When Being Black Isn't Enough: Experiences and Persistence Strategies of Six African American Administrators at a PWI

by

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Abstract

This phenomenological study explored the experiences and persistence strategies of African American administrators at Broussard University, a pseudonym given to a predominantly White university located in the southeastern portion of United States. Through the use of phenomenological methods a purposeful sample of six full time African American administrators from various units across Broussard University's campus were selected and interviewed extensively. The study revealed invariant themes that emerged from analysis of interview transcripts to explain the phenomenon of minority experiences and persistence in a predominantly White institution. More specifically, the study addresses the strategies used by African American administrators to persist in their leadership capacity as members of an underrepresented group. By exploring the particular experiences of African American administrators, this study also sought to develop and test a theoretical model for minority persistence strategies within majority homogenous institutional structures.

The conceptual framework that guided this inquiry focused on variables that influence the persistence strategies used by minority leaders. Specifically the study explores the experiences of African American administrators working at a predominantly White institution as suggested from a review of literature. Those variables were identified from within four areas in the education literature: (a) social dominance theory, (b) organizational socialization, (c) the role of critical race theory and whiteness as property, and (d) the role of race, culture, identity, and gender on career dynamics.

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To my family and friends…

I have spent many years loving you from afar for the pursuit of my education. In the mean time, I have missed so much. While you celebrated accomplishments, the birth of children, and general noteworthy moments in life, I was away navigating my education. I have studied and worked my way through a lot of your lives. I could not be "there" for special moments or just to hang out, yet you have understood. You never judged me. Your patience with me has inspired me to continue on. Please accept this final degree as evidence that my time away from you was not in vain.

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And finally, to my God…

I will crumble into a million pieces the moment you withdraw your grace, mercy, and love from me. There were moments I just knew that I would not make it. I have doubted many

times and You told me to keep the faith. I have done so and you have kept Your promise of seeing me through to the end. Therefore, as I do with myself and all of my daily problems and prayers, I too place this degree on the altar for it is Yours. As always, You command and I will follow.

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List of Abbreviations

CRT   Critical Race Theory

Ed.D   Educational Doctorate

GTA   Graduate Teaching Assistant

HBCU   Historically Black College and University

HWI   Historically White Institution

IPEDS   Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

IRB   Institutional Review Board

LM   Legitimized Myth

NCES   National Center for Educational Statistics

PhD   Doctor of Philosophy

PWI   Predominantly White Institution

SDO   Social Dominance Orientation

SDT   Social Dominance Theory

U.S.   United States

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Persistence (n.):

Continued existence or occurrence.

(persistence. 2010. In *Dictionary.com Online Dictionary*. Retrieved August 17, 2010 from

http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/persistence)

Strategy (n.):

a plan, method, or series of maneuvers or stratagems forobtaining a specific goal or result

(strategy. 2010. In *Dictionary.com Online Dictionary*. Retrieved August 17, 2010 from

http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/strategy)

In 1965, Caplow and McGee wrote, "Discrimination on the basis of race appears to be

nearly absolute (in the academe). No major university in the United States has more than a token

representation of Negroes on its faculty, and these tend to be rather specialized persons who are

filled in one way or another for such a role…" (p. 194). When Caplow and McGee made their

observation, the majority of African American faculty and administrators were at historically

Black colleges or universities (Rafky, 1972; Moore & Wagstaff, 1974). Later, in 1983, Menges

and Exum (1983) noted that the existence of African American faculty and administrators at

predominantly White institutions (PWIs) was so rare during the early twentieth century that they

could be individually identified. Yet, 20 years after Menges and Exum's observation, there is

still a scarcity of African American administrators on predominantly White college campuses

across the United States. For some of today's key university stakeholders, the lack of

representation for African Americans and other administrators of color raises question about the institutional commitment to diversity, particularly at historically White institutions (Cabrera et al., 1999; Holmes et al., 2000; Jackson & Rosas, 1999). In response, many collegiate institutions have attempted to use "quick fixes" and most have made little to no progress in making diversity a reality (Jackson, 2000).

Prior to the 1960s it was understood that the small number of African American faculty and administrators represented in higher education at PWIs was most likely attributed to deliberate exclusionary practices (Jackson, 1991). Between the years of 1980 and 1998 there was little if any change in the status of administrators of color (Chenoweth, 1988; Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991). Further, when compared to their White counterparts, African Americans have made little progress in closing the professional achievement gap. Harvey (1999) and Holmes (2004) noted that African Americans represented only 8.9% of full-time administrators in higher education, while their White counterparts comprised 85.9%. The most recent report from the National Center of Education Statistics (2009) indicated that African Americans represent 21,047 or 9.67% of 217,518 executive, managerial, and administrative staff in degree granting U.S. college institutions in fall of 2007.

Statement of the Problem

Over the past three decades a considerable amount of scholarship has been generated about the status of African Americans in higher education (Holmes, 2004). Yet there is a paucity of research that focuses specifically on the career development experiences and persistence strategies of African Americans administrators in higher education. Comparatively, studies investigating the disproportionate status of African Americans in higher education have usually been directed towards the retention of students and faculty (Holmes, 2004; Jackson, 2001; 2002;

Perna, Gerald, Baum, & Milem, 2007). Research focused on African American administrators is either limited to student affairs practitioners (Holmes, 2004; Jackson, 2000; Watson, 2001) or to administrative roles directly related to the diversity mission of the institution—such as multicultural affairs (Rolle, Davies, & Banning, 2000). A closer examination of existing research suggests that few studies disaggregate administrators of color groups into individual ethnic groups to determine just how and why they persist in higher education (Holmes, 2004). Further, little is known about what happens to African American administrators once they reach executive-level administrative positions (Jackson, 2004). Consequently, there is a gap in literature regarding African American access, persistence, and departure at the administration level of higher education.

There is some evidence to suggest that there is a long-standing connection between historical ideologies of injustice and higher education access, equal opportunity, and career mobility related to people of color (Holmes, 1999; 2003). The literature also suggests that this connection lingers in such a way that race related issues make equity, mutual respect, and full participation in all areas of the academy difficult for African Americans and other administrators of color to achieve (Holmes, 1999; 2003; Turner & Myers, 2000). As Collins (1990) and Leedy (1997) contend, an individual's reality is shaped within a cultural, social, political, and economic landscape that influences how they perceive themselves as well as the experiences and events that occur to shape their reality. In recent years, educational scholars have used critical race theory (CRT) as a lens to explore the experiences of people of color in connection with educational institutions (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Gillborn, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) — especially in regards to inequity. Critical race theorists tend to agree that barriers to access and opportunity exist

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among people of color because race is a significant factor in determining inequity in a U.S. society that is based on property rights (Bell, 1995; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, & Tate, 1995). According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), in examining the intersection of race and property, critical race theory becomes an analytical tool through which we can understand social inequity. In this study the concept of CRT was used as a means of examining the intersection between race and representation disparities for African American administrators persisting at a PWI.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which minorities, specifically African American administrators, persist at a predominantly White university as they negotiated and navigated their way through a White dominated institutional culture using their persistence strategies. The study is based on the premise that the process of persistence for African American administrators is demarcated by a culture of whiteness in which they function as a nonwhite minority group. Therefore, the focus of this research is aimed towards understanding if and how the persistence strategies used by African American administrators are influenced by their knowledge of being a minority on campus in race and status. In this study, phenomenology was used as a qualitative method to better understand the lived experiences of African American administrators and their persistence strategies at a PWI. Semi structured interviews and a transcendental tradition proposed by Moustakas (1994) were used to explore and create narratives from the participants' experiences within the academy. The data were structured by the participants' descriptions of their experiences and the researcher's interpretation of those descriptions to identify patterns from the literature that applied to the participants and to reveal new relationships. The study also used critical race theory as an analytical tool to investigate

these categories and narratives in order to gain a better understanding of African American perceptions as minorities in a leadership position within a PWI. The researcher chose university administrators as a sample because of the degree of influence administrators holds over institutional policy and culture.

Research Questions

Four research questions were posed in this study.

1. What strategies do African American administrators use to persist at their PWI?

2. What are the perceptions of African American administrators regarding their own survival at a PWI?

3. To what extent does an African American administrators' understanding of working as a minority within a PWI culture influence their persistence strategies?

4. What actions can PWIs and already present African American administrators take to increase the persistence of African American administrators at the university level?

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Significance of the Study

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Diversity at all administration leadership levels is needed in order to service the needs of a growing multicultural student population (Jackson, 2004; Watson et al., 2002). In examining the experiences of African American administrators who continue to persist at a predominantly White institution, more intuitiveness is offered on the factors that could attribute to minority recruitment, retention, policy formation, and ultimately minority career mobility and success. Also, the illustration of the participating administrators' experiences into a body of literature will better prepare other African Americans wishing to pursue an administrator path for the challenges that could possibly lie ahead. In explaining the practices of African American

administrators, this study aims to provide information to increase an understanding of how minority persistence strategies are developed in positions of power.

Significance to Leadership

This study is significant given its focus and the potential to enhance existing knowledge about the persistence of African Americans administrators in PWI settings. Further, by exploring the experiences of a particular group, "lessons learned" can provide practical examples and strategies for existing and aspiring African American administrators. The findings of the study presented explanations of African American persistence strategies and why African Americans are underrepresented at the administration level from the viewpoint of those who have experienced the phenomenon of persisting as a minority in a predominantly White institutional culture. The findings of this study will contribute to the discussion on ways to understand and increase the recruitment and retention of African American administrators, specifically at PWIs. As long as African Americans remain underrepresented in PWI administration, they will not be able to play a significant role in developing policies to influence institutional change. Moreover, due to the absence of scholarship on this topic, it is likely that the limited presence of African Americans administrators will continue to be marked by underrepresentation and entry in the field of university administration at PWIs.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is synthesized from four areas of literature: (a) social dominance theory, (b) organizational socialization, (c) the role of race, culture, identity, and gender in career dynamics, and (d) critical race theory and education.

Social Dominance Theory

An examination of minority group experiences on PWIs must by default consider how such groups negotiate and navigate their way through an institutional culture that has traditionally benefitted White males. Also, certain elements of intergroup relations, specifically social dominance theory, must be considered. According to social dominance theorists, there is a general human tendency to form and maintain *group-based social hierarchies* in which it is argued — whether predicated upon ethnicity, class, caste, or any other social designation — can be observed within the modern human society (Haley & Sidanius, 2005). Additionally, social dominance theory posits that one or a small number of dominant groups exist at the top of the social structure and at least one subordinate group at the bottom. Whereas members of dominant groups enjoy a disproportionate share of positive social value (i.e. wealth, status, and power), members of subordinate groups are forced to endure a disproportionate share of negative social value such as poverty, powerlessness, and lack of prestige (Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz, & Frederico, 1999).

In the context of this study, group-based social hierarchy refers to an individual's relative position in life as a function of his or her membership in an ascribed and socially constructed group such as race, gender, age cohort, religion, lineage, or social class. Individual-based hierarchy suggests that one's relative station in life is primarily the result of his or her own effort, talent, intelligence, creativity, virtue, or cunning. However, group-based social hierarchy implies that one's talents are not the primary reason for their status; instead one's position is relegated to the status and power of the groups to which they belong (Sidanius et. al, 1999).

In this study, social dominance theory represents how psychological and sociological perspectives are integrated into group socialized hierarchies within an institution. Further, the

social dominance theoretical model illustrates the complexities of group interactions with regard to status and privilege within institutions. Both are essential when examining the persistence of African American administrators within an organizational culture that is often framed by historical and social patterns that are both White and male (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). Also, when examining the position of administrator as one of power and privilege, social dominance theory helps to better explicate the social arrangements that contribute to the secured order of power and privilege (McIntosh, 1990; Neito, 2005) and status quo of exclusivity. Furthermore, social dominance theory illustrates a larger depiction — even among intergroup conflicts — of how groups cooperate and function in the maintenance of group-based social hierarchies that perpetuate the production of broad social ideologies and operations of social institutions (Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz, & Frederico, 1999). Social dominance theory aids in determining the contextual clues necessary for interpreting the influential group dynamics of status and power in culture as it relates to the individual existing within the group-based hierarchies.

Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization is the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to function within a particular organization. Traditionally, organizational socialization describes learning on the part of the individual adjusting to a new or changing role within an organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). However, in this inquiry, organizational socialization is used to describe already existing members. Chao, O'Leary, Wolf, Klein, and Gardner (1994) generated six dimensions of organizational socialization: (a) performance proficiency — the extent to which the individual has learned the tasks involved on the job; (b) people — establishing successful and satisfying work relationships with organizational members; (c) politics — one's success in gaining information regarding formal

and informal work relationships and power structures in the organization; (d) language — one's knowledge of the profession's technical language in acronyms, slang, and various jargon unique to the organization; (e) organizational goals and values — one's understanding of rules and principles that work toward maintaining the organization's integrity; and (f) history — the transmission of the organization's traditions, customs, myths, and rituals to transmit cultural knowledge and perpetuate a particular type of organizational member. The conceptualization of these six dimensions provides a basis for specifying the content representing persistence strategies as outcomes in the organizational socialization process. Furthermore, these six dimensions expound upon organizational socialization as a multidimensional and relatively independent concept that aides understanding of the various relationships between experience and one's ability to persist. Therefore, Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner assert:

> Individuals who are well socialized in organizational politics may be more promotable than those who are not socialized in politics, whereas individuals who are well socialized with people in the organization may not increase their promotion chances because of this particular socialization. Furthermore, if an individual is about equal in all content areas but one, a deficiency in that area may highlight a specific problem. Thus, an individual may be able to perform the job and get along with others in the organization, but failure to learn about organizational goals and values could put a cap on that individual's career development. The identification of different content areas acknowledges the changing importance each may have for the individual's career (p. 731).

Race, Culture, Identity, and Career Development

In order to understand the roles, statuses, and experiences of African American administrators in a predominantly White institution, it is also important to understand how

culture and group identity influences career development. The influence of race is an important variable in the study of career development of minority groups (Cox, 1993; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989) because race is embedded in culture. Therefore, before one can understand the impact of race, the culture surrounding it must be defined and contextualized.

Traditionally culture has been assumed to be an expression of monolithic ethnic/racial communities, through symbols such as art, food, music, clothing, religion, or other outward forms (Akinyela, 1992). Thus, the traditional view leads one to believe that culture operates under the assumption of being static, unitary, essentialist, and all encompassing (Yon, 2000). Alfred (2000) argues that culture is not static; it is a socially and contextually fluid construct that changes as situations change. Further, culture is continuously reconstructed and negotiated due to varying places and contexts (Yon, 2000). Therefore, in this inquiry, culture and race cannot be properly understood without simultaneous exploration of both concepts (Alfred, 2000; Asante, 1987; Collins, 1990; Schiele, 1994). In this study, culture refers to the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them (Lederach, 1995). Further, one asserts that as social realities change, the culture and how an individual indentifies self changes as well. Consequently, as individual identities shift so do certain *group identities* in varying contexts. Therefore, in explanation, a study of minority career development should take into account the concept of group identity and its influence on the individual's emerging career.

