am of others. I have the feeling that I have to always do well. There are rewards in the love of the journey. How do I see this; how do I see me benefiting with the end result; how do I see all this impacting the end result?” He keeps these questions in mind as he reads about others’ works and meets individuals who are prolific in the field that he could learn from to enhance his academic area and experience.

Conversation and various tools of communications are forms of professional development that Cornel utilizes to navigate the barrier of lack of information.

Conversation and other forms of communications such as emails, memos, and letters with

his college president is how Cornel hones his survival skills that are necessary to succeed in higher education administration. His acceptance of constructive criticism through conversations and other tools of communication have enhanced his learning from his deans and directors in regards to how he can be a better manager and supervisor through strengthened communications.

Cornel has utilized critical conversations and other tools of communications to disseminate information to his university gained through national conferences of higher education administration. He has made himself visible by dispersing clear and concise information of what he has learned from his conferences to alleviate any possible lack of communication. He shares the following examples of communications:

He attended a conference on campus safety issues that are currently facing our college campuses across the country. He states “that after 911 many college campuses were charged with creating management crisis plans. I was charged with the responsibility of creating a management crisis plan and monogram for our campus and was the continued voice of communication providing presentations, adequate written policies, and reading materials.”

### *Mentoring*

Frederick called his next coping mechanism “grouping” whereby he would seek out older African American males that were in higher education administration. In the same process, other African American male administrators sought him as well to participate as a mentor. They would share barriers encountered or still encountered in higher education administration and provide advice to Frederick on how to overcome negative situations to aid in his advancement in higher education administration.

Cornel has also utilized the coping mechanism of mentoring. He has had several mentors who have been helpful in his career to support him as an individual and an administrator. Through his career in higher education administration, Cornel has always had high esteem of his educational achievements to the point of alienating others who were in positions to advance his career. Over the years his mentors have helped guide his personal life and career by engaging in dialogue about life lessons and providing sound advice regarding humility.

Cornel's involvement in the mentoring process has been very healthy mentally. Cornel says, "I think I have mellowed out over the years because I think when I was twenty-seven I found arrogance and I think that turned people away from you. I think it is very important that you develop a level of comfort with people and how you interact with people so that you can feel that you do care about them as individuals." He credits his mentors with their shared wisdom and patience to have belief in his own self esteem. Although believing in self first is foremost, to maintain humbleness and develop professionally through merit increases and the opportunity to go to conferences to improve on his management and leadership skills is invaluable.

In conjunction with Frederick and Cornel, Booker also utilized the advice of a mentor to overcome barriers in higher education administration. Booker reflected on his past mentors and alleged "I had a tremendous mentor that helped a great deal when I came into higher education. A gentleman took me under his wing and calmed me down and told me what I had to do to survive." Booker received those instructions from his mentor and stated exuberantly "Those instructions, that guideline that he afforded me gave me the ability to at least survive the earlier part of my career, gave me a way to

relax and understand and follow instructions.” Booker strongly advocated that his mentors have all been very positive persons who have played a fundamental role in building the foundation for his betterment as an administrator in higher education administration.

### *Exercise*

Another coping mechanism that Frederick utilizes is exercise. Frederick mentioned that he had high blood pressure and gained some weight due to not taking care of himself physically. He let the pressure of his job dictate his time. He states “I couldn’t find time which was my fault. I didn’t find enough time to take care of myself physically first. I had to really start thinking about the fact of what Covey said in his book, no one on their death bed wished they would have spent more time in the office.” Frederick regrouped his priorities to maintain an exercise regiment to alleviate stress. He has managed his personal time better by not allowing his job or other individuals to fill this gap.

Attending work early to read and work on plans of action is an exercise that Cornel found effective for his personal productivity. Cornel would attend work early to mentally prepare for the demands of his day. He would garner his thoughts to be attentive if he were to either meet one on one with his staff, dean of directors, or the university council. He has implemented this regiment so that he would be assured in his mind that his points of conversation and ideas were at least valued by him and hopefully those beyond his particular Unit.

Cornel also utilizes the coping mechanism of exercise, by attending the health club everyday. Cornel states “that helps me mentally, emotionally, and physically.”

Cornel shared the fact that some of his colleagues have taken pills and drank to cope with their jobs which are detriments to their overall well-being. He emphasized that attending the health club everyday helps mentally to reinforce the positive thoughts and ways in which he conducts business and says “I do that because it is a positive way to do things.” The coping mechanism of employing exercise into Cornel’s life has kept him grounded to navigate his barriers mentally, emotionally, and physically.

Booker is fully cognizant that his career in higher education can be frustrating and therefore it is imperative that he separate work from home. He utilizes the mechanism of separation of home and work to be effective in both his administrative role in higher education and in his home life. He suggest that by leaving his home life at home and not fussing his home life with his career life does not cloud his judgment to be an effective administrator. He states “when I do leave work, I try to leave the job there because if I would ever take it home with me, it would disrupt my personal life.”

Booker resorts to the coping mechanism of keeping physically active. Booker works out at least three times a week. He discovered that when he works out in the afternoon it relaxes him and he utilizes this time to focus on his administrative duties. He “finds a sense of existence,” and further specifies “those three things: mentorship with the gentlemen I mentioned earlier, my work experience, leaving the job on the job and not taking it home where I don’t have to, and keeping myself physical active and healthy” are his survival skills and coping mechanisms for success in higher education administration.