Cox (1993) defines group identity as "a personal affiliation with other people with whom one shares certain things in common" (p. 43). According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), the personal affiliation of group identity plays a role in individual behavior. For instance, the African American group identity has been shaped by the unique history of slavery and the rigid

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racial segregation and discrimination practices that resulted in the Civil Rights Movement. These experiences have contributed to a group identity and individual identity that is characterized by feelings of community, similarity, and common purpose (Schiele, 1994). However, an individual's affiliation results from the value and significance attached to their membership (Brewer & Miller, 1984). Because both individual and group identities are attached to human experiences and a sense of belonging, the two are subject to change with new contexts and situations depending on its significance and value.

Past scholars have used the influences of race, identity, and culture to understand minority career development. Their previous attempts to do so have resulted in studies that simply articulate the negative effects of discrimination or early socialization (Brown, 1997; Cohn, 1997; Peterson, 1997). Furthermore, few have proposed advanced models to use in examining career development. Cohn (1997), for example, examines the effects of racial and ethnic discrimination on the career development experiences of people of color. Her findings suggest that race and culture influences the learning experiences to which people are exposed. Further, she finds that early discrimination, particularly in school, results in low self-concept and self-doubt in the participants' perception of their performance abilities in certain career roles.

Another study by Johnson-Bailey and Tisdell (1998) examined the issues of women's career development and implies that stereotypical images of women of color further complicate their career endeavors. More importantly, the negative images serve as means of denying the operation of privilege and making the dominant group more favorable. Akinyela (1992) attributes these cultural phenomena to the asymmetrical power relations and tension between and within groups. He further contends that cultures are constructed in society to compete for power and privilege.

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The cultural perspective proposed in this study serves to integrate the psychological and sociological perspectives of career development in organizations. The objective of one's career is represented through their competencies, roles, expectations, and power in negotiating and managing expectations as defined by the institutional and societal cultures (Schein, 1984). Because the careers of African American administrators in this study are developed within the milieu of a PWI culture that labels them as the minority and consequently a non-privileged group, it becomes important to understand how those statuses influences their career development. Further, it is germane to contextualizing the oppressive system of whiteness and privilege as entailed in critical race theory.

Critical Race Theory and Education

As an analytical tool CRT can provide a means of lending voice to underrepresented groups in an attempt to uncover the racism embedded within various American social structures and practices (Bell, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Lynn, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) while also challenging any assumed neutral ideologies of an institution that benefits Whites while seemingly excluding nonwhites (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1988, 1993). According to Delgado (1995), critical race theory arose in the 1970s as a result of the work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman who was both distressed over the slow pace of racial reform in the U.S. that resulted from the Civil Rights Movement. Together, they believed that the methods of filing amicus briefs, conducting protests and marches, and appealing to the moral sensibilities of decent citizens were no longer producing the gains of previous efforts.

Since its origination in the 1970s from the work of legal scholars, the influence of CRT has extended into a variety of disciplines. While there are differences in scholars' thinking about CRT, Delgado (1995) and Howard- Hamilton (2003) argue that there are shared similarities: (a)

the assumption that racism is not just individual acts but is a contagious, deeply ingrained, cultural and psychological way of life in America; (b) the need for a reinterpretation of civil-rights laws because some of the laws are often undermined before fulfilling their promise; (c) traditional claims of legal neutrality, objectivity, color-blindness, and meritocracy are camouflaged for the self-interest of the dominant culture in America and need to be challenged; (d) the need for an insistence on the reformulation of legal doctrine and subjectivity to reflect the perspectives of those who have been victimized by racism and experienced it firsthand; and (e) stories of first-person accounts should be used.

In 1995, CRT was introduced into education by Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate. Taking in their seminal article, *'Towards a Critical Race Theory in Education*, Ladson-Billings and Tate constructed a CRT argument based on three central propositions of social inequity: (a) Race is a continuously significant factor in determining inequity in the United States, (b) the United States' society is based on property rights, and (c) the intersection of property and race creates an analytical tool through which we can better understand social inequity.

According to Solórzano and Yosso (2000) critical race theory in education is a set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the subordination of people of color. In this case, racial homogeneity in the academy is not viewed as a coincidence in history. It is illustrated as a systematic annihilation of people of color at every step of the educational pipeline from kindergarten to graduate school (Lynn, 2004) and beyond. As a tool, CRT questions the role, processes, and structures of schools in maintaining racial, ethnic, and gender subordination (Lynn, 1999). Furthermore, CRT addresses and challenges the ideas that

the American educational system operates to "ensure objective, meritocracy, neutrality, and equal opportunity" (Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Solórzano, 1997). This notion has failed in eliminating social, economic and political disparities between races. According to Ladson-Billings (1998), the type of racism in education is so complex that even when people recognize its failures to make sense, they continue to employ and deploy it (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

The purpose of using CRT is to contextualize and analyze the various experiences of the African American administrators participating in this study. Critical race theories advocate that minority shared experiences provide people of color with a "unique voice" to inform through their narratives (Bell, 1994; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). Narratives are used primarily in CRT because they add the contextual contours to the seeming "objectivity" of the positivist perspective (Ladson-Billings, 1998). There are three reasons for representing scholarly ideas in this manner: (a) much of reality is socially constructed; (b) through stories, members of minority groups are provided a vehicle for psychic self-preservation; and (c) exchanging stories from the teller to the listener can help overcome ethnocentrism (Delgado, 1989). Delgado (1989) also notes that most oppression does not seem like oppression to the perpetrator. Instead, the dominant group justifies their position by presenting stock stories that constructs reality in such a way that it legitimizes their privilege. Stories by people of color can counter the stories of the oppressor as well as illustrate a more comprehensible picture of how oppression functions within an institution.

In summary, to better understand how African American administrators navigate and negotiate their way through a predominantly White institution, researchers must consider how culture, identity, and race influence and shape persistence strategies. The theoretical framework for this study is based on the view that institutions of higher education are unique organizational

cultures (Clark, 1987; Masland, 1985; Peterson & Spencer, 1990; Rhoads & Tierney, 1992) and the administrators are culture bearers who shape and are influenced by institutional values and beliefs (Austin, 1990; Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Further, in addition to expounding upon career development, the added elements of culture and critical race theory helps to understand the structure of racism and exclusivity as deemed through group hierarchies. In turn, the internalization of culture and the response presents a triadic relationship that illustrates how some ethnic minorities continue to persist within a predominantly White institution.

The synthesis of several theoretical concepts and a literature review has led to the creation of a theoretical model to be tested in this study. The proposed conceptual model is depicted visually Figure 1. It illustrates an ongoing cyclical process that takes place between African American administrators and their predominantly White institutional workplace as dictated by experience. The conceptual model suggests that there is a reciprocal interplay between personal factors and the formal and informal experiences in institutional cultures that shapes an individual's persistence strategies. In this proposed model, there are several key influential factors: (a) institutional environment, (b) individual characteristics, (c) institutional communication, (d) the integration and observation, and (e) the persistence strategy (ies) outcome. A broad function of the conceptual framework begins with the individual who encounters the integration and observation process which describes information gained through either direct interaction or observation with the environment. The knowledge gain is then used to facilitate institutional communication (information access, decision making ability, available resources, and etcetera) and to derive persistence strategies. Due to the nature of cultural contexts changing, the cycle is theorized to be a continuous two-way exchange of information

from various interactions. Lastly, all factors are influenced by institutional environment –which

serves as a foundation- where all interactions take place.
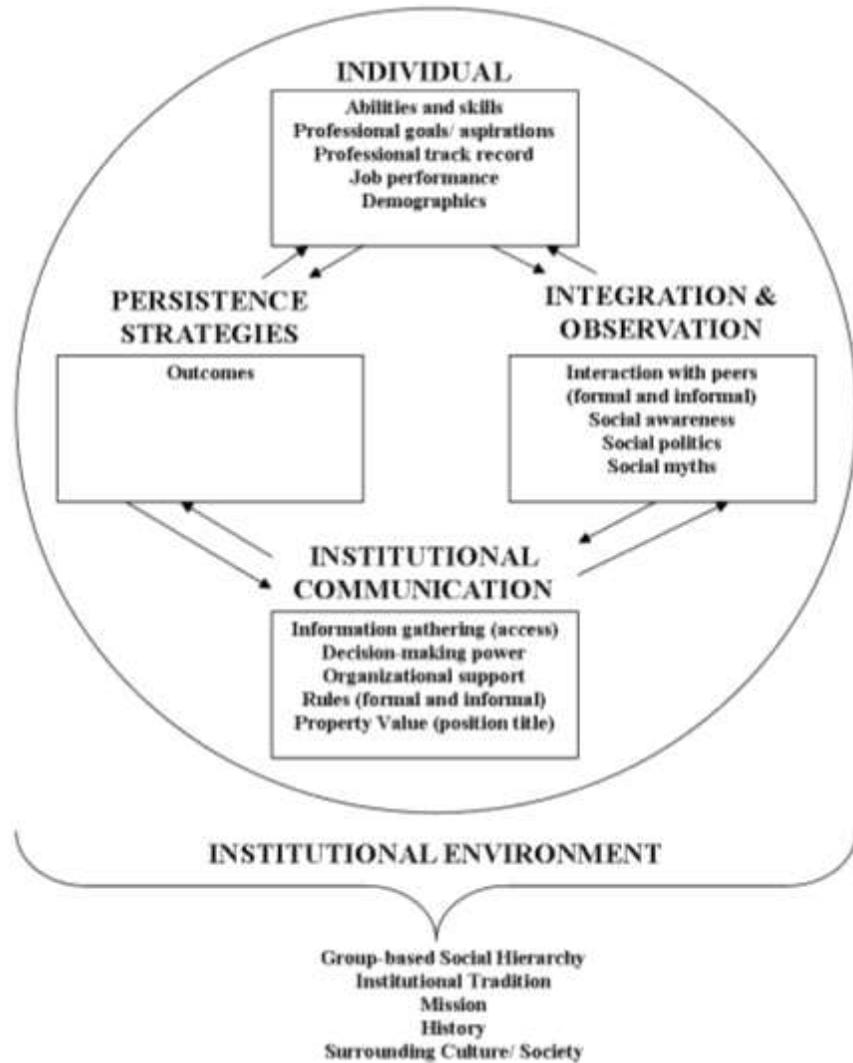
Figure 1 Proposed Model of Minority Persistence Strategies

In more detail, the conceptual framework initiates with the individual who — with

various personal and professional characteristics — first observes and participates in the

socialization process through integration and observation. This entry engages the individual in

various social encounters that make them aware of the politics, rules, norms, regulations, and

social myths. Further, their social interactions may impact their institutional dialogue in which

decisions are made and values are further defined by power and resource allocation. Judging

from the interaction, this model illustrates that the outcome is a lesson learned in persistence strategies or a more adept awareness that either legitimizes or debunks the social myth surrounding them. Thus, the cycle begins again, this time with new found information that influences all processes as they engage them. In each case, it is theorized that an individual's persistence strategy is either strengthened or weakened by the experiences that they have observed and internalized.

Assumptions

In conducting this study, the researcher assumed the participants would answer queries honestly because they willingly volunteered to participate in the study. All participants were notified that their identities would remain anonymous and all personal identifiers removed. It was also assumed that their experiences would reverberate with other African Americans in similar situations or with those desiring to obtain their position. A theoretical model was generated from the chapter two literature review and it is assumed that the findings of this study will help to develop the produced model.

Scope, Limitations, Researcher Role, and Delimitations

The scope of this study included qualitative data collected for this phenomenological study. The participants in this study were mid to high level university administrators from various departments –in academic, administrative, and student affairs- at Broussard University. The researcher conducted extensive in-depth one-on-one interviews with each participant. A phenomenological approach provided a method for analyzing the data collected to reveal emerging themes from and among participants.

In a qualitative study, the researcher is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data. Therefore it is important to note that the researcher -as a human instrument- is a

limitation simply by the fact of being human. Mistakes can be made, opportunities missed, and personal biases can interfere (Merriam, 2001). In the phenomenological approach, prejudgments about what is considered to be "real" are removed. All prejudgments are set aside by bracketing experiences and relying on intuition, imagination, and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experience (Creswell, 1998). However, it is also important to note that the findings of the study could be subject to multiple interpretations. Due to the nature of the questions posed in this study, the intended focus group for data collection proved not to be feasible because the small number of African American administrators and their interactions could compromise their identities. Multiple data sources were limited because the study was narrowly tailored to the participants' perspectives only. Also, a review of public documents at Broussard University produced no documents for analysis in this study. Therefore, the researcher depended on gathering rich description from extensive in depth questioning for data collection.

As an outsider, African American researcher, I have become intimately familiar with the details of Broussard University and their African American administrators. Care was taken on the part of the researcher to minimize any biases or preconceived ideas when interpreting the data. In a qualitative study, the findings could be subject to other interpretations. Strategies were used to minimize possible biases including: (a) having another trained qualitative researcher analyzes the data (joint analysis), (b) member checking with the study's participants, and (c) extensive interviews with the participants for data saturation.

This study sought to explain the experiences of all African American administrators at one particular predominantly White institution of higher education. The sampling was purposeful, therefore, in accessing this information it is important to note that the examined academic experiences of the African Americans participating in this study pertain to them alone.

Further, while their narratives may provide insight into the workplace experiences of other African American administrators in similar settings, they should not be thought to represent or explain the experiences of all African American administrators in predominantly White institutions. Each institution is different in tradition, history, culture, and location.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of terms and concepts are used throughout the course of the study. Understanding their meaning (as it applies) helps to clarify their relevance to this study.

Critical Race Theory: A tool that aims to provide a voice to the underrepresented groups as a means to uncover the racism embedded within various American social structures and practices (Bell, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Lynn, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) while at the same time, challenging an assumed neutral ideologies of an institution that benefits Whites while excluding nonwhites (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1988, 1993).

Culture: The shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them (Lederach, 1995).

Deculturalization: An educational process in which a culture foregoes their own identity and replaces it with that of a new culture (Spring, 2006). The educational process that takes place within this study comes in the form of understanding and learning social rules and norms.

Group identity: A personal affiliation with other people with whom one shares certain things in common (Cox, 1993).

Group-based social hierarchies: One or a small number of dominant groups exist at the top of the social structure and at least one subordinate group at the bottom. Whereas members of dominant groups enjoy a disproportionate share of positive social value (i.e. wealth, status, and power), and members of the subordinate groups are forced to endure a disproportionate share of

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negative social value such as poverty, powerlessness, and lack of prestige (Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz, & Frederico, 1999).

Individual-based hierarchy: One's relative station in life is primarily the result of his or her own effort, talent, intelligence, creativity, virtue, or cunning

Institutional culture: The surrounding morals and values of society as reflected within organizational structure(s)

Persistence Strategies: Methods an individual takes in order to maintain or promote their current status within an atmosphere of group competition.

Phenomenology: A research methodological procedure that focuses on "descriptions of how people experiences and how they perceive their experience of the phenomena understudy" (Glesne, 1999).

Social Dominance Theory: A social psychological theory of group conflict which describes human society as consisting of oppressive group-based hierarchical structures based on ethnicity, religion, nationality, and so on. These human social hierarchies consist of a hegemonic group at the top where more powerful social roles are increasingly likely to be occupied by a hegemonic group member and less powerful and influential roles for non-members (Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz, & Frederico, 1999).