### *Spirituality*

Martin utilizes the coping mechanism of spirituality in his daily routine. Martin said “everyday I am in prayer between 3:00 and 3:30 in the library. I take a newspaper

and may read about two minutes of that and then I go into prayer. That is my number one support system.” Martin is very clear that his spirituality is not only a support system in his administrative job in higher education, but also it is a support system in his life. He is thankful that through his spirituality he has been placed in higher education administration. He gives thanks for his success in higher education administration, and for feeling the little nudges and whispers from his supreme being.

### *Networking*

Networking in the work place involves influence and collaboration to bring people together. Networking is the key to relationship building that has provided African American males in higher education an opportunity with similar interest and concerns to interact and remain in informal contact for mutual assistance and support. The involvement, influence and collaboration of African American male administrators enhance manifesting mechanisms to succeed which lead to success.

Malcolm was involved in a mentoring program for faculty and staff at [a mainstream university in the Midwest]. The program was implemented through the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) officer for the university. The program involved new African American staff and faculty members to be paired with other African Americans on campus as a way for them to become acclimated to the campus environment. Malcolm states “we had a network or a tool among each other.” Progressively, the network helped in terms of their survival techniques on campus and also in terms of progression in their careers.

African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education are usually in the same predicament of being in lower positions with little or no

power to influence the decision making process to advance others in higher education administration. In many instances, networking for African American male administrators on mainstream institutions of higher education consisted of think tanks for discussing solution to problems. Malcolm agrees that African American male administrators “weren’t in higher positions to push you forward. They were just there to help you along the way and deal with some of the stresses you have to deal with being an African American in a predominantly white campus.” He credits his mentor program for his advancement made in higher education administration and states “I don’t think that I would have survived my first couple of years without that support system.”

Mentoring and networking have been instrumental in the elevation of Cornel’s career in higher education administration. Cornel has been fortunate to have had good mentoring from other African American male administrators’ who encouraged him to pursue higher degrees of education. He has a supervisor who has taken interest in his in his professional development through personal grooming and professional seminars and workshops to further his advancements in higher education administration. Cornel’s networking on the national level in professional organizations and serving in leadership positions have been vital in his advancement.

Cornel has always been able to travel and engage in networking on the national level. Networking on the national level has bestowed on him the recognition for his publications and scholarly contributions to literature and research. He states “it was very humbling to me in front of six hundred people stand and applauds my accomplishments because I was the first person of color and it took thirty years since the conception of the award to get it.” He insist that African American male administrators need to be

mentored and participate in organizations such as the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and National Association Student Personnel Administrators (NASFA), because of the networking and mentoring possibilities gained from seminars dealing with issues African American males and females encounter in the workplace.



**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY, STUDY REFLECTION**

Introduction

This study illuminated the lived experiences of five African American male administrators who are currently working at mainstream institutions of higher education. Through interviews and personal communications they have disclosed (1) barriers that prevent career advancement, (2) identified the paths in which African American male administrators' successfully navigated barriers and, (3) identified coping mechanisms and support systems to aid in overcoming barriers to successes. This study provided space for the responses from these African American male administrators' backgrounds and lived experiences of racism and oppression that authentically speak to the dominant culture. They deserve to be heard for social change. Their statements are undeniably a testament to the trials and tribulations that they have experienced due to hegemonic practices at mainstream institutions of higher education.

The overall goal of this research study is to provide information to current and future African American males regarding barriers they are challenged to overcome for career advancement at mainstream institutions of higher education. The significance of this study was to inform African American male administrators in higher education of the barriers they face as they navigate through the mine fields of higher education administration. This study identified how racism manifests itself, prevents advancement and attempts to silence the African American males' voice. In this chapter I will analyze the study findings, engage in dialogue in regards to the implications for mainstream institutions of higher education, and present recommendations for future study.

## **Analysis of Findings**

### *Cognizance of Limited and Limiting Opportunities*

The participants in this study have acknowledged that they have worked in limited and limiting career opportunities at mainstream institutions of higher education. They have recognized that the presence of the federal government in mainstream institutions of higher education was responsible for the creation of new line and staff positions that were charged with the oversight of policies, procedures and fiscal management for federal funded programs and services. Since the 1970's, African American male administrators have been offered and accepted line and staff designated positions created at mainstream institutions of higher education such as Director of Minority Affairs, Director of Multicultural Affairs, and Equal Employment Opportunity Officer. In the last two decades little has changed in the offering and placement of positions that have traditionally been offered to African American male administrators who operate in the hierarchal administrative structures at mainstream institutions of higher education.

Prior to the aforementioned time period, there were very few African American male administrators working at mainstream institutions of higher education. Through the enactment of civil rights laws, student and community protest, government funding, and the mandate for affirmative action plans for the management of on-campus federal programs, expanded access and career opportunities for African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education have occurred.

The participants in my study confirm this perspective when they began their careers in higher education administration by accepting designated positions as their only career opportunity and possible advancement in higher education administration. Their

involvement was very limited in working with faculty, staff, students and other administrators within their campus community. The small interaction that my participants had with other segments of the university community and administration came about when their interest converged in dealing with issues and problems that only pertained to minority students.

The concept of “interest convergence” tolerates advances of disenfranchised people for racial justice only when it suits its interest to do so. It is imperative to understand how designated positions are utilized by mainstream institutions of higher education administration and more importantly whose interests are really served. I clearly articulate, that designated positions were and are necessary to support programs and services for students of color (and other minority groups) on mainstream institutions of higher education.

My participants in this study have accepted designated positions that were in their best interest as a way to begin and perpetuate their careers in higher education administration. They all agreed that designated positions are relevant to the survival of programs and services for students of color (and other minority groups) but, in the same scenario recognize the realization and the importance of not becoming pigeon holed in designated positions, and to use these positions as stepping stones.

Mainstream institutions of higher education possess a vested interest to hire African American male administrators to: (1) serve in administrative capacities; (2) advocate for a specific population; and (3) in return, to receive funding from the federal government and other entities to enhance and fund other programs and services. The interest convergence of mainstream institutions integrating African American male

administrators and serving their client interest of the federal government and students of color benefits the greater interest of mainstream institutions. As a result, mainstream institutions of higher education maintain their status quo through hegemony and racism. They are successful in maintaining hegemony and racism through the U.S. Supreme court's interpretation of color-blind tolerance and diversity by providing African American male administrators with limited scope of duties and lack of operational control of budget and resources as they serve in their designated positions.

Mainstream institutions of higher education have adhered to the U.S. Supreme Court's color-blind constitutionalism of tolerance and diversity which as a social ideal, tolerates the acceptance of African American males serving in administrative positions in the hierarchal administrative structures. The use of color-blind constitutionalism and social change by mainstream institutions of higher education which was meant to educate the campus community by demonstrating the proper attitude toward race fails to genuinely open and improve relationships between African American male administrators and the campus community. The devaluing and inequities of resources through the use of color-blindness of diversity that African American male administrators possess in their roles and responsibilities has unjustifiably perpetuated the social superiority (collective advantage of whiteness) to maintain hegemony and oppression at mainstream institutions of higher education.

My participants have concurred that in their limited scope of duties, roles and responsibilities were not clearly defined. As a consequence they experienced devaluation and inequities in their designated positions at mainstream institutions of higher education. Their designated positions lacked real power to suggest and influence significant

decisions to the campus community and administration for pertinent social changes. My participants were limited in their scope of duties to make decisions for only students of color (and other minority groups) with little or no control of budget or resources to effectively and efficiently maintain programs and services for which they serve.

Lack of operational control of budget and resources have had a detrimental effect internally as well as externally on my participants designated positions and their oversight of department functions and responsibilities. Fundamentally, this was due to other university officials who possessed various resources and controlled the flow of funding. For example, internally, staffing issues were a major concern for my participants because their mainstream institutions of higher education dictated that the marginal allocated funding for staff and resources was sufficient to serve their department and institutional needs. The participants in this study were under constant scrutiny as to their relevance and faced the possibility that at any time their institutions of higher education had the power through reorganization or budget cuts, to eliminate staff and resources thus, leading to the possibility of program failure.

Externally, lack of operational control of budget and resources within their respective departments contributed to not fully meeting the institutional mandates for the completion of the overall goals, objectives, and strategies. The involvement of other university administrators controlling department budget and resources generated an environment in which my participants were limited. Consequently, their decision making process of prioritizing funds and resources for effective and efficient services plus academic programming for students of color (and other minority groups) was hampered. For example, other university administrators from the dominant culture would allocate

funding that was non-threatening to the status quo for superficial programs such as multicultural festivals that included food as the theme for diversity. Allocation of funding for significant programs to raise the consciousness of students of color (and other minority groups) regarding social change and global issues were frowned upon with resources and budgets limited and at times unavailable. The control of budget and resources by the dominant culture maintained the status quo (social superiority) by oppressing effective and efficient programming that could manifest inequities in hegemonic practices.

According to my participants, the lack of operational control of budget and resources prohibited their participation in order to obtain and experience opportunities to (1) learn the intricacies of budgeting and the availability of other resources. My participants said they received insignificant training on specific forms that was needed to request funds or resources from other departments on campus opportunities to (2) manage budget and resources. They expressed that they did not have the chance to fiscally be responsible for forecasting and allocating funds and resources that would support their purpose of providing significant programs and services to students of color (and other minority groups). And, (3) further opportunities to understand the place and order of the department's budget and other available resources within the context of the overall budget at mainstream institutions of higher education. By not having the opportunity to gain access and knowledge of resources and operational control of budgeting practices, my participants expressed that the oppression and inequities with no budget control authority nor resource allocation power is detrimental to advance African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education. This occurs because hiring

committees perceive them as not having enough experience to manage various departments.

### *Impact of Institutional Racism*

I have determined that the impact of institutional racism at mainstream institutions of higher education is evidenced in:

- Denied participation in search and screening committees.
- Not sharing information essential to duties and responsibilities from subordinates and superiors.
- Not accepting ideas.
- Lack of trust.

Search and screening committees prohibit the entrance and advancement of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education. African American male administrators at these institutions of higher education rarely receive equal consideration for positions of power and authority. The culture of search and screening committees at mainstream institutions of higher education are not actively involved in the recruitment, advancement, or support for African American male administrators who wish to catapult their careers to positions of leadership.