University Administrator: The administration of higher education are broken down into three specialty areas: academic affairs (president, academic deans, vice president or provost of research), student affairs (vice president of student affairs, dean of students, and director of financial aid), and administrative affairs (vice president of finance, director of alumni affairs, and director of computer services) (Moore & Sagaria, 1982; Sagaria, 1988). In the context of this

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study, the term administrator refers to a person in a managerial or policy-making capacity that may have a line or staff function (Jackson, 2004).

White privilege: A set of advantages enjoyed by White people beyond those commonly experienced by non-white people in the same social, political, and economic spaces (Fields & Pence, 1999). In this study it is important to differentiate white privilege from racism or prejudice because a person who may benefit from white privilege is not necessarily racist or prejudiced and may be indeed unaware of having any privileges reserved only for Whites.

Whiteness: social construct that justifies discrimination against non-whites in an effort to maintain white dominance upon a multicultural society

Whiteness as Property: Defines social relations in the broader sense of "encompassed jobs, entitlements, occupational licenses, contracts, subsidies, and indeed a whole host of intangibles that are the product of labor, time, and creativity, such as intellectual property, business goodwill, and enhanced earning potential from graduate degrees" (Harris, 1993). Those granted with whiteness as property enjoy the same privileges and benefits that are germane to owning tangible and legal property such as the right to disposition, use and enjoyment, right to exclude, and for reputation and status.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The act of institution is an act of magic… An act of communication, but of a particular kind: it signifies to someone what his identity is, but in a way that both expresses it to him and imposes it on him by expressing it in front of everyone and thus informing him in an authoritative manner of what he is and what he must be. This is also one of the functions of the act of institution: to discourage permanently any attempt to cross the line, to transgress, desert, or quit (Fine, 1996).

The current higher education institutional landscape in America caters to a diverse population of students, faculty, staff, and administrators. As institutions of higher learning, colleges and universities are both culture and communities operating within a system united by shared values, languages, and customs reflecting those of the dominant culture (Owens, 2003). Those who lead them play a vital role in shaping the culture of these institutions through decision making, personnel practices, and their own personal leadership styles (Jackson, 2001). Therefore, it is a primary concern for institutions of higher education to reflect the diversity found in their general population through institutional leadership. Although many campuses articulate the value of racial diversity in mission statements and recruitment plans, there is often insufficient action to match the words of inclusiveness and multiculturalism (Guillory, 2001) on all levels. The degree of contradiction between words and actions in regards to diversity has been a concern to many colleges, universities, governing boards, and the accrediting agencies (Jackson, 2001; 2002).

This study explores the experiences that African American administrators working as minorities within a predominantly white college and the persistence strategies they employ to navigate their careers and maintain sustainability. In the following sections, the researcher aims to expand the scant body of literature on this subject by examining four areas that are critical to this research. Included in these sections are: a brief overview of the literature on African American administrators at PWIs, African American administrator retention, elements of social dominance theory — specifically the importance of socialization and legitimating myths; the role of culture and identity on career development; and critical race theory. However, before these areas can be expounded upon, the researcher believes that is essential to provide a brief historical overview of the status of African Americans and higher education. This section contextualizes African American academic life within an institutional culture traditionally designed for the benefits of White males (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Gregory, 1995; Wilson, 1989). This information frames the institutional landscape of higher education as it applies to nonwhite cultures, specifically African Americans.

Historical Context of African Americans and American Education

A major part of the educational history within the U.S. is centered on ensuring the maintenance of racial hierarchy and domination of a Protestant Anglo-American culture among impending cultures. From colonial times to the present, educators have preached equality of opportunity and good citizenship while engaging in acts of racial segregation, cultural genocide, and other acts of discrimination against nonwhites (Spring, 2005). For those considered nonwhite, Protestant Anglo-American domination meant *deculturalization.* Deculturalization is an educational process in which a culture foregoes its identity and replaces it with that of a new culture (Spring, 2006). The philosophical underlining for deculturalization is to ensure that

dominated cultures embrace rather than resist subjugation under the guise of schooling. For schools in the U.S., deculturalization has been used in varying forms in attempts to eradicate the cultures of Native Americans, African Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and immigrants from Ireland, southern and Eastern Europe, and Asia (Spring 1994, 2005). The result was the acceptance of a long term second-class citizenship.

For some African Americans, being relegated to a status of second-class citizenship would later result in various legal oppositions. African Americans began challenging the ethos of White domination on the basis of the U.S. Constitution. In part, African Americans were not just resisting assimilation; they were fighting for their right to equally persist within society. For instance, the 1868 ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment provided equal opportunity to citizens (involuntary Africans and native-born African Americans). However, it would soon be called to interpretation in a courtroom decision to determine the extent of equality in legal segregation, as noted in the 1896 landmark case of *Plessy v. Ferguson.* Homer Plessy, who considered himself "one-eighth black and seven-eighths white," rode in a railroad car specified for Whites only. Under Louisiana state law, Plessy was classified as African American and was thus required to sit in the "colored" car. Plessy refused and was arrested. He argued that his 13th and 14th Amendment rights were violated (Tushnet, 2008). The court later decided against Plessy, stating that segregation was permissible if both entities were of equal nature and provided the same service — *separate but equal*. The significance of the ruling not only granted Whites the ability to keep one particular institution separated, the ruling gave way to further separations, especially within educational institutions (Fleming, Gill, & Swinton, 1978; Preer, 1982; Spring, 2005). The *Plessy* decision also restricted African Americans from participating in choice occupations in all areas of society (Holmes, 2004). Fleming et al. (1978) noted that White

institutions all virtually refused to hire African American faculty or administrators. As a result,

African Americans mostly either attended private *Negro Colleges* or the public colleges for

African Americans established after the passage of the Morril Act of 1890 (Preer, 1982). The

Plessy decision stood unchallenged for nearly 50 years as precedent to deny African Americans

and other racial minorities access and opportunities across the U.S.

The *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (comprised of four state cases

consolidated into one) successfully challenged previously prohibited equal access and

opportunities for African Americans on a larger scale. The plaintiffs of the 1951 class action

lawsuit argued that the Topeka Board of Education separation of public schools for African

American and White children denied African American children equal educational opportunities

(Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). Further, schools reserved for African Americans provided inferior

accommodations, services, and less qualified teachers (Kluger, 1977). The 1954 ruling

demanded an immediate change to old segregation laws, especially in public schools. As a

result, African Americans began applying to — what were then — all White colleges and

universities in significant numbers (Anderson, 1988; Fleming et al., 1978). Although the court's

ruling legitimized integration and opportunity, the actual pace of equality in academia moved at

a much slower pace — especially in the South.

As the stronghold and hierarchal racial supremacy of Jim Crow laws weakened in the

South, many Whites sought to protect their status by fighting back against African Americans

who exercised their new educational rights. For example, a movement known as "Massive

Resistance," contested the *Brown* ruling by choosing to close schools rather than desegregate

(Andrews, 1997; Payne, 2004). In 1963, Governor George Wallace of Alabama took part in

what became known as the "Stand in the Schoolhouse Door," in which he tried to prevent the

enrollment of two African American students by personally blocking the doorway to Foster Auditorium at the University of Alabama (Payne, 2004). In some cases, refusal to accept the *Brown* ruling escalated into violence. As a result, the U.S. government passed the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 granting de facto rights of admission to people of color at many institutions of higher education, especially those that are predominantly White (Green, 2001).

Another educational impetus for access to PWIs in particular came as a result of the affirmative action executive orders backed by the federal government. All employers, including institutions of higher education, who received federal contracts of at least $50,000 and 50 employees were required to end discrimination based on race, creed, national origin, or sex and were required to develop affirmative action programs to ensure that all groups of people were hired at a rate their availability in the workforce would suggest (Fleming, et al., 1978). In 1971, Executive Order 11246 united affirmative action mandates to higher educational institutions to provide broad-based access to all areas of the academy for African Americans and other minority groups (Washington & Harvey, 1989). However, access through affirmative action did not always translate into acceptance by the predominantly White institutional culture. As Kawewe (1997) argues, "Colleges and universities devised sophisticated internal mechanisms to subvert affirmative action in recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion to the advantage of the privileged gender and race that dominate the academy" (p. 264). According to the United States Labor Department, although affirmative action has benefitted all ethnic groups, the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action are White women (Hamilton, 1992). Also, a study conducted in 1995 on university faculty hiring practices revealed that in many instances, once a minority hiring goal was met, departments stopped seeking minority applicants. In some cases institutions have ceased recruiting minorities (e.g., by pulling their ads from minority publications)

regardless of the number of vacancies that occurred from then on (Wilson, 1995). Thus it appears that institutions not only adjusted to the pressures of affirmative action, but used it as another tool to maintain White privilege in higher education.

As the federal government became involved in higher education during the 1970s, there have been improvements in minority participation (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). However, many of the executive orders ratified in the mid 1960s and early 1970s were nullified during the Reagan administration in the 1980s (Washington & Harvey, 1989). Furthermore, Washington and Harvey (1989) contend that historically White institutions have regressed in their efforts to retain African Americans and other people of color in all areas of the academy. In some states, such as California and Texas, the institutions' reliance on affirmative action has been called into question and even suspended (McCutcheon & Lindsey, 2004).

In the 1990s, reports from national conferences, symposia, workshops, and research findings reveal that African Americans in all areas of the academy were exiting the academy as fast as they entered due to certain "-isms" against them (Holmes, 2004; Holmes, Ebbers, Robinson, & Mugenda, 2000; Phelps 1995). Further, when explored African Americans have cited inhospitable campus environments, isolation, alienation, marginalization, unrealistic role expectations, limited advancement opportunities, feelings of powerlessness, tokenism, and the lack of mentoring and sponsorship as reasons for leaving (Burgess, 1997; Gregory, 1995; Holmes, 1999; Moses, 1997; Phelps, 1995; Turner et al., 1999; Watson, 2001). Oliver and Davis (1994) also noted that the retention of African American administrators in predominantly White institutions (PWIs) is short-lived due to the personal harassment and indignity that they face in the discharge of normal duties. These findings are important because they reveal areas of needed improvement for the building of a culturally inclusive institutional climate.

It is against this historical background that this study is situated. Although, previous

research and historical context illustrates the actions that have resulted in the poor access and

retention of African American administrators, the content does not specifically examine how

African Americans — administrators— have persisted through the institution's "revolving

doors" (Jackson, 2001). Nor has this research made a connection as to how African Americans

conceptualize their status through their own sense of internalization as a degree of influence to

their persistence strategy as minority administrators negotiating and navigating their careers

within a PWI. The purpose of this study is to address those omissions by exploring the

experiences of six African American administrators at a PWI. More importantly, this study

explores the type of persistence strategies used by these administrators to navigate their White-

dominated culture in the academy.

Campus Life and Climate

Campus life and climate describes the degree to which African Americans and other

individuals of color are comfortable with the culture, habits, decisions, practices, and policies

that are part of the academic environment (Alfred, 2001; Turner, 2003). Terms such as

marginality, *alienation*, *isolation*, and *invisibility* are often used in the literature to describe the

campus climate for faculty and administrators of color as well as their experiences with

university life. Sadao (2003) describes the phenomenon of faculty and administrators of color at

a PWI as living in two worlds; meaning that some of these individuals feel a constant tension of

being pulled between their ethnic culture and the university culture. Many have developed

coping strategies as a result. Code switching is the ability to apply "parts of their separate value

systems to different situations as appropriate" (Sadao, 2003, p. 410). Unfortunately, navigating

two (or more) cultural frames of reference involves time and effort that can tax the psyche and

lead to occupational stress (Stanley 2006, p. 7). According to King and Watts (2004), African American faculty members face a myriad of challenges within the predominately White institutional setting. Within the departmental/ institutional culture, the message, "Go along to get along," is conveyed, yet this behavior "requires such a degree of assimilation that African American faculty may find it intolerable. The alternate options are to assimilate or struggle to transform the culture so that it is less hostile for oneself and for future faculty of color" (King and Watts 2004, p. 118).

Studies have indicated that faculty of color experience higher levels of occupational stress than their White counterparts (Smith & Witt, 1996; King & Watts, 2004). People of color are "always in the spotlight" (Turner & Meyers, 2000) and perceive that they have to work twice as hard to be treated as equals (Laden & Hagedorn, 2000). Some are viewed as diversity experts, and despite their hesitancy to serve in that role they do so anyway so that the "diversity voice" does not get lost at the table (Stanley, 2006). Stanley (2006) also posits that:

Ironically, many are sought after when there is a specific call for diversity-to represent their group and to provide the diversity perspective. It is rare when they are sought after to serve on committees with much larger and what could be considered as more prestigious charges.

Institutional racism is usually entrenched in an institution's history as being systemic and habitual (Stanley, 2006). It is often subtle to the majority White culture and rarely acknowledged publicly. Many PWIs value diversity, but they often do not look beyond the surface level to ascertain how habitual policies and practices work to disadvantage certain social, racial, or cultural groups (Holmes, 2004; Jackson, 2004; Stanley, 2006). This is one of the key arguments (presumption of a race neutral institution) made in critical race theory.

African Americans Working in Predominantly White Academies

Jackson (2001) posits that the presence of African Americans in the administrative ranks of a college or a university speaks directly to the institution's degree of commitment to diversity. Therefore, an assessment of the dynamics of African American administrators at PWIs is essential to this study. The limited literature on African American administrators at PWIs tends to suggest that their presence is a late twentieth century phenomenon. Prior to the civil rights movement there were virtually no African Americans in the administrative workforce at PWIs. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were the only real available opportunity for African Americans to become administrators (Wilson, 1989). Only until after the civil rights movement was the demands and pressures of civil rights legislation, affirmative action regulations, and increased social consciousness did many PWIs attempt to increase African American representation at the administrative level (Wilson, 1989). Even then, African Americans were assigned to special positions dealing with minority relations. Typically, African Americans — as well as other people of color — entered into higher education institutions as directors of TRIO programs, affirmative action officers, director of minority student affairs, and so forth (Jackson, 2001). These positions do not carry the same status as other administrative positions because they are not mainstream administrator positions. Administrator positions are considered mainstream if those in them engage in activities such as defining criteria for the university curriculum, dealing with students' admission requirements, or defining and overseeing faculty qualifications. Calvert H. Smith (1980) would best illustrate this phenomenon in stating that African American administrators were given the responsibility, but they were not given the power and authority in the formal administrative structure to commensurate with that responsibility. Instead, in most situations, their positions –regardless of the job description or

title- was to troubleshoot with African American students, pacify the African American community, and/or to demonstrate that the hiring institution was an equal opportunity employer (Smith, 1980).

It also appears that people of color rarely get considered for top-level positions such as president or provost (Jackson, 2001). Those who were able to obtain administrative positions at PWIs are often seen as high achievers, but also as *tokens* (Lindsay, 1997). These individual African Americans are often perceived as representatives of their racial group or symbols rather than individuals. Often, these individuals were encouraged to behave in stereotypical ways of their group –which was used to justify the exploitation and discrimination against them (Fontaine & Greenlee, 1993).

Statistics taken from the National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), indicates that there were a total of 217,518 executive administrative positions filled in 2007. Of those, 173,948 (nearly 80%) were filled by Whites, leaving the remaining 20% for all other minority groups (NCES, 2009 Table 246). Figure 2 depicts the exact numerical and percentage breakdown as reported. It is important to note that Figure 2 is a make-up of all degree-granting institutions in the United States. However, there is no disaggregation of the data by institutional type (PWI or HBCU) or the specific type of administrative function between executive, administrative, or managerial. Although the exact numbers are not present, a slight increase of African American administrators has been reported.

Primary occupation	Total	White	Black	Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native (combined)	Unknown*
Executive/administrative/ Managerial	217,518	173,948	21,047	17,812	4,711
Category Percentage	100%	79.9%	9.7%	8.2%	2.2%

Administrators in Degree-granting Institutions, by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2007

*Unknown refers to nonresident alien and persons whose race/ethnicity is unknown.

Figure 2 Administrators in Degree-granting Institutions by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2007

Administrators of colors are needed at PWIs because they can "warm the chilly campus climate for students of color" (Jackson, 2001). Further, the presence of administrators of colors will help increase the recruitment, retention, and ultimately the success for students of color at the institution (Henry & Nixon, 1994). In addition to the aforementioned reasons for increased minority administrator participation, there is a theoretical factor that encompasses the need — representative bureaucracy. Representative bureaucracy is established upon the belief that leaders or policymakers should represent the demographic composition of a constituency group (Krislov, 1974; McCabe & Stream, 2000; Meier, 1975, 1993; Meier & Stewart, 1992). The philosophical underpinning of representative bureaucracy argues that if the attitudes of those administrators are similar to the attitudes held by the general public, then the decisions of the administrators should be responsive to the desires of the general public (Meier & Nigro, 1976). Although the theory of representative bureaucracy is largely used in the political science arena, it has wide applications that support the need for African American administrator retention in higher education. It actually is the basis for affirmative action policies, previously discussed.

Underrepresentation of African American Administrators in Higher Education

There are several recent studies that have added to the limited body of literature on African American administrator representation and retention, which are critical to this study.

Jackson' (2001) conducted a qualitative study involving 10 African American administrators whom all identified eight practical steps for institutions to utilize for retention of African American administrators. These practical steps are:

> The participants in the research were recognized as experts by their peers, however there were no criteria mentioned as to how each participant qualified as an expert. A modified, two-round Delphi technique was used as a method to collect data. Data reduction techniques were also used to identify emergent themes from the participants' responses. 1) Commit to the principles of diversity and affirmative action, 2) Use recruitment as a retention strategy, 3) Provide equity in wages and salaries, 4) Provide an orientation program, 5) Develop a mentoring program for junior and senior management, 6) Foster open lines of communication between the administration hierarchy and staff, 7) Empower the administrator to perform his or her job, and 8) Promote the pursuit of professional advancement and development (i.e. learning and research). (pp. 103–106).

However, the shortcoming of the research resulted from the lack of detail in the methods section of the publication. Further, there was no mention of the research limitations or safeguards used to verify the data.

Barr's (1990) research identified barriers to African American administrator retention. Barr's study specifically focused on student affairs administrators and their barriers to success as practitioners. These barriers were: lack of professional identity; lack of career path; poor working conditions; inadequate compensation; competition from outside of the academy, and competition from within the academy. The last three issues require some clarification. Unlike faculty, colleges and universities lack a formal rank and promotions process for administrators. In

addition, administrators often work at an unyielding pace which makes for poor working conditions at some institutions. Further, when working long hours, administrators do not receive additional compensation. When comparing the number of hours per week against the dollar amount earned, administrators tend to have a sizeable disparity in regards to their pay scale. Further, unlike faculty, many administrators are not provided the opportunity of tenure, which makes job security an issue (Jackson, 2001). While all administrators face these issues, colleges and universities find themselves competing for minority administrators -who are often sought by private enterprise- against institutions outside of the academy due to the higher compensation packages offered. Competition can also derive from inside the academy as overworked administrators seek other jobs with similar titles and duties with more pay, thereby sometimes resulting in lateral or upward moves to other universities (Jackson, 2001).

Guillory (2001) claims that there are a myriad of barriers and organizational pitfalls that African American administrators face that their White counterparts do not. One of the more widely known barriers is prejudice and discrimination, which refers to behavioral biases in attitude of prejudgment towards a person based on the person's group identity (Cox, 1993).   In addition, there are institutional biases which refers to preference patterns that are inherent in how organizations are managed; and such patterns create barriers to full participation by members of a dominating group. One example of such is the "similar-to-me" phenomenon that suggests that selection decisions are heavily influenced by the extent to which decision makers view the job candidate as "fitting in" by being like him or herself (Cox, 1993).

Institutional biases can also occur in the form of informal networks.

Because of the importance of informal contacts, recommendations, and referrals as a

source of information for occupational advancement, individuals such as women,

nonwhite men, persons with disabilities, and others who are not majority group members
will struggle to participate in informal communications and social networks, thus helping
their careers. (Guillory, 2001, p. 114)

Although Guillory's article is intended for practitioner's use, there was one major concern that
limited the research. The work is not based on any empirical research. Guillory's strategy
compilation was formed from practical observations made from several experiences.

Additional researchers have weighed in on the number of factors that may contribute to
the underrepresentation of African American administrators in higher education. Turner and
Meyers (2000) postulate that the low representation of African American administrators result
from an insufficient applicant pool exasperated by the small number of doctorate degree
recipients in the educational pipeline. Others believe that the academic leadership pipeline
would be greatly increased if more African Americans at historically Black colleges and
universities were viewed as viable candidates (Roach & Brown, 2001). In a study of staff at one
large public predominantly White university, Mayhew, Grunwald, and Dey (2006) found that,
after controlling for measures of staff demographic characteristics, staff professional
characteristics, department structural diversity, and department climate for diversity, perceptions
of the campus community's ability to achieve a positive climate for diversity were lower for staff
members of color than for White staff members.

Social Dominance Theory

Group-Based Social Hierarchies

According to social dominance theory (SDT), there is a general human tendency for the
formation and maintaining of group-based social hierarchies. Such hierarchies — whether
predicated upon ethnicity, class, caste, or any other social designation — are observable to any

human society (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). However, in all cases, one or more dominant social groups enjoy a large set of social advantages while one or more subordinate groups suffer disproportionate social disadvantages. Examples of social advantages would be authority and power, goods, food, wealth, and high social status.

Social dominance theorists posit that these observable social hierarchies are in large part created, preserved, and recreated by social institutions or organizations. Therefore, institutions play a principal role in shaping group-based hierarchies (Mitchell & Sidanius, 1995; Pratto et al., 1997; Sidanius, Liu, Pratto, & Shaw, 1994; Sidanius et al., 1996). From these observations, SDT suggests that there are various identifiers of mechanisms that interact to produce and maintain group-based social hierarchies. The identifiers are cataloged into three stratification systems that that makes up group based social hierarchies: (a) an age system, in which adults and middle age people have disproportionate social power over children and younger adults, (b) a gender system that suggests that males have a lopsided amount of social and political power when compared to females, and (c) an arbitrary-set system which is characterized by socially constructed and prominent groups based on attributes such as race, ethnicity, religion, social class, or any other socially relevant group distinction.

Group-based social hierarchies refer to social power, prestige, and privilege that an individual possesses by virtue of his or her ascribed membership in a particular socially constructed group such as race, religion, clan, tribe, familial lineage, linguistic/ethnic group, or social class (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Although power and privilege can be gained independently as an individual, SDT suggests that such achievements and status of individuals are not completely independent of status and power of the groups to which they belong.

Therefore, one's social status, influence, and power are also functions of one's group membership and not simply of one's individual abilities or characteristics.

Schematic View of Social Dominance Theory

Social dominance theory is based on three primary assumptions. The first assumption states that as age and gender based hierarchies tend to exist within all social systems, arbitrary-set systems of social hierarchy will invariably emerge within social systems producing sustainable economic surplus. Secondly, most forms of group conflict and oppression (e.g. racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, nationalism, and classism) can be regarded as different manifestations of the same basic human predisposition to form group-based social hierarchies. Lastly, human social systems are subject to counterbalancing influences of hierarchy-enhancing forces, producing and maintaining ever higher levels of group-based social inequality, and hierarchy-attenuating forces, producing greater levels of group-based social equality (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Figure 3 illustrates a complete schematic view of the social dominance theoretical model.

Legitimating Myths
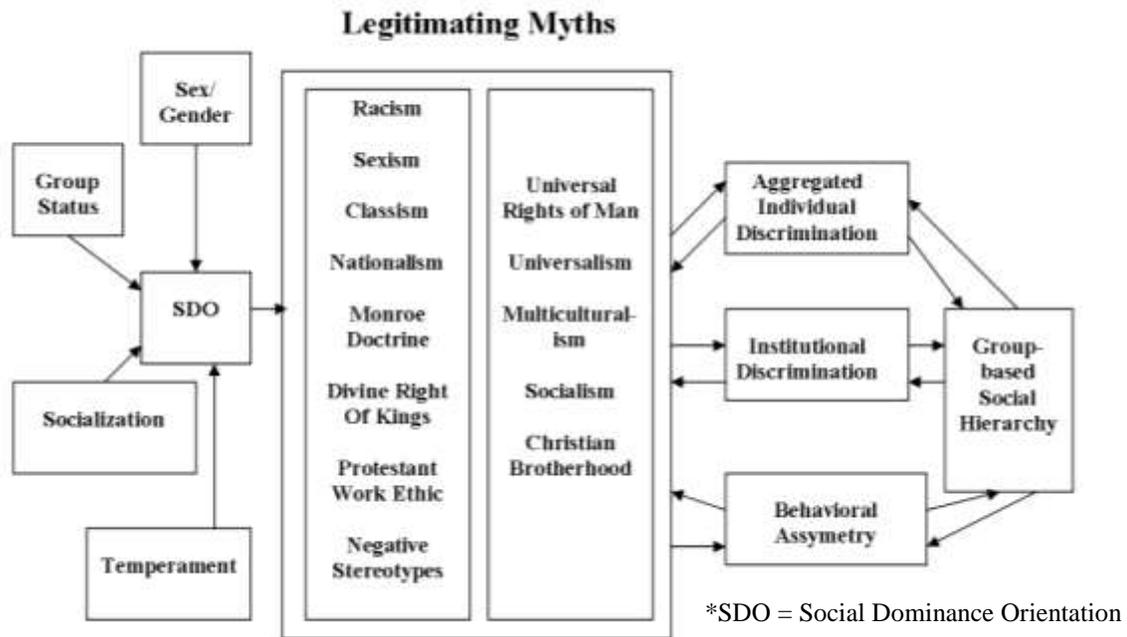
Figure 3 Social Dominance Theoretical Model

Given the three basic assumptions of SDT, there are processes that create and sustain group-based social hierarchies: *behavioral asymmetry, aggregated individual discrimination*, and *aggregated institutional discrimination*. Behavior asymmetry emphasizes an agentic perspective on subordination, in which it is suggested that subordinates actively contribute and participate in their own subordination. Aggregated individual discrimination refers to the simple, daily, and sometimes inconspicuous individual acts of discrimination by one individual against another. Aggregated institutional discrimination involves the rules, procedures, and actions of social institutions public and private (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Within the system it is argued that institutions help to maintain the integrity of the social hierarchy by use of systematic terror.

 "By systematic terror we refer to the use of violence or threats of violence disproportionately directed against subordinates. Systematic terror functions to maintain expropriative relationships between dominants (i.e., members of dominant groups) and

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subordinates (i.e., members of subordinate groups) and enforce the continued deference of subordinates toward dominants. (p. 41)

There are three basic forms of systematic terror: *official terror*, *semiofficial terror*, and *unofficial terror*. Official terror refers to the public and legally sanctioned violence and threat of violence perpetrated by "organs of the state" and disproportionately directed towards members of subordinate groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). An example of official terror would be widespread state violence against minorities in the form of arrests, trials without due process, or detainee torture tactics. Semiofficial terror is the violence or intimidation directed against subordinates, carried out by officials of the state (e.g., internal security forces, police, etcetera) but not publicly, overtly, officially, or legally, sanctioned by the state. Lastly, unofficial terror refers to the violence or threat of violence perpetrated by private individuals from dominant groups against members of subordinate groups.

> While this terror does not enjoy the active approval or sanction of official government agencies, it usually does enjoy the tacit approval if not active participation of members of the security forces (e.g. lynching by the Ku Klux Klan). This type of terror can be quite widespread in scope a comprehensive in its effects. (p. 42)

Altogether, within SDT there are various mechanisms and processes that illustrate the cooperative nature of oppression and group-based social hierarchies. Systems of group-based social hierarchy are not maintained simply by the oppressive activities of dominants or the passive compliance of subordinates, but rather by the coordinated and collaborative activities of both dominants and subordinates. Therefore, these processes are regulated by how individuals legitimize particular social myths (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Legitimizing Myths

Legitimizing myths (LMs) is the extent to where an individual endorses, desires, and supports a system of group-based social hierarchy or not. It consists of attitudes, values, beliefs, stereotypes, and ideologies that provide moral and intellectual justification for the social practices that distribute social value within the social system (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The purpose of LMs in a social system is to either maintain, increase, or decrease social inequality among groups (p. 104). The use of the term *myth* simply implies that the information is neither true or false; rather the information only appears true because enough people in society behave as if it so. The degree to which an LM is effective as a function relies upon four factors: *consensuality*, *embeddedness*, *certainty*, and *meditational strength*. Consensuality refers to the degree to which social representations and social ideologies are shared within the social system. Sidanius and Pratto argue their point in stating:

> For example, for most of U.S. history, classical racism, the belief that Blacks were inherently inferior to Whites was not simply a belief held by most Whites, but arguably a belief shared by a substantial number of Blacks as well. Among other things, this implies that Blacks have endorsed anti-Black racism almost as intensively and thoroughly as Whites have. (p.47)

Therefore, Sidanius and Pratto suggest that consensuality produces a sense of system stability of maintaining group-based hierarchies because the subordinate group endorses such a self-demeaning ideological notion.

Embeddedness suggests that LMs are strongly associated with and supportive to other parts of ideological, religious, or aesthetic components of culture (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). For instance, it is argued that racism is so embedded within U.S. society that the mere aesthetics of

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color juxtaposes certain aspects of character. The color black is often associated with implications of evil, sin, filth, depravity, and fear (i.e. black magic, blackballing, the philosophical parallel of black as ignorance, black plague) while the color white is most often associated with notions of purity, truth, innocence, piousness, harmlessness, and righteousness. According to Sidanius and Pratto, these "contrasting color symbols permeate a great deal of Western culture and can be discerned in everything from classical fairy tales to popular film and literature" (p. 47).