The interviewing process in higher education, particularly at the level of dean or higher requires a search and screening committee that is charged with the responsibility of making recommendations to the president and in some instances to board members of the institution for the fulfillment of vacant executive leadership positions in higher education administration. Search and screening committees are usually comprised of individuals from the dominant culture at mainstream institutions of higher education with

little or no minority representation. In many instances a pre-selected candidate is placed before these committees. The chosen individuals that serve on search and screening committees are responsible for review and assessment of candidates' qualifications, accomplishments, academic backgrounds, and personal qualities, thus matching the criteria to fill position vacancies. However, my participants in this study have been impacted by institutional racism of search and screening committees regardless of their qualifications. Because of their immutable characteristics of race and its visibility, coupled with cancellations and re-openings with revised qualifications, have consequently, and prevented consideration for executive level positions at mainstream institutions of higher education.

My participants experienced the process of having sought and applied for positions that have been advertised to the public with the attached context stating "minorities and women strongly encouraged to apply", only to arrive at the realization that they had been utilized as a tool to appease affirmative action and human resource requirements for government compliance. They have been challenged with navigating through hidden barriers of institutional racism at mainstream institutions of higher education. Examples experienced are to compete against an interim or a pre-selected candidate who has been quietly nominated by individuals of family or friends of the dominant culture serving on search and screening committees.

My participants expressed that they have been told by members from various search and screening committees at mainstream institutions of higher education that they were not hired out of fear because of their strong intimidating demeanor, appearance or dress as expressed by Senator Joseph Biden's (D-Del.) remarks regarding Senator Barack



O’Bama as a “mainstream” African American who is “articulate and bright and clean.” Individuals from the dominant culture have shared with my participants that members from search and screening committees were fearful of how well they spoke and articulated positions of logic and understanding of issues. They expressed how members of search and screening committees were fretful of previous positions that were held by my participants because it would manifest their weaknesses and the oppression and inequities that were rendered to persons of color. They were also told that even if they were victorious in some how managing to successfully gain access to the vacant position that was held by an interim or pre-selected candidate by the search and screening committee, that they would be challenged with racism in their working relationships with staff.

The study revealed that African American male administrators at mainstream institutions are faced with navigating the barrier of shared information that is reluctantly released by members of the dominant culture. My participants stated that individuals from the dominant culture would withhold pertinent information to sabotage projects, programs, and services in an effort to discredit them and their department. The lack of shared and timely information has played a significant role in the poor implementation of goals, objectives, and strategies to effectively and efficiently perform tasks necessary for positive job results.

My participants expressed that they were not consistently provided with full delineated details of projects and other imperative information that have caused them to be side tracked from completing duties and responsibilities to the best of their abilities. Booker described his situation of the dominant cultures effort to balance his success to

run his department with full vision, by succinctly stating, “If critical information comes out of the meeting, the Dean doesn’t forward it to their level then of course it is a problem. I don’t think information is not shared as much because of the system in which we operate; you only know what you need to know to function, if you can function.” Marginal information was shared with African American male administrators with the intent of those in power to balance their success.

The participants in this study were challenged to navigate the conflict barrier when working with staff subordinates internally and externally with other university departments. African American male administrators were confronted with their interdepartmental subordinate’s lack of reporting clear and concise information, plus the lack of coordination and clarity of communications at the executive levels. Executive level administrators and dominant culture subordinates of African American male administrators were derelict in providing timely and relevant information in order to run their department or complete tasks required to meet the mission and vision of the institution.

Lack of shared information from the executive level has also oppressed African American male administrators working at mainstream institutions of higher education by not providing clarity of communications for effective strategic action planning procedures and policies. My participants’ efforts were severely hindered due to insignificant information passed from the executive level not fully supporting the implementation of proposed goals, objectives and strategies. As a result, tasks and projects were delayed; this created confusion and amplified the dominant cultures lack of acceptance of ideas or trust of African American male administrators.

The impact of institutional racism relative to the acceptance of ideas or trust by the dominant culture at mainstream institutions of higher education is obstacles that prevent career advancement of African American male administrators. My participants were faced with navigating the barrier of acceptance of ideas or trust by receiving minute respect from staff and other administrators. During meetings my participants' expressed that they were constantly overlooked and their participation and contribution would fall on deaf ears. Subordinates and other administrators challenged their competency and authority as a way to maintain defiance in an effort to negate my participants' power and self respect. They were constantly questioned by their subordinates and administrators, having to overly justify their leadership. Because subordinates and administrators were jealous, and envious about the position of power held. In order to survive, they had to navigate through the personality conflicts from both superiors and subordinates.

Attaining the respect of staff and other administrators was a challenge to my participants organizational and leadership skills. They noticed that their staff and other administrators would expect them to perform the same tasks in the same manner as their predecessors. My participants stated that conflict would rise when they would not allow themselves to be debased by adhering to trivial request from their staff and other administrators. As a result, their organizational leadership and style was attacked. Their personality and performance came under great scrutiny and had to constantly show and prove their work in order to survive, thus gaining the respect from the dominant culture. Conflict was escalated from this attempted oppression when subordinates and other administrators would seek to render my participants incompetent by overly questioning their leadership.