Certainty refers to the degree that a presented LM provides to moral, religious, or scientific certainty, or truth (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Evidence of such behavior could be argued through social Darwinism where it was believed that Whites were the more dominant species. As this became an accepted scientific paradigm produced and supported by U.S. and Western European intellectuals, this kind of "influential truth" matriculated into and became the foundation for social discourses such as slavery.

Finally, meditational strength argues that LMs serve as a link between the desire to establish and maintain group-based social hierarchies and the endorsement of social policies that strengthen, weaken, or maintain system structure on the other hand. A given belief, attitude, opinion, or attribution relationship can be classified as an LM if it has a meditational relationship between the desire for group-based social dominance and support for the group's policies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Social Dominance Orientation

Social dominance orientation (SDO) represents the psychological component of SDT. SDO is defined as the degree to which individuals desire and support group-based hierarchy and the domination of "inferior" groups by "superior" groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In general,

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SDO refers to the group distinctions that are prominent within a given social context. "These group distinctions may include genders, races, social classes, nationalities, regions, religions, sexes, linguistic groups, estates, sports teams, or any of an essentially infinite number of potential distinctions between groups of human beings" (p. 48).

Social dominance orientation is assumed to be influenced by several factors. First, SDO is driven by one's membership in identification with arbitrary, highly salient, and hierarchically organized arbitrary-set groups. Second, one's level of SDO is affected by series of background and socialization factors such as one's level of education, religious faith, and other demographic beliefs. Third, it is believed that "people are born with different 'temperamental dispositions' and personalities" (p. 49). Lastly, it is assumed that one's level of SDO is gender dependent — invariance hypothesis. Invariance hypothesis suggest that males generally have higher levels of SDO versus women due to the simple fact that they occupy dominant social roles.

Organizational Socialization

A large part of SDT relies heavily upon the socialization experiences within the institution; therefore it is essential to include the theory of organization socialization into this study. Organizational socialization is the "process by which one is taught and learns 'the ropes' of a particular organizational role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). It is the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to function within a particular organization. Dunn, Rouse, and Seff echo Van Maanen and Shein by stating that socialization is "the process by which individuals acquire the attitudes, beliefs, values and skills needed to participate effectively in organized social life" (1994, p. 375). In an article on organizational culture Tierney defined socialization by asking,"What do we need to know to survive/excel in the organization?" (1988, p. 8). Kirk and Todd-Mancillas (1991) were similarly instrumental in

their definition by linking socialization with educational "turning points" in an individual's life (p. 407).

The purpose of socialization is to reconfigure the organization as new members enter the association; to introduce the organizational hierarchy, and to build loyalty and commitment to the culture and the organization (Manning, 1997; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). Informally, the process of socialization is assumed to begin whenever an individual becomes accustomed to others under a shared symbolic label (Manning, 1997; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). Formal organizational socialization is usually viewed as a product of social relations and structure (Manning, 1977). In other words, the institution organizes and facilitates communicative structures.

The socialization process may range from a trial-and-error process to a more complex one whereby the individual being socialized participates in an extended period of education and training followed by an extended period of apprenticeship (Van Mannen & Schein, 1979). The socialization process is where individuals learn what behaviors and perspectives are customary and desirable and what behaviors and perspectives are not (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993).

According to Van Maanen (1978), there are three fundamental underpinning assumptions of the socialization process. First, individuals who are in transition between organizations are placed in an anxiety-producing situation. These individuals attempt to reduce anxiety as soon as possible by becoming familiar with functional and social requirements of their position. The same can be said of faculty members who transition into administration. Some of the anxiety producing events that faculty transitioning to administration may face include finding a balance between their teaching, research, and service while learning the criteria for achieving success and sustainability within new rankings.

Second, the learning that occurs during socialization does not occur in a vacuum based on formal job requirements (Van Maanen, 1978). Van Maanen posits that the new member into the organization is looking for assistance on how to proceed upon joining the organization. Assistance may come from colleagues, superiors, subordinates, or constituents; and it may either lend support to or hinder the socialization process.

The third assumption about organizational socialization is that the stability and productivity of any organization depends on the manner in which newcomers assume their responsibilities (Van Maanen, 1978). When positions within organizations are assumed without problem, the continuity of the organization's mission is maintained, the predictability of the organization's performance is intact, and the survival of the organization is assured.

Altogether, the definitions and assumptions of organizational socialization refer to Robert Merton's (1957) ideas about socialization within a society and its applicability to an organization as a culture. Whereas culture becomes the sum of activities in the organization, and socialization is the process through which individuals acquire and incorporate an understanding of those activities. Further, as an organization culture, individuals are taught how to behave, what to hope for, and what it means to succeed or fail (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993). Some individuals become competent while others do not.

Culture's Role in Organizational Socialization

The acquisition and understanding of culture is important because it permits individuals to learn the norms, expectations, and practices of the organization (Reynolds, 1992). At the same time, individuals make sense of the organization through their personal experiences and the current contexts of the organization (Tierney, 1997). Consequently, while the individual is

experiencing the cultural norms, values, ideas, and predispositions the individual is also introducing their feedback into the organizational environment, resulting in the give-and-take of the socialization process.

Since both the individual and the organization are influenced during the socialization process, Tierney have deemed socialization as "bidirectional" (p. 37) instead of unitary. A unitary socialization process is one where new faculty assimilates into the organization (Tierney, 1997). Anthony and Taylor (2004) describes the unitary form of socialization as a linear process where there are obvious "winners and losers, misfits and fully incorporated members" (Tierney, 1997, p. 6). Turner and Thompson (1993) lend support to this argument through their categorization of the socialization process as one that has been "organized to perpetuate self-containment and marginalization" (p. 356).

Turner and Thompson (1993) also contend that marginalization perpetuates itself when new members join the organization and the organization fails to change or adapt, particularly when the new member is a person of color or female. Further, traditional socialization theory assumes that an individual must meet two conditions to be successfully socialized. First, the individual has to develop characteristics consistent with others in the chosen profession. Second, the individual has to assimilate his or her own values to the cultural norm (Antony & Taylor, 2004). Considering that the work of an administrator is highly individualized, expecting all administrators to conform to a unitary socialization process and to perceive that experience in a like manner is unrealistic.

Austin (2002) and Clark and Corcoran (1986) also posits that socialization is bidirectional. From an organization's perspective, socialization is the means by which new members "learn the values, norms, knowledge, beliefs and the interpersonal and other skills that

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facilitate role performance and further group goals" (Clark & Corcoran, 1986, p. 22). From an individual perspective, socialization is the defined by the way that one learns how to participate in the social life of the organization. By re-defining the socialization process as a bidirectional exchange administrators will gain a better understanding of the unique and varied socialization experiences of African American administrators and other administrators of color. Further, if academia truly values and appreciated diversity in its rankings, then African American administrators –and other administrators of color- should have the opportunity to influence the university just as the university influences their quality of life within the institution (Jackson, 2001).

The Role of Race, Identity, and Gender on Career Dynamics

Race and Career Dynamics

An understanding of the relationship of race to individual career experiences is paramount to this research. In the research on race and career dynamics informs the study undertaken by focusing on race as it relates to the professional world, but more importantly, professional institutions and organizations. While the research reviewed on race and career deals mainly with the world of business, it can be reasonably assumed that some of the same dynamics are applicable to higher education.

A review into the literature on minority career experiences suggests that there are four areas of significance in which advances in understanding have been made. First is viewing the context of the minority experience in predominantly White organizations as bicultural. Second understands how race influences the internal sense of self within the career development of minorities. Third concerns minority experiences of gaining significant social and instrumental support from superiors and peers. The fourth concerns issues of minority women in

organizations and the ways in which gender influences cross-racial relationships between men and women (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). Each of these advances in understanding is crucial to conceptualizing the factors which contribute to the persistence strategies of African American administrators at a PWI.

Racial Identity

Individuals go through a sequence of life and career development stages (Thomas & Aldefer, 1989); however previous theories used to explain this phenomenon have not taken into account the influence of race on the developmental process. Cross (1991) and Helms (1990) have researched the area of racial identity development as influenced by social context.

Cross first introduced the concept in1971 by reporting that there are three stages of racial identity development for African Americans. The first stage called pre-encounter, has three sub-categories, pre-encounter assimilation, pre-encounter miseducation, and pre-encounter racial self-hatred. Pre-encounter assimilation describes the Black person whose social identity is organized around a sense of being an American and an individual. The person places little emphasis on racial group identity, affiliation or salience, and consequently, is not engaged in the Black community and culture. Pre-encounter miseducation depicts a Black person who accepts without question the negative images, stereotypes, and historical misinformation about Black people. In this phase, a person sees little strength in the African American community, and hesitates to engage in solving or resolving issues in the Black community. They often hold the attitude "That's the way they act, but I am different." The final phase, pre-encounter racial self-hatred, suggests that the individual experiences profoundly negative feelings and severe self-loathing because of being identified as Black (Grantham & Ford, 2003, p. 19).

The next stage of racial identity is concerned with the immersion-emersion identity types. In the first stage of immersion-emersion anti-White, the person is almost consumed with anti-White sentiments. The person is deeply entrenched into Black culture and separates themselves from anything dealing with White society. In immersion-emersion it is suggested that the individual becomes almost obsessed with their Blackness in almost a cult-like fashion (Grantham & Ford, 2003).

The last racial identity stage, internalization, is comprised of three identity types: internalization nationalist, internalization biculturalist, and internalization multiculturalist. An internalization nationalist stresses an Afro-centric perspective about themselves, other African Americans, and the world. Typically these individuals are fully engaged in the Black community. An internalization biculturalist is an African American who gives equal importance to being an African American and an American, and is able to celebrate being both Black and an American and is able to engage in both cultures. Finally, an internalization multiculturalist represents the Black person whose identity fuses between two or more social categories or frames of reference, and is interested in resolving issues that address multiple oppressions and is confident and comfortable in multiple groups (Grantham & Ford, 2003).

While Grantham and Ford's research has revealed that minorities undergo identity development in stages, Dickens and Dickens (1982) expounded upon the research by suggesting that Black career development evolves in stages as well. According to Thomas and Alderfer (1989), there are four stages in Black career development: entry, adjusting, planned growth, and success.

Entry marks the beginning of the Black individual's relationship with the organization. Its characteristics include feelings of false security in which anger is contained and issues of race

are ignored in an effort to avoid conflict. The individual cooperates under the assumption that rewards or promotions are based on merit and they are unaware of organizational or institutional politics (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989).

Adjusting is established by two sub-categories, dissatisfaction and frustration. In the dissatisfaction stage the person becomes aware of the lack of mobility in the organization and unequal treatment between Blacks and Whites. In the frustration stage the individual's anger cannot be contained. In this stage the individual is unwilling to let incidents and perceived insults pass and is viewed as uncooperative or militant among Whites. Little professional growth is achieved during this stage, however, there is some emotional benefit as the person is allowed to express pent up frustrations (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989).

In the third stage, planned growth, the individual learns to manage their frustrations and chooses strategically when to become angry. The individual develops a style that is consistent with organizational norms while maintaining a sense of self identity. It is in this stage the Black manager learns to work and develop relationships with Whites (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989).

In the fourth and final stage, the individual learns to integrate learning from the previous phases, and accepts the burdens that comes with being a manager, and is aware of Blackness and its impact on an organization, needs fewer praises than others, is results oriented, and has more confidence. The individual continues to refine interpersonal skills and uses a style of confronting Whites while leaving their dignity intact (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). These advances can be proven to be very useful in understanding African American administrators in higher education. A potential outcome of understanding career development among African American administrators can be an increase in retention and representation of African American administrators at a predominantly White institution, which is paramount to the current study.

Gender and Race in the Workplace

Previously conducted research on African American managers in the workplace usually considers the issue of gender less important when compared to race, and has tended to replicate a patriarchal bias found in much of social science research (Gilligan, 1982). Studies that addressed the experiences of both minority men and women propose that each gender have unique experiences despite the many shared commonalities (Fernandez, 1981).

For minority women, career aspirations are impacted by a plethora of factors. "When compared to other race-gender minority groups, women tend to be [represented as] the poorest segment of our society, disproportionately represented in single-parent household, welfare roles and low-paying occupations" (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). Bell (1986) discovered that Black women registered stress levels on standardized measures that were significantly higher than those reported in the general population. Likewise, Fernandez (1981), in a study of over 5,000 managers, found that Black women reported more criticism of their experience than any other race-gender groups. Davis and Watson (1982) contributes to the reported stress by Black women by arguing that Black women were being "doubly taxed" because of the racial and gender discrimination felt in the workplace.

Edwards (1997) conducted a study that examined the experiences of three African American women in upper strata leadership positions in higher education administration at a PWI in an attempt to understand the conflicts and the adaptation strategies they employed. The study was a naturalistic anthropological qualitative inquiry with informant interviews and non-participant observation as data collection methods. In the study, Edwards (1997) discovered that the participants all shared similarities in both their professional and personal lives of racism,

sexism, tokenism, and underrepresentation. In addition, their leadership abilities were questioned.

Findings also indicated that campus environment is crucial to the success of African American women administrators. The climate of a university depends heavily on the attitudes and behaviors of the administration, which in turn determines the degree of racism and sexism that the African American women will experience.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory originated in the 1970s as a response to Critical Legal Studies (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lynn, Yosso, Solórzano, & Parker, 2002). Critical race theory derived from a variety of disciplines including sociology, law, history, ethnic studies, and women's studies (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Although its origins began in legal studies, CRT extended to areas such as education during the late 20th century and is emerging as a powerful theoretical and analytical framework for education scholars (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). One of the germane focuses of CRT is to incorporate an activist component that highlights the effects of race and racism with an end goal of facilitating change in such a way that CRT implements social justice (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

> Solórzano and Yosso (2002) posits that CRT advances a strategy to foreground and account for the role of race and racism in education and works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of opposing or eliminating other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language, and national origin. (p. 25)

It recognizes that people of color as creators and holders of knowledge that may challenge and critique mainstream traditions and paradigms (Delgado Bernal, & Villalpando, 2002). Further,

CRT operates as a framework for identifying, analyzing, and transforming the structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominate racial positions in and out of the classroom (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Schematic View of Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory is comprised of five basic tenets: (a) counter-storytelling, (b) the permanence of racism, (c) Whiteness as property, (d) interest convergence, and (e) the critique of liberalism (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Counter-storytelling is "a method of telling a story that aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 27). The use of counter-storytelling is a means for providing a voice to traditionally marginalized groups and for exposing and critiquing normalized dialogues that perpetuate racial stereotypes (DeCuir & Dixson, 2002, 2004; Ladson & Billings, 1998, 2000). There are three reasons for representing scholarly ideas in this manner: (a) much of reality is socially constructed; (b) through stories, members of minority groups are provided a vehicle for psychic self-preservation; and (c) exchanging stories from the teller to the listener can help overcome ethnocentrism (Delgado, 1989). Delgado (1989) also notes that most oppression does not seem like oppression to the perpetrator. Instead the dominant group justifies their position by presenting stock stories that constructs reality in such a way that it legitimizes their privilege. Stories by people of color can counter the stories of the oppressor as well as illustrate a more comprehensible picture of how oppression functions within an institution. There are several forms of counter-storytelling that are traditional in the African American, Chicano, Asian American, and American Indian community: personal stories/ narratives, other people's stories/ narratives, and composite stories/narratives (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002).