Subordinates internally and administrators externally, within the university community, would question my participants' organizational and leadership skills in an effort to make them seem unaware and inept in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Externally, administrators would question the relevance of why certain programs and projects were imperative to their department functions in executive and presidential cabinet meetings in an attempt to disrespect my participants' organizational and leadership skills in facilitating programs and services. My participants expressed that when they did work with other administrators from various departments within the university community they would grudgingly provide scarce resources as a façade to give the impression that they were sincere about working collaboratively, but later would question the relevance to other members of the dominant culture of its worth and value to the university community.

Subordinates, internally, would question my participants' organizational and leadership skills by asking why certain tasks and responsibilities were important and relevant in terms of their specific duties and responsibilities. They became entrenched with wasting vast amounts of valuable time explaining to their subordinates why and how they understood the issues relative to their subordinate's job responsibilities. My participants would constantly stress and articulate to their subordinates the importance of concentration on their specific duties and responsibilities, absolutely they were told not to be concerned about others' job requirements internally and externally to meet the mission and vision of their department and of the institution as well.

*Alienation through Non-Involvement*

The intersection of African American male administrators and the dominant culture's property interest of whiteness, according to Harris (1995) states

“Whiteness is simultaneously an aspect of identity and property interest, it is something that can both be experienced and deployed as a resource. Whiteness can move from being a passive characteristic as an aspect of identity to an active entity that like other types of property is used to fulfill the will and exercise power” (p. 282)

limits and excludes African American male administrators from the decision making process at mainstream institutions of higher education. My participants rarely served on campus-wide committees which contributed to their alienation and non-involvement in pertinent decisions that were made within their campus community. They were challenged to navigate the barrier of alienation by consistently double checking information received from other departments while volunteering to take on extra responsibilities and group projects within their office and their units of administration. My participants expressed at times, it seemed regardless of their work experience in higher education administration and degrees held, they did not receive the benefits of institutional advancement due to vast alienation at mainstream institutions of higher education.

The property interest of whiteness as an identity has been utilized by the dominant culture as a right of use and enjoyment that was installed as a resource in an attempt to silence my participants' voices and alienate their presence at mainstream institutions of higher education. Traditionally, property rights of whiteness have been conceptualized as maintaining exclusive rights of use and privilege, and those in possession were able to

use this right as a means to exclude. For example, the property rights of whiteness has been adapted by people within the dominant culture to exclude African American male administrators from participating on certain committees such as budget, or personal as a means to maintain inequities, oppression, and the status quo. Whiteness as an inherent unifying characteristic of the dominant culture at mainstream institutions of higher education has been utilized by its membership to reinforce exclusivity and racial subjugation in an effort to prohibit my participants from advancing to positions of leadership.

The utilization and privilege of whiteness by the dominant culture enhanced the barriers of invisibility and alienation of my participants to serve on campus-wide committees that were charged to make relevant decisions for their respective institutions. As Cornel expressed “by non-invite or non-involvement we have no participation in the plan of actions, we have no voice of concern, no voice of reason, and no contribution to issues that occur on a college campus.” My participants said that they “were out of sight and out mind.” Non-involvement on campus-wide committees meant that my participants did not receive the benefit of mentoring or networking from others that was gained through the participation of serving on campus-wide committees. Further, the utilization and privilege of whiteness perpetuated the alienation of my participants’ involvement on certain studies or research projects that eliminated the space for voice and perspectives of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education.

My participants in this study were alienated by department staff members internally and externally when working on so called “collaborative projects.” They conveyed that many times they would perform tasks in isolation within their office and

their units of administration that were meant to be collaborative to ensure timely completion of projects. Mandates to provide programs and services to students of color (and other minority groups) by the institution were met by my participants with no budget responsibilities, administrative support, and relegation to working in solitude.

The dominant culture practice of preserving the property interest of Whiteness at mainstream institutions of higher education has relegated African American male administrators in isolated locations within their campus community as a means to manipulate their administrative efforts. Individuals within the dominant culture have normally placed my participant's offices on the periphery of other centrally administrative designated areas to work in solitude with vastly inundated workloads for a select student population with little or no staff. The isolated placement of my participants' office location and visibility coupled with lack of appropriate signage that was provided by the institution strained visitation and services upon staff, occasionally students of color (and other minority groups), faculty, and administration. The limitation and exclusionary practices in preserving the property rights of whiteness has aided in manipulation and alienation of non-institutional advancement of African American male administrators.

My participants were limited and alienated through non-involvement practices by members of the dominant culture at mainstream institutions of higher education that enhanced their non-institutional advancement regardless of their work experience in higher education administration and degrees held. They have viewed other co-workers of the dominant culture who possess the same experience and degrees held, promoted to positions of leadership in administration both within and outside their institutions of

higher education. Utilization of non-involvement practices has demoted and prohibited my participants from advancement into leadership positions in times of institutional reorganizations. Mainstream institutions of higher education have relegated my participants to lesser roles and responsibilities in the hierarchal administrative structures in an attempt to make African American male administrators invisible.

### *Coping Mechanisms*

African American male administrators working at mainstream institutions of higher education have been challenged to navigate a variety of barriers that have prohibited their career advancement to positions of leadership. My participants have been subjected to feelings of tension and stress as they have navigated through the mine fields of higher education to maintain and advance their careers. From the data, I learned that African American male administrators have found ways to alleviate tension and stress by utilizing a number of coping mechanisms. They have resorted to self development, mentoring, exercise, spiritually, and networking for emotional support.

Understanding the work environment and shifting to a more functional means of managing stress, by knowing and utilizing a variety of coping mechanisms, focuses on changing negative stereotypes. Such ill personal self perceptions will project positive self-esteem of African American male administrators, sorely needed for advancement to leadership positions. When African American male administrators engage in self developmental activities such as professional development workshops, conferences, and involvement in research with other colleagues, they generate a sense of self-assurance and affirmation. From this, they can persevere when confronting and navigating barriers of advancement at mainstream institutions of higher education.



Mentoring and networking groups are put to service as coping mechanisms become important aspects that African American male administrators need to be cognizant of while explaining and exchanging their experiences with others. Mentoring through the voice of African American male administrators' stories and shared experiences of prior and current barriers encountered, provides a valuable way to mentor other African American males. This provides a comfortable environment on how to navigate negative situations and aid in the advancement in higher education administration. The mentoring through the African American male voice has helped guide the personal life and career of other African American male administrators through grounded engagement in dialogue about life lessons while providing sound advice regarding humility.

Networking, as a coping mechanism, has been the key to relationship building internally and externally. It has allowed for survival of African male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education. Networking has played a critical role for African American male administrators in the way problems and successes are shared to utilize as positive tools for career advancement. It has empowered African American male administrators who share the some of the same knowledge to produce an alternative view of the status quo.

Creating alliances as a coping mechanism has been a powerful tool for career advancement of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions. They have formed alliances with supervisors and other administrators who appreciated their skills and understood their interest in advancement. These compacts have enabled my participants to locate experts who helped them achieve their career goals of advancement through discussions about relevant policies, and why key decisions have been made in the

past. My participants have conveyed the importance of gathering allies across departments within the university community for better collaboration on projects and procedures in an effort to achieve visibility for career advancement.

Professional development as a coping mechanism through personal grooming, professional seminars and workshops have aided their advancements in higher education administration. My participants have benefited from the personal grooming of self-directed learning by making decisions about what training and development experiences will be sought. They have selected and carried out their own learning goals, objectives, methods, and means which verified their goals were met for advancement. My participants have stated, though professional seminars and workshops, they have honed their leadership skills through training, thereby keeping current with changing technology and practices for career advancement.

The involvement in state and national level professional organizations has been utilized as a coping mechanism by my participants as a way to establish connections for exchange of ideas and experiences for success. My participants expressed that they have benefited from their professional associations journals and newsletters, thus keeping them abreast of current issues. Their involvement with state and national level organizations have provided them opportunities to become known by publishing articles so contributing to their specific interest in the field of higher education. They have participated in these state and national level organizations and thereby gained job listings for career advancement.

My participants have enlisted mutual assistance as another coping mechanism to discuss issues that are relevant to only African American male administrators. They have

formed a community of similar interests with intent to maintain informal contact for mutual assistance. My participants utilized this coping mechanism of mutual assistance to stimulate and build self-help communities to ease and navigate the burden of social injustice at mainstream institutions of higher education for career advancement.

### Implications of Study

African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education have been faced with navigating the barriers and inequities that have been placed upon them by the dominant culture. There is a need for adult educators and human resource administrators in higher education to work collaboratively with different administrative sections, such as student and academic affairs to remove barriers and inequities that hinder advancement.

Higher education's administrators can provide adult educators with institutional needs assessment information so that they collaboratively can work to periodically review themselves. They can facilitate, re-enforce and strengthen diversity education programs, policies and procedures through department training and workshops. Adult educators can work with higher education administrators in articulating the importance of inclusion of African American male administrators. Involvement should include all facets of decision making made at mainstream institutions of higher education.

Adult educators and African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education need to work collaboratively to bring about social change in higher education administration. Such can begin by promoting involvement and membership in local, state, and national level organizations, in particular with organizations that seek to interpret reality of their needs and interest as learners. It is

imperative that adult educators facilitate learning in an andragogical format with African American male administrators thru professional development seminars and workshops to engage critically in their world of reality.

Adult educators and African American male administrators are ready as resources that can play significant roles in promotion and encouragement of other African American male administrators. They can speak to others in continuing and achieving advanced degrees of higher education for career advancement to leadership positions in higher education administration. Adult educators must work with African American male administrators within the humanistic philosophical foundation of adult education. Such efforts provide underpinning dignity of African American male administrator's capabilities for growth and development gained through their experiences and analysis when engaged in discourse and development of the whole person. The adult educator's goal is to make African American male administrators realize their self worth and facilitate fresh opportunities to gain greater self-actualization.

African American male administrators, adult educators, and mainstream institutions of higher education need to be cognizant of the power of partnerships. By doing so, they can concentrate on eradicating the barriers of oppression and inequities of African American male effectiveness in higher education administration. African American male administrators and adult educators can participate in motivating mainstream institutions of higher education staff to critically reflect on their assumptions, values and practices for social change by understanding and embracing the proper intent of diversity involvement in higher education administration.