The second basic tenet of CRT is the permanence of racism. CRT scholars argue that race and racism is a permanent, powerful, dominant and normalized component of American society (Delgado, 1995; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lynn, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Lopez (2003) and McIntosh (1990) suggest that society fails to see racism because it is an everyday experience that is often taken for granted. Thus, one of the purposes of CRT is to "expose and unveil White privilege… and reveal a social order that is highly stratified and segmented along racial lines" (Lopez, 2003, p. 84).

Whiteness as property is the third basic tenet of CRT. Whiteness as property suggests that due to the role of racism in history, Whiteness can be considered a property interest (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). According to Harris (1993), *property* is not just tangible objects; it is a metaphysical extension of certain rights as pointed out in U.S. history. Harris also asserts that the central notion of whiteness as property is the "the legal legitimization of expectations of power and control that enshrine the status quo as a neutral baseline, while masking the maintenance of white privilege and domination" (p. 1715). Therefore, the owners of Whiteness are granted the same privileges and benefits that are germane to owning tangible and legal property such as the right to disposition, use and enjoyment, right to exclude, and for reputation and status. In particular, Whiteness as property defines social relations in the broader sense of "encompassed jobs, entitlements, occupational licenses, contracts, subsidies, and indeed a whole host of intangibles that are the product of labor, time, and creativity, such as intellectual property, business goodwill, and enhanced earning potential from graduate degrees" (p. 1728). From an educational viewpoint and for the purpose of this study, Whiteness as property refers to the entitlements that have seemingly excluded people of color from administration as they are marginalized or isolated in academia.

The fourth basic tenet of CRT is interest convergence. Interest convergence is a notion that posits that the primary beneficiaries of civil right legislation are not people of color, but Whites (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1988, 1993; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1998). It has also been suggested by CRT scholars that the landmark case of Brown v. Board of Education decision sided with African Americans because the material interest of Whites converged with the civil rights interests of African Americans (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Lopez, 2003). Therefore, the Brown decision benefitted Whites more than African Americans, thus proving that racism remains and that social progress only advances at a pace determined by Whites (Lopez, 2003).

The final basic tenet of CRT is the critique of liberalism. CRT scholars use the critique of liberalism to examine the concepts of colorblindness, legal neutrality, and increment change (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Colorblindness is disregarded because being White is considered the *accepted* norm for understanding the experiences of people of color. Second, the idea that the law is neutral is arguably inadequate because rights and opportunities in the U.S. have often been bestowed and withheld based on race. Finally, CRT scholars suggest that incremental change is not promoted for traditionally marginalized groups because it does not benefit those in power. When it does, change moves at a pace that is acceptable to the dominant group rather than the marginalized group (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

Critical Race Theory in Education

Ladson-Billings and Tate were the first to introduce CRT into education in their construction of an argument to explain social inequities in education: (a) Race is a continuously significant factor in determining inequity in the United States, (b) the United States' society is based on property rights, and (c) the intersection of property and race creates an analytical tool

through which we can better understand social inequity. The meta-proposition used to support the first proposition is that class and gender do not have enough explanatory power to clarify all of the differences in the school experience and performance. Neither class nor gender is able to stand alone as variables to explain the educational achievement differences between African-Americans and Whites (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The same educational process that elevates the oppressor while depressing the oppressed demonstrates this social inequity (Woodson, 2000). The second proposition, that the U.S. society is situated in property rights, is shown in Cheryl Harris's (1993) argument of *whiteness as property*. Through the use of Harris's argument, Ladson-Billings and Tate adds to the analysis by illuminating the use of Whiteness as a type of property that gives the holder of such property the right to exclude others.

According to Harris (1993), *property* is not just tangible objects; it is a metaphysical extension of certain rights as pointed out in U.S. history. Harris also asserts that the central notion of Whiteness as property is the "the legal legitimization of expectations of power and control that enshrine the status quo as a neutral baseline, while masking the maintenance of white privilege and domination" (p. 1715). Therefore, the owners of Whiteness are granted the same privileges and benefits that are germane to owning tangible and legal property such as the right to disposition, use and enjoyment, right to exclude, and for reputation and status. In particular, Whiteness as property defines social relations in the broader sense of "encompassed jobs, entitlements, occupational licenses, contracts, subsidies, and indeed a whole host of intangibles that are the product of labor, time, and creativity, such as intellectual property, business goodwill, and enhanced earning potential from graduate degrees" (p. 1728). In this study, the status of administrator at a predominantly White institution is translated as property due to powers associated and exclusivity.

According to Solórzano and Yosso (2000), the CRT framework in education is best described as:

Different from other CRT frameworks because it simultaneously attempts to foreground race and racism in the discourse on race, gender, and class by showing how these social constructs intersect to classed experiences of communities of color and offers a laboratory and transformative method for examining racial/ethnic, gender, and class discrimination (p. 63).

Solórzano (1997, 1998) also identifies five tenets of CRT that can inform theory, research, pedagogy, curriculum and policy: (a) the intercentricity of race and racism; (b) the challenge to dominant ideology; (c) the commitment to social justice; (d) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (e) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches. The first tenet, the intercentricity of race and racism along with other forms of subordination, operates from the premise that race and racism are central, endemic, permanent and a fundamental aspect of defining and explaining how U.S. society functions (Bell, 1992; Russell, 1992; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Further there are multiple layers of racialized subordination ranging from gender, class, immigration status, name, accent, phenotype, and sexuality (Crenshaw, 1988, 1993).

The second tenet of CRT in education is the challenge to dominant ideology. In the field of education, CRT scholars challenges White privilege while refuting the claims that educational institutions make regarding objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity (Yosso, 2005). CRT challenges notions of *neutral* research or *objective* researchers and exposes the kind of research that silences, ignores and distorts epistemologies of people of color (Delgado, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 2000). Further, CRT scholars argue that these traditional

claims are ways of camouflaging the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in U.S. society (Bell, 1987; Calmore, 1992; Solórzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005).

Maintaining a commitment to social justice is the third tenet of CRT in education. It offers a transformative response to racial, gender, and class oppression (Matsuda, 1991). Such a social justice research agenda attempts to expose the interest convergence (Bell, 1987; Howard-Hamilton, 2003) of civil rights gains in education. Further, a commitment to social justice also works toward the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty, as well as the empowerment of marginalized groups (Freire, 1970, 1973; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

The fourth tenet focuses on the synthesis of CRT in education on the centrality of experiential knowledge. In order to understand the complete picture of racial subordination, CRT recognizes that the experiential knowledge of "people of color" is legitimate, appropriate, and critical is needed (Delgado Bernal, 2002). As the dominant group justifies their position by presenting stock stories that constructs reality in such a way that it legitimizes their privilege, stories by people of color can counter the stories of the oppressor as well as illustrate a more comprehensible picture of how oppression functions within society. Through the use of methods such as storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, and narratives CRT aims to unearth the lived experiences of people of color (Bell, 1992, 1995; Delgado, 1989, 1995; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000, 2002; Yosso, 2005).

The fifth and final tenet of CRT in education is the transdisciplinary perspective. In using the transdisciplinary perspective, CRT goes beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries to analyze race and racism within both historical and contemporary contexts, drawing on scholarship from ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, law, psychology, film,

theatre and other fields (Delgado, 1984; Yosso, 2005). Further, the utilization of the transdisciplinary approach to link theory with practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005). In doing so, CRT is better prepared to address the complexities of race and racism.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity. (Friere, 2000)

This chapter describes the methods used to collect data to explore answers to the research questions posed in this study. This study was designed to explore the experiences and persistence strategies of African American administrators at a PWI and the strategies used by them which have contributed to their persistence. Qualitative research methods and the philosophical assumptions based in phenomenology were used. Participants were encouraged to share their stories as a way to reveal a deeper meaning of their lived experiences. Further, elements of CRT were incorporated to gain a better and more in-depth understanding of the experiences of this particular minority group.

In this chapter, I will discuss my rationale for the use of qualitative methods, specifically a phenomenological approach toward the study and my incorporation of CRT into the research design. Additional topics in this chapter include the limitations of using a phenomenological research design; the setting of the study; methodological procedures; data collection; and data analysis.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research methods were used to gather information for this study. Qualitative research functions under the key assumption that reality is constructed by individuals interacting

with their social worlds, therefore, qualitative research is interested in understanding the meaning

people have constructed or how they make sense of the world and the experiences within them

(Merriam, 2001). Patton (2001) presents a similar perspective when he notes that qualitative

analysis is a way of understanding phenomena in its natural state with direct quotes and

descriptive data. The purpose is to allow the researcher an opportunity to depict the participants'

view of their social reality, which in turn, allows the researcher to be a central role in the

generation of data (Hammersley, 1992). Qualitative research also involves an interpretive

naturalistic approach to studying phenomena in terms of the meaning that people bring to them.

According to Creswell (1998);

> Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct
>
> methodological traditions of inquiry that explores a social or human problem. The
>
> researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of
>
> informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p. 15).

As a more generalized term, qualitative research refers to the including and collection of data

through case study, personal experience, introspect, life story, interview, observational,

historical, document analysis, interactional and visual texts, such as photos and journals (Bogdan

& Biklen, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Through the use of these aforementioned methods

data is collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and written document

analysis. These forms of data collection produce information that is rich in description and

explanation. Crane (1999) posits that qualitative research offers a substantial liberating potential

in the development of a stronger more theory-rich empirical base. In using a qualitative

approach to this study, African American administrators are offered the opportunity to express

their reactions in their own words and themes are allowed to emerge and be developed for further

testing. Altogether, the underlying assumption of the qualitative research paradigm is that it is primarily concerned with meanings, fieldwork, implementing human mediation as the primary instrument, the informational discovery process rather than outcomes or products, and analysis with descriptive and inductive reasoning (Creswell, 1998).

Qualitative Method Rationale

The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experiences of African American administrators as it relates to persistence strategies used by them in a PWI. Qualitative research methods allow for the participants to fully explain their experienced, perceived, and constructed realities through recollection. Due to the nature of the study, qualitative research is invaluable in because the researcher is attempting to gain a full deep understanding of the experiences of the participants and attempting to reconstruct events in which the researcher did not participate (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

A quantitative research design, on the other hand, would have restricted the scope of this study, by limiting the depth and width of the participants' responses to predetermined categories based on standardized questions (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, the quantitative researcher tends to use cause and effect variables, questions, and hypotheses in predetermined instruments to gather statistical data that can be compiled to arrive at conclusions (Creswell, 2007). Rubin and Rubin (2005) posit that quantitative research uses fixed-design methodology to produce numbers and statistics to answer research questions. However, numbers alone do not illustrate a rich picture of participant experiences as qualitative research does. Quantitative research methodologies fail to capture the emotions of the lived experiences of the study participants (Patton, 2002).

According to Robson (2002), the choice of a research methodology should be determined by the subject under investigation and the research questions. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies each have their own value because they do different things for dissimilar reasons. In this case, little is known about the phenomenon of persistence strategies of African American administrators as minorities in a PWI; therefore, this study was exploratory in nature, and lends itself to a qualitative approach.

Critical Race Methodology and Qualitative Research

In addition to the use of qualitative research methods, this study incorporated a critical race framework. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) speculate "critical race methodology in education challenges White privilege, rejects notions of 'neutral' research or 'objective' researchers, and exposes deficit-informed research that silences and distorts epistemologies or people of color" (p. 26). Furthermore:

> CRT offers insights, perspectives, methods and pedagogies that guide our efforts to identify, analyze, and transform the structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom.
>
> (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 63)

Also, CRT provides a framework for communicating the experiences and realities of the oppressed (Ladson-Billings, 1998). For this study, CRT aids in better conceptualizing the daily socialization experiences of African American administrators including learned norms of their respective institution as presented in social dominance theory.

Phenomenological Methodology

The qualitative research design for this study relies on a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is mainly associated with the foundational writings of German philosopher

Edmund Husserl (1970), who is known as the father of the phenomenological movement. Husserl argues that man's ultimate interest was in exploring the roots of all knowledge, therefore science needed to restore its contact with deeper human issues (Morrissette, 1999). Husserl believed that our subjective experience was the source of all of our knowledge of objective phenomena (Wojtyla, 2002). Creswell (2003) defined phenomenological research as follows:

> [It is] the methodology in which the researcher identifies the "essence" of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study. Understanding the "lived experiences" marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. In this process, the researcher "brackets" his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study. (p. 15)

The transcendental tradition of phenomenology has been described as a way to scientifically study what we see and how it appears to us in consciousness (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl had many abstract ideas about philosophy, though maintained four major themes throughout his work: (1) philosophy should be based on lived experiences, (2) one must suspend judgments about reality and set aside existing knowledge about a phenomena, (3) our reality is based on our consciousness, and (4) the meaning of an object cannot exist without the meaning that individuals ascribe to the object, in that the self and the object are indissoluble. Husserl's themes are what guide transcendental phenomenology and enable our understanding of what the meaning, structure, and lived experiences are for a phenomenon (Patton, 1990). The focus, then, is to determine the essence of a lived experience (Creswell, 1998).

This study follows the methodology and data analysis outlined by Moustakas (1994), which is specifically discussed later in this chapter. Moustakas's (1994) design was chosen for this study for specific reasons. First, Moustakas's methods are very detailed in regard to the protocol needed for a transcendental phenomenology. He offers the researcher a thorough and succinct process to effectively analyze data. Additionally, Moustakas (1994) synthesizes the research of several other phenomenological researchers, essentially offering the researcher an integrated approach that highlights the best of several approaches.

A phenomenological study "describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or phenomenon" (Creswell, 1998). There are three basic steps to phenomenological inquiry (Patton, 2001). The first approach is meant to suspend all judgments about what is real; a suspension based on what Husserl would call *epoche*. Epoche is the period in which the researcher must examine themselves in order to identify their own biases and remove them from the phenomenon being studied. Secondly, phenomenological reduction is the phase in which the researcher brackets the rest of the world and any presuppositions with which he or she approaches the subject to study. Finally, structural synthesis involves the articulation of the phenomenon experience and the description of its structure (p. 408).

In this inquiry, phenomenology is used to discuss the central issue of persistence strategies as derived from lived work experiences of the participating African American administrators in the study. Phenomenology allows for a shared meaning that underlines a participant's reason and rationale for choosing their workplace persistence strategy. Moreover, a phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to provide a rich descriptive analysis of the three interrelated themes in phenomenology: parts and wholes, identity in manifolds, and presence and absence (Sokolowski, 2000). The researcher used the phenomenological approach

to analyze the make-up of the whole experience –in addition to the whole experience itself- of African American administrators at Broussard University. In analyzing the pieces that make up the content, of the whole experience, the researcher gained a better understanding of the experience. Sokolowski (2000) states, "The naming of parts is the essence of thought and it is important to see the difference between pieces and moments when we try, philosophically, to understand what understanding is" (p. 27). It is also important to note that each participant has a different perspective on the meaning of their experiences and that diversity in itself preserves the reality and distinctiveness of each individual in their profiles.