Through adult education, mainstream institutions of higher education can be led to understand their prejudices, assumptions, and positions of power. They can realize how these affect interpretations of new experiences of thinking and knowing can influence erosion of barriers and lead to inclusion and advancement that African American male administrators welcome at mainstream institutions of higher education.

#### Recommendations for Future Study

A recommendation for future study is to investigate whether the level of federal funding has increased or decreased since the 1970s that support access of African American studies and centers for programs and services at mainstream institutions of higher education. From this knowledge, the researcher can ascertain which mainstream institutions of higher education have gained or lost their incentives to diversify students, staff, faculty, and administration. Such study will further investigate designated positions at mainstream institutions of higher education.

A second recommendation is to study the comparison of African American male administrator's experiences and degrees held to those of the dominant culture at mainstream institutions of higher education. To this extent this would determine if there is equality in the selection and placement process in the hierarchal structures of higher education administration.

A third recommendation for future study is to investigate the recruitment, retention, and advancement of African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education. From this study, the researcher can ascertain rich, thick descriptions of their participant's experiences that mainstream institutions of higher

education have utilized as means of enticement for them to stay and advance at a particular mainstream institution of higher education.

A fourth study recommendation is to determine whether barriers exist that prevent career advancement of women and other minority groups at mainstream institutions of higher education. Such study can focus on their unique experiences and coping mechanisms that aid in advancement to leadership positions in higher education administration.

### Study Summary

This study has provided knowledge and contemporary understanding of the African American male administrator's experience and barriers confronted which prevented career advancement in higher education administration at mainstream institutions of higher education. From audio taped interviews and transcribed analysis, you have taken a journey and have heard the voices and shared experiences of five African American male administrators from various mainstream institutions of higher education throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. They have provided invaluable information in regard to overcoming the barriers of advancement and have manifested mechanisms as navigation tools to travel with success through the mind fields of higher education administration.

African American male administrators in higher education will now have an opportunity to view and utilize this study as an educational apparatus while mentoring and facilitating seminars and workshops to other African American male administrators and mainstream institutions of higher education. This study has enabled the reader to critically reflect on their positionality of power and their commitment for social change.

Reasoned change leans to the inclusion of African American males to participate in the decision making processes and equality for advancement in the hierarchal administrative structures for all at mainstream institutions of higher education.

### Study Reflection

Four years ago, I embarked upon a journey that gradually passed from fear to confidence and from innocence to mature awareness. I have laid awake many nights, tossing like a ship in a sea storm and awakening to the early morning darkness of a new day. I experienced feelings of apprehension, strength, negativity, and development as a whole person in pursuit of earning and obtaining a doctoral degree. Part of my journey has come to an end, only to begin anew. I have heard that the destiny of receiving a doctoral degree is not as important as the journey itself, because it is the richness of joy and pain of knowledge gained that has made this journey a one of a kind experience.

I have always wanted to pursue a doctoral degree and continue to work in higher education. I was blessed to begin this journey when I enrolled in the advance certificate program of Adult and Continuing Education at National-Louis University. The advance certificate program provided an opportunity for me to ascertain knowledge about a relatively new and exciting field of study that allowed me to hone my understanding of teaching and inspiring learners through their lived experiences. Once I completed this program, I knew it was my calling to pursue and complete a doctoral degree to teach, research, and inspire others in their pursuit to continue life long learning.

My pursuit of the doctoral degree began with the completion of the application process and invitation to the admissions weekend. This was the point of reference when

my feelings of apprehension emerged with excitement and anticipation of in-depth knowledge that was to be received. When I gained acceptance into the doctoral program and attended the summer institute portion of the program in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, I embraced the cohort concept of a united group of people supporting one another and sharing common factors to gain knowledge and obtain a doctorate. From cohort members, I was able to gain personal strength and triangulation understanding of others' shared experiences.

Throughout this journey I have met with triumphs and disappointments. The triumphs have come when I have experienced the awakening and enlightening moments where all dots connected to understanding have exploded like fireworks in the thick of the night. At other times, I have experienced emotional disappointments that have made me ponder in anguish and ask the following questions: Do I belong here? Do I have what it takes to finish? Am I capable to really bring significance to the field of study? And I have answered YES I DO! AND I WILL SUCCEED!

I have developed personal and professional commitments to listen with an open ear and welcome other voices to be amplified. This process has prohibited me from silencing perspective voices that may have an impact in the decision making process. I have committed to recognize that everyone is my teacher through their shared and lived experiences. I am committed to teach through a student centered perspective, with conviction that adults are educated through their own experiences. They have the ability to interpret their experiences and construct a meaning perspective.

I am evolving as a critical thinker, reader and listener that have enabled me to question the status quo and liberal ideologies of oppression. I have transformed like



single words joined together in full sentences to make meaning. I have developed as a whole person mentally, spiritually, and physically. Through this study and program I have immersed myself in the belief that I can't let nothing or no one turn me around, or stop me from achieving my goals, and in the same process to help others realize their potential as well. I am becoming a person who does not quit, who takes a chance on the many possibilities of if, and who realizes that all is possible when I think I can. Please join me further in whom am I becoming.