Setting and Participants

Setting

The institution selected for this study is Broussard University, the pseudonym name given for a four-year public predominantly White university located in the southeastern portion of United States with an African American student body representation of eight percent out of the 24,000 plus reported on campus by the 2009 fall semester. Full-time employee data shows that the selected institutional setting has over 4,500 employees in which 15% are classified as African American. Of the 300 plus administrators and executive level employees on campus, only 16 are classified as African American.

Broussard University has a history of exclusionary practices relating to students, faculty, and staff of color. As with many PWIs during the 1960s, Broussard University did not desegregate until they were mandated to do so by the federal courts. The first African American student was not admitted until 1964 and the first administrator of color (African American) was hired one year later. Shortly afterwards, a discrimination lawsuit was filed against Broussard University due to the failed inclusion of African Americans at the student, faculty, and

administration level. The lawsuit would later merge into a larger civil rights class action lawsuit

against Broussard University and other peer PWIs in the region as well. The decision in the case

ultimately held that vestiges of de jure segregation still existed in institutions of higher learning

in Broussard University and its surrounding areas, therefore steps must be taken to rectify the

situation. The federal district court ruling in the case mandated that the state engage in

affirmative efforts to break down the remaining residue of discrimination and segregation,

including: actively recruiting and increasing the number of African American students, faculty,

and administrators to historically White state schools, ensuring that the historically Black

colleges and universities (HBCUs) within the state receive appropriate resources and funding,

and making certain that White students are recruited for HBCUs in addition to granting that

diversity is promoted there as well. After 20 plus years of litigation and the resulted ruling,

many African Americans feel that there are still remnants of institutional oppression and

inequality placed against them that has yet to be rectified (Gordon, 2005).

Participants

Six mid to high level full time African American administrators were purposefully

selected as participants for the study (Patton, 2001). A small sample size is generally used by

qualitative researchers (Maxwell, 1998) because it is such a rigorous and systematic

methodology. Six participants were chosen because it is the recommended sample size for a

phenomenological study (Creswell, 1998; Morse, 1994). Also, according to Polit, Beck, and

Hungler (2001), phenomenology studies are typically based on samples of 10 or fewer.

The participating university administrators each represented one of the various university

specialty areas across Broussard's campus. The term *university administrator* refers to an

individual in a managerial or policy-making capacity that may have a line or staff function

(Jackson, 2004). Typically, administration levels of higher education are broken down into three specialty areas: academic affairs (president, academic deans, vice president or provost of research), student affairs (vice president of student affairs, dean of students, and director of financial aid), and administrative affairs (vice president of finance, director of alumni affairs, and director of computer services) (Moore & Sagaria, 1982; Sagaria, 1988). Participants were selected from all university administration areas across Broussard University: three academic affairs administrators, two student affairs administrators, and one administrative affairs administrator. The participants' profiles are highlighted in a profile matrix (Figure 4).

Name	Gender	Administrator Ranking	Years as an Administrator	Highest Degree Completed	Undergrad Institutional Type	Graduate Institutional Type
Jason Williams	Male	Mid-level	10	PhD	PWI*	PWI*
Mary Moore	Female	Mid-level	7	Ed.D	HBCU	PWI*
Margaret Rayford	Female	High-level	18	PhD	HBCU	PWI
Timothy Wright	Male	High-level	18	Ed.D	PWI	PWI
Susan Johnson	Female	Mid-level	4	PhD	HBCU	PWI
Joe Clark	Male	High-level	9	PhD	PWI*	PWI*

PhD denotes doctor of philosophy

Ed.D denotes educational doctorate

(*) denotes that participant attended Broussard University

HBCU denotes Historically Black College or University

PWI denotes Predominantly White Institution

All names are pseudonyms

Figure 4 Demographic Profiles of Participants

Participant Procedures

To identify potential participants, assistance was sought from the university's Office of Institutional Research. Once identified, a Request for Participation form was sent requesting their assistance, stating the information needed, and how it will be used. Once a participant agreed to participate in the study, a Biographical and Institutional Data and Informed Consent forms were hand delivered by the researcher to each participant to fill out. The Biographical and Institutional Data form were used to construct biographical profiles, gain background information prior to the interview, and allow each participant to generate a code name to protect their anonymity. An Informed Consent form was used to gain final approval and to confirm their participation acceptance for this study as prescribed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). All relevant guidelines as required for the protection of human subjects by the IRB were followed. Prior to participant contact, the study was approved for implementation with human subjects by the University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A).

Data Collection

Once a participant grants their final approval an initial interview date is scheduled. Open ended interview questions (both semi-structured and informal in depth) were the primary method of data collection. The researcher used an audio recorder to obtain and ensure interview data accuracy. Each participant was interviewed at least twice. Each interview began with the researcher explaining to the respondent the objectives of the investigation, which were derived from a thorough review of the literature. All interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. A journal was kept to document the descriptions, thoughts, and interpretations of the interviews. Both the audio recordings and journal assisted in the follow up interview and the analysis phase of the dissertation process.

After the first interview, the researcher transcribed the audio recording into a Word document verbatim and e-mailed each participant's individual transcript interview to the appropriated participant for their review, verification, and validation (document review). A corresponding letter was attached that requested each participant review the document, make changes, and note any questions they may have for the follow-up interview. Follow-up interviews were conducted for *member checking*, clarity, and data validation. Member checking is a term used to determine the trustworthiness of the data analysis. By participating in member checking, study participants have the opportunity to review the researcher's conclusions to ensure that they accurately depict the participants' personal experiences (Creswell, 1998). Also, this second interview provided an opportunity for participants to provide any additional information that was not provided in the previous meetings (commentary).
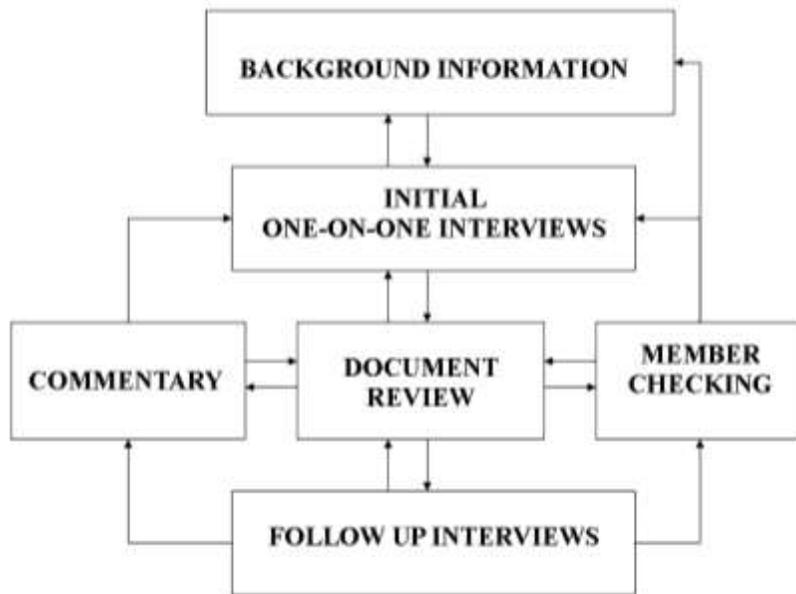
Figure 5 Data Collection Model

Once the interviews were completed and all biographical data had been collected, several precautions were taken to protect the original data. Copies were made of the original audio recordings as data files on the researcher's flash drive. In addition to making multiple paper

copies of transcripts, data were saved in three different locations: (a) private email inbox as an

attachment, (b) computer hard drive, and (c) on a computer flash drive.

Interview Protocol

In an effort to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of African American

persistence strategies at a predominantly White institution, the researcher developed a set of

questions to guide the interview process. New questions -served as follow-up questions-

emerged as the data were analyzed. The researcher conducted and recorded one-on-one

interviews with each participant. The data were organized, analyzed, and synthesized to form

structural meaning and essence (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher created open-ended interview

questions that elicited the essence and meanings of the experiences of African American

administrators at a predominantly White institution. The intent of the study was to reveal the

qualitative factors in perceptions and adaptive skill choices that relate to the persistence of

African American administrators as minorities in their position. Also, the intent of the study was

to illuminate the findings derived from the participants' descriptions of those experiences

(Moustakas, 1994).

Interview Process

The researcher utilized a purposeful sample of six mid to high level African American

administrators at Broussard University as participants. Purposeful sampling is a non-random

method of sampling where the researcher selects *information-rich cases* for in depth study.

Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central

importance to the purpose of the research (Patton, 2001). All participants hailed from various

units across the campus and represent different fields of university administration. Six

participants were chosen because it is the recommended sample size in a phenomenological

study (Creswell, 1998; Morse, 1994). Also, a small sample size is generally used by qualitative researchers because it is such a rigorous and systematic methodology (Maxwell, 1998). The criterions for selection were African American administrator with a minimum of mid-level standing and at least four years serving as an administrator.

Each participant agreed upon a time and place for the interview. The process was informal and began with a social conversation on their individual backgrounds. The researcher asked a series of questions that were developed in advance. These questions were developed to obtain a descriptive account of each participant's experience. Each interview was audio recorded for transcript accuracy and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes in length.

Figure 6 below shows the relevance of the questions contained in the interview guide to the research questions. The research questions were used to initiate discussions on several topics: then as a researcher I probed deeper into the participants' responses to develop a clearer picture of their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Interview Questions and Relevance to Research Questions

Research Questions	Interview Guide Questions
1. What strategies do African American administrators use to persist at their PWI?	(1) Please describe your motivation for entering and staying in your field as an administrator. (2) In the time that you have been working in this institution, what do you contribute to your successful navigation of the administrator field? (3) Are there any barriers –personal or organizational- that you could identify that would halt your progress? Explain. (4) Do you have a mentor? If so, what advice has he/she given you that has helped you persist as a minority leader at a predominantly White institution? (5) If you were to give advice to an incoming African American administrator who has arrived at your institution, what would you tell him or her about the experience and what they can expect? (6) What strategies have you used in the past that has helped you navigate your career mobility? (7) What strategies do you contribute to sustaining your position in this institution? (8) What strategies do you use to stay relevant and competitive in your field in comparison to your peers up and coming, at your level, and those ahead of you? (9) Describe for me your day-to-day persistence strategies (tactics you use daily). (10) What sacrifices, if any, have you made to obtain your position as an administrator? (11) What lifestyle changes have you made since you obtained your current administrator position?
2. What are the perceptions of African American administrators regarding their own survival at a PWI?	(1) How would you describe your strategies for addressing and dealing with conflict among other peer administrators within the institution? List examples if necessary. (2) Do you consider your level of communication, dialogue, and comfort with other African Americans different from Whites within the institution? Explain. (3) If a peer African American administrator made a poor decision, would you intervene or express your concern to said individual? Why and on what condition(s)? (4) Does your racial identity influence your decision making ability for the institution as a minority? If so, then how? (5) Do you feel that there is a fundamental difference in the way African American males and African American females choose to navigate their way through the academy? How so? (6) What are your thoughts on sustaining job security as it pertains to working as an African American administrator at a PWI? In other words, how should African American administrators maintain their job security? (7) Describe the characteristics necessary to sustain being an administrator at this university? (8) Are there any additional characteristics strictly for African Americans? What are they? (9) Describe for me how you manage your time. (10) What are your thoughts about those (lifestyle adjustments) changes?
3. To what extent does an African American administrator understanding of working as a minority within a PWI culture influence their persistence strategies?	(1) What are your thoughts upon learning of the departure of another African American or person of color from the institution? (2) Have you ever experienced feelings of separation or isolation from your peers during particular events or activities? Explain. (3) Has there ever been a particular instance in which you may have felt that other administration leaders in the institution may have made a decision based on exclusion rather than the inclusion of diversity? What was your response? (4) Do you believe that there is a set of written and unwritten rules strictly for African Americans at your professional level within the institution? Explain. (5) How do you internalize being a person of color in a position that's predominantly held by Whites? (6) How do you feel about this institutions commitment/ lack of commitment to diversity? (7) What are your thoughts on sustaining job security as it pertains to working as an African American administrator at a PWI? In other words, how should African American administrators maintain their job security? (8) What would affect your decision to leave or stay within a particular institution? (9) What type of stressors do you experience on the job as an administrator? How do you handle

stress? (10) What social skills and personalities are expected of African American administrators at a PWI? (11) Describe for me how you manage your time. (12) What skills are required for African Americans administrators to persist in their position? (13) How would you describe the academy's accepting of African Americans at the administration level since desegregation?

4. What actions can PWIs and already present African American administrators take to increase the persistence of African American administrators at the university level?	(1) What are your thoughts about the institution's policy concerning equal opportunities and affirmative action? (2) Why are African Americans administrators poorly represented at PWIs? (3) What do you believe is the reason for the underrepresentation of African American administrators at the administrator level at Broussard? (4) What kind of career path would you recommend to those seeking an administrator position? (5) What should be done in order to increase working minority representation at the administrator level in the academy? (6) If you could, what actions would you advise other peer administrators to take in developing the representation of African Americans in the academy? (7) If you could, what actions would you advise the University president to take in order to develop a better representation of working African Americans administrators at this institution and in the academy in general?
Miscellaneous	(1) Tell me a little bit about yourself and why did you chose to be a university administrator. (2) Describe your professional and academic preparation towards your current administrator position? (3) What is a "typical day" for you in your position within the institution? (4) Would you consider yourself a low, mid, or high/ executive level administrator? (5) Describe your working conditions, i.e. compensations, resources, hours spent on the job, support, and etcetera. (6) Is there anything else you would like to add?*

(*) represents that the question was asked in each interview

Figure 6 Interview Questions and Relevance to Research Questions

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research can be defined as consisting of three action steps: *data reduction*, *data display*, and *conclusion drawing and verification*. These steps are present in parallel during and after the collection of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). First, data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the collected data. It must be reduced and simplified in order to make the data more readily accessible and understandable (Kvale, 1996). Second, data display is used to organize the collected data in such a way that it permits conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Lastly, the third component of the data analysis process is conclusion drawing and verification. During the collection of data, there should not be made any definitive conclusions, and these preliminary conclusions should be verified during the process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Once the interviews were completed and all other data had been collected, participant code names were changed, information was separated into color-coded folders, and all other possible identifiers were removed. This aforementioned method is introduced in order to minimize potential bias in analyzing and interpreting data. Afterwards, each interview was transcribed verbatim, the researcher engaged in data reduction to better analyze and code transcriptions for themes. As Krueger and Casey (2000) contend, the analysis should be systematic, sequential, verifiable, and continuous. Following this path provides a trail of evidence, increases the extent of dependability, consistency, and conformability of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1989).

The first step in providing a trail of evidence is using a clear procedure of data analysis so that the process is clearly documented and understood. Interviews are separated into segments by reading and re-reading the transcripts thoroughly for readily identifiable themes and patterns

as related to the phenomenon. Notes were generated in the margins and categorized as the

analysis transitioned into the second step — coding. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998):

>Developing a coding system involved several steps: You search through your data for
>
>regularities and patterns as well as for topics your data cover, and then you write down
>
>words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. These words and phrases are
>
>coding categories. They are a means of sorting the descriptive data you have collected so
>
>that the material bearing on a given topic can be physically separated from other data. (p.
>
>171)

Once initial codes were developed, audio recorded interviews were replayed while

following transcripts in order to understand and recapture what was being discussed in the

interviews. Close attention was paid to the comments and the manner in which they were stated.