### Don't Quit

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,  
When the road your trudging seems all uphill,  
When the funds are low and the debts are high,  
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,  
When care is pressing you down a bit  
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and its turns,  
As everyone of us sometimes learns,  
And many a failure turns about  
When they might have won, had they stuck it out.  
Don't give up though the pace seems slow,  
You may succeed with another blow.

Often the struggler has given up  
When he might have captured the victors cup;  
And he learned too late when the night came down,  
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out  
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt  
And you never can tell how close you are,  
It may be near when it seems so far;  
So stick to the fight when your hardest hit,  
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit!

Unknown Author

If by Rudyard Kipling

if you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master,  
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it all on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breath a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

The Man Who Thinks He Can

IF YOU THINK YOU ARE BEATEN, YOU ARE  
IF YOU THINK YOU DARE NOT, YOU DON'T  
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO WIN BUT YOU THINK  
YOU CAN'T

IT'S ALMOST A CINCH YOU WON'T  
IF YOU THINK YOU'LL LOSE ,YOU'RE LOST  
FOR OUT IN THE WORLD WE FIND,  
SUCCESS BEGINS WITH A FELLOW'S WILL,  
ITS ALL IN THE STATE OF MIND  
IF YOU THINK YOUR OUTCLASSED, YOU ARE  
YOU'VE GOT TO THINK HIGH TO RISE  
YOU'VE GOT TO BE SURE OF YOURSELF  
BEFORE YOU CAN EVER WIN A PRIZE.

LIFE'S BATTLES DON'T ALWAYS GO TO THE  
STRONGER OR THE FASTER MAN,  
BUT SOONER OR LATER, THE MAN WHO WINS  
IS THE MAN WHO THINKS HE CAN.

Walter D. Wintle

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## Appendix A

### INFORMED CONSENT – PARTICIPANT

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study that will take place from October 2005 to May 2006. This form outlines the purposes of the study, provides a description of your involvement, and your rights as a participant.

I consent to participate in a research project conducted by Orlando W. Lewis, a doctoral student at National-Louis University located in Chicago, Illinois

I understand that this study is entitled: *Overcoming the Barriers for Advancement: African American Male Administrators at mainstream institutions of Higher Education Manifesting Mechanisms to Navigate Successfully*. The purpose of this study is to determine what are the barriers facing African American male administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education that prevent advancement to high level executive positions. This study will focus on uncovering mechanisms that African American administrators at mainstream institutions of higher education must utilize to navigate through the inequities encountered for their career advancement in higher education. The purpose of this study will also identify those coping mechanisms along with other support systems and models to aid in overcoming barriers to succeed.

I understand that my participation will consist of participating in a 1 – 2 hour interview with a possible second, follow-up interview lasting 1 – 2 hours. I understand that I will receive a copy of my transcribed interviews at which time I may respond to clarify information that I have provided.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without prejudice until the completion of the dissertation.

I understand that my identity will be kept confidential by the researcher coding the data and that my identity will neither be attached to the data I contribute, nor stored with other project data. I understand that only the researcher, Orlando W. Lewis, will have access to a secured file cabinet that will contain all transcripts, tape recordings, and field notes from the interview(s) in which I participated.

I understand that the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, but my identity will in no way be revealed.

I understand that in the event I have questions or require additional information I may contact the researcher: Orlando W. Lewis, National-Louis University, 850 Warrenville RD, Lisle, Illinois 60532 USA 630-874-4312 Email address: olewis@nl.edu

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by me, you may contact my Primary Advisor/Dissertation Chair:



Dr. Gabriele Strohschen, School for New Learning, DePaul University, Loop Campus 25  
W. Jackson Suite 305, Chicago, Illinois 60604 USA (312) 362-5122  
Email address: gstrohsc@depaul.edu

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix B

**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**  
**Data Transcriptionist**

This confidentiality form articulates the agreement made between Orlando W. Lewis, the researcher, and [NAME OF INDIVIDUAL AND COMPANY OF A PROFESSIONAL TRANSCRIBER].

I understand and acknowledge that by transcribing the audiotapes provided to me by Orlando W. Lewis, that I will be exposed to confidential information about the research study and the research participants. In providing transcription services, at no time will I reveal or discuss any of the information of which I have been exposed.

In addition, at no time will I maintain copies of the electronic or paper documents generated. Further, upon completing each transcription, I agree to provide the electronic and paper documents to the researcher:

Orlando W. Lewis  
5536 Washington  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60516  
630-725-9150  
Email address: lewiso@hotmail.com

I understand that a breach of this agreement as described above could result in personal and professional harm to the research participants for which I will be held legally responsible.

Transcriptionist's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ -  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Interview Questions

- 1) What barriers in the work place have you encountered while advancing in your career in higher education?
- 2) What do you perceive are the work place barriers you may encounter that hinder you from advancement to the executive level of higher education?
- 3) What mechanisms do you utilize that navigate you through the inequities encountered in your career advancement in higher education?
- 4) What coping mechanisms, support systems, and models do you utilize that may assist you in overcoming the barriers to succeed?
- 5) How would the identified barriers affect you mentally, emotionally, and physically, as you seek opportunities to advance your career?
- 6) How and in what ways can you improve yourself to navigate and overcome the barriers that you have identified to advance in the field of higher education administration?