Further, transcribed interviews were reviewed multiple times for emerging patterns and

themes. Following the procedures outlined by Moustakas (1994), I extracted significant

statements from each transcript and organized these statements into clusters of meanings

(vertical analysis). An initial analysis, or summary, was written for each individual interview and

given back to the participants for member checking purposes. Once the initial analysis for each

participant was reviewed, all significant statements were analyzed across interviews (horizontal

analysis). The clusters of meanings were then identified as fitting into two separate categories,

textural or *structural*. The textural cluster describes *what* happened (Creswell, 1998). The

textural cluster is simply considered the content information, merely the answer to the question

about the experience of persisting as an African American administrator in a PWI. However, a

structural cluster is what describes *how* the phenomenon is experienced (Creswell, 1998). Once

this process was employed through each transcript, data matrices were formed, the researcher

combined the clusters from all transcripts by theme (textural and structural), conclusions were drawn, and interviews underwent cross comparisons for verification. The individual descriptions were used to develop composite descriptions of the meanings and essence of the experience that represents the sampled population (Moustakas, 1994). The findings of these methods are included in the next chapter.

In addition, the CRT methodology was introduced to analyze and interpret the interview data of the various experiences of full-time African American administrators in the drawn conclusions and verification stage. One of the fundamental elements of CRT is the centrality of experiential knowledge (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). "Critical race theory recognizes that the experiential knowledge of people of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination" (p. 26). Due to the nature of this claim, critical race theorists believe that storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, chronicles, and narratives are essential in learning about people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

In this study, storytelling and counter-storytelling is used to learn more about the experiences of full-time African American administrators that has attributed to their persistence strategies. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) define counter-storytelling as a "method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told" including people of color, women, gay, and the poor (p. 26). According to Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002), counter-storytelling counters a set of unexamined assumptions made by the dominant culture and is a rich way of understanding knowledge from communities of color — referred to as *majoritarian narratives*. Whereas majoritarian narratives speak from a standpoint of authority and universality in which the experiences of one group (Whites) are held to be normal, standard, and

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universal, counter-stories serve to undermine racist, sexist, homophobic, and classist narratives. Counter-stories facilitate social, political, and cultural cohesion, as well as survival and resistance among marginalized groups (Delgado, 1989; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). In other words, counter-storytelling tells stories of those whose experiences are not often shared.

There are two aspects of counter-storytelling: theoretical sensitivity and cultural sensitivity (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The concept of theoretical sensitivity as stated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) refers to the special insight and capacity of the researcher to interpret and give meaning to data. Cultural sensitivity (Bernal, 1998) refers to the capacity of individuals as members of socio-historical communities to accurately read and interpret the meaning of informants. For the purpose of this study, these concepts were used to provide sensitivity to meanings embedded in the narratives.

Data Analysis Procedures

Procedures	Task(s)	Modification(s)
Listing and Preliminary Grouping	• Examine all verbatim transcripts of the interviews. • Find participant statements that describe an element of the phenomenon. • Highlight, separate, and list units of data.	
Reduction Elimination (Data Reduction)	• Each unit of data is tested for two requirements: Does it contain information about the phenomenon that is necessary for understanding it? Is it possible to abstract and label it? • Keep all statements that meet the two requirements.	
Clusters and Themes (Data Analysis)	• Related units of data are clustered together into particular meanings. • These meanings, or themes, are given a descriptive label. • Repetitive or irrelevant data units are discarded.	At the end of this task, I created participant summaries containing all clustered units of data and gave them a descriptive label, or themes through data matrices.
Final themes	• Final check of themes against the complete record of the participant. • This final check includes determination if the theme is explicit in the data, and if not, is it compatible? • Themes that do not make this final check are discarded.	
Construction of Textural and Structural Descriptions	• A textural and structural narrative describing the phenomenon is created for each participant. • The aim is to understand *what* the experience of working as a minority administrator is and *how* the participants feel it has influenced their persistence strategies.	
Individual Textural and Structural Descriptions	• Individual textural and structural descriptions are merged to create a synthesis for each participant.	Individual textural and structural descriptions were used to create participant profiles.
Composite Textural/ Structural Descriptions (Drawing Conclusions)	• A textural-structural description of the group's experience was created. • Focus is on the common threads between participants to arrive at the essence of the phenomenon	Add CRT methodology to interview interpretations

Figure 7 Data Analysis Procedures

Validity and Reliability

The strength to qualitative research is internal validity (Phelps, 1994). The internal validity of this study is high because it is participant driven. The interviews were conducted in a natural setting, thereby allowing for sufficient time to refine assertions and recheck the conclusions of the participants' responses. Moreover, the interviews allowed the use of language that is familiar to the participants, thus allowing the opportunity for participants and researcher to clarify meanings. The participants also had the opportunity to validate participant responses after they were transcribed from audio recordings. Further, the researcher provided sufficient time and opportunity for participants to clarify their perceptions and individualized meaning of events in their lives via email and through one-on-one member checking in the follow-up interviews. External validity was not a goal of this qualitative research design. The researcher was interested in the comparability and translatability of his findings. Therefore, the internal reliability is dependent upon the presentation of the study's results and external reliability relies upon the researcher's ability to provide complete disclosure.

Credibility

During the course of the study, the researcher took measures to ensure the credibility of the data developed within the study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility is achieved by using various activities to increase the likelihood that credible findings will be produced. Credibility is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a "credible" conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher utilized three ways to achieve credibility. First, there was an included peer debriefing as part of the research process with Paulette Dilworth, PhD, whom is knowledgeable about the research topic. The researcher's personal experiences of the

study were shared with Dilworth. Dilworth also received regular progress reports and updates, while being encouraged to pose questions regarding the research question, methodology, ethics, trustworthiness, and other research issues. She was also invited to make pointed observations and suggestions and pose as "devil's advocate" at her discretion. Notes of these interactions are described in the researcher's field notebook. Second, the use of triangulation was employed to increase the confidence, or validity, of the methodological plan. Data triangulation was used by checking each interview transcript against the researcher's written field notes that were either developed during or after the interview itself. As described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) this process improves the probability that the findings and interpretations of the study will be found credible. Finally, there was an employed process of member checking in which each participant was asked to partake in during the course of the initial and follow-up interviews. Upon their agreement, each of the research participants was given a summarized data analysis and transcripts of their individual interview once completed. Participants were encouraged to offer comments on any of their statements they wish to expound on, whether or not they felt the data was an accurate representation of who they are, and if the interpreted manner is congruent with their own experiences. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that member checking is "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Member checking documents were sent to participants via email before face-to-face follow-up interviews were conducted.

Limitations of Phenomenological Design

It is important to disclose the limitations of a study to maintain ethical practices. Creswell (1998; 2003) stated, "Another parameter for a research study establishes the boundaries, exceptions, reservations, and qualifications inherent in every study: delimitations and limitations, which are found in both qualitative and quantitative studies" (p.110).

It is difficult to apply conventional standards of reliability and validity to the subjective nature of qualitative data (Burns, 2000). It is difficult to apply conventional standards of reliability and validity to the subjective nature of qualitative data (Burns, 2000). Although in qualitative research, a researcher can gain an insider's view of the phenomena in question; the documented interaction with each participant in a phenomenological study cannot be replicated (Burns, 2000). Additionally, due to the lack of a random selection process for the sample population, there is a decreased generalization of findings. Further, the data from study may not be considered applicable to all predominantly White universities. Lastly, because the study used qualitative research method, the findings could be subject to other interpretations

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS & RESULTS

...no one ever talks about the moment you found that you were white. Or the moment you found out you were black. That's a profound revelation. The minute you find that out, something happens. You have to renegotiate everything. And it's a profound psychological moment. And it's never talked about, except as paranoia, or some moment of enlightenment. —Toni Morrison (Denard, 2008)

Chapter Four reveals the results of interviews with six African American administrations on the topic of minority persistence strategies at a PWI. As detailed in Chapter Three, a qualitative approach was selected for the study as the best method to explore the phenomenon. The investigator served as the primary instrument of data collection using semi-structured in-depth interviews to explain the shared meaning of the phenomenon of minority persistence. Data for the study resulted from interviews between the researcher and participants as each African American administrator shared personal stories. Each of the subjects in the study was interviewed in their own office (natural setting).

The conceptual framework was constructed from the review of relevant literature regarding African American administrators at predominantly White institutions. Variables emerged from the literature to form the conceptual framework. The findings were coded to the variables in the conceptual The focus of this chapter is three-fold: (a) to introduce participant descriptions; (b) present the findings that emerged from the research questions; and (c) provide a

synthesis of the meanings and essences of the experiences and persistence strategies of African American administrators at Broussard University.

Meet the Participants

Timothy Wright

Timothy Wright is a high level administrator at Broussard University. He is a very determined and driven individual who states that he owes his academic and intellectual influences to his university professors. In particular, Wright references one African American male professor who has guided and encouraged him to "pay it forward" – a concept that instructs him to reach out and help others the way that his professor has helped him. Wright's ultimate goal is to become a university president; something he has been grooming himself for since graduate school.

Wright attributes his persistence as an administrator to being a good listener and communicator, hard worker, teacher, empathizer, critical thinker, having a desire to constantly learn, and his ability to take in tons of information to process and make data driven decisions. He also views himself as a lifelong learner that is constantly driving towards improving upon his craft as an administrator. According to Wright, it is important that one does not stop professional development after receiving a degree or receiving the desired position post. "One must constantly refine self and stay up to date with the current literature and developments in the field." In his opinion, that was one of the obstacles that have stifled African Americans administrators from previous generations in that they stopped learning once they have attained their desired position.

Wright is aware of Broussard's issues with minority representation and ultimately the South's legacy of racism and inequality. However, he does not see racism as his problem when working at Broussard because it does not stop him from performing his role.

Mary Moore

Mary Moore is currently a mid-level administrator who is also one of the longest serving African American administrators in the interview group. She states that she originally did not have any intentions to become an administrator when she began her career. She just wanted to be in a position to deliver programs to help others in the community as much as possible. Moore considers herself "old school" and feels a strong alliance to the African American community because she knows that she not only represents herself, but her church, race, and community through her actions.

Moore inherits her frame of reference for persistence from being intimately familiar with individuals involved in civil rights desegregation and litigation cases against Broussard University in which she believes resulted in her administrative hiring. She credits her persistence strategies to the older African American administrators who welcomed her when she first arrived at Broussard. From them she learned the importance of punctuality, accountability, doing her very best, hard work, keeping proper appearances, and being an activist. All of those African American administrators are no longer at Broussard. Since their departure Moore prefers to spend her time alone choosing to socialize, but not make friends. "You shouldn't party where you work". Furthermore, witnessing the departure of African American colleagues/friends from the university –early in her career- served as reinforcement for such behavior. Moore is nearing retirement and does not feel the pressure to persist. She feels that all she has to do is her job.

Moore feels that racism still exists at Broussard. In her eyes Broussard systematically oppresses African Americans in such a way that it becomes very challenging for them rise through administrative rankings without opposition. Moore also feels that the university will systematically retaliate against those who will stand up against them. According to Moore, Broussard University has always functioned that way and therefore she doesn't take it personal. She states that she has been victim to the university's reprisal, but that has not stopped her from being an activist. To Moore it is important for administrators as she to fight for diversity and equality because change will not happen without an initiator. "I think that when it comes to this university we have not been willing to move forward without some stimulus or should I say stimuli."

Jason Williams

Jason Williams is a mid-level administrator at Broussard University. He was born and raised in the city of Broussard –the location of Broussard University. In addition, Williams received both his undergraduate and doctoral degrees from Broussard University. Williams feels that he is in his current administrator post due to what he feels resulted from university politics gone wrong and betrayal from the executive level administrators who have served as allies and political safeguards in the past.

Williams was once a high level administrator who contributed his persistence to being politically savvy and being able to make good friends and connections with individuals in high places. According to Williams, those executive level administrators mentored him, helped guide his career, protected him politically, and made sure that he received access and opportunity into certain arenas that would be normally closed off or very challenging for African Americans to gain access to. However, due to a current regime change at the executive administrator level,

Williams felt exposed and has since transitioned into a mid-level administrator position. Now Williams views being a person of color in a historically White institution as a challenge because of the perceived prejudices and his lack of political allies.

Williams feels that his privileged position as a high level administrator and attempt to remain neutral in some instances has resulted in some failed professional relationships among his African American peers. Meanwhile Williams' notes that his presence in the administrative rankings has caused some Whites to stigmatize him as an affirmative action child with an unfair opportunity and advantage due to his minority status. He no longer has a professional mentor and feels "cut adrift". Despite those feelings and failings from both cultural groups, Williams continues to use what he learned to persist.

Joe Clark

Joe Clark is currently a high level administrator. Like Jason Williams, he too grew up in the Broussard community and received all of his postsecondary education at Broussard University. Clark proudly proclaims that he's been working at the university since he was 13 years old noting how he once sold cold beverages at the university football games.

Clark owes his persistence to having a great mentor and staying true to his core convictions of fairness and integrity. He feels that his racial identity does not influence who he is as an African American administrator. Clark also admits that he does not know if he internalizes or acknowledges himself as being an African American administrator at Broussard as much as he views himself as working towards being a great administrator. He feels that the challenges that are present for African Americans are the same as every other race. To him, oppositions in the academy are natural and expected due to the mixing of culturally diverse individuals. To Clark, that is the beauty of the academy.

Margaret Rayford

Margaret Rayford is a high level administrator. She is also one of the highest ranking African American female administrators among all participants. Rayford claims that she chose to become a university administrator because she was looking for opportunities to engage in challenging work. She feels that her unique experience as staff, faculty, and a now administrator is what gives her a well rounded perception into how the university functions. She feels that she has honed her skills as an administrator by "internship of observation" in which she watched, observed, and learned from those who are really good at their craft. As an administrator in her department, Rayford recognizes that her program is underfunded and under resourced. Despite what she lacks Rayford feels comfortable knowing that she has the connections and support to be productive.

In terms of persistence, Rayford does not see herself as doing such because she knows that she can leave at anytime. Rayford's contributes her sustainability to taking ownership of her own happiness within the workplace. According to her, comfort is something that you have to create and work at. Therefore, she believes that individuals have to make decisions on how they are going to be happy. However, Rayford does note that one of her persistence strategies lies in observing and trying to get a better understanding of the university's culture. So far she understands that the culture at Broussard is still very traditional and people take pride in keeping it that way. "That's the Broussard way and at the same time they talk about change but they still hang on to the Broussard way." She also feels that of all the places she has worked, Broussard is probably one of the least collaborative environments.

As an African American female, Rayford feels that elements of racism and sexism exist at Broussard because it is ensconced into the institution. She believes that despite the talks of

diversity, Broussard is structured in such a way that pockets of inequity will exist because everyone has "their place" and stays there. She also feels that conversations around those inequities are very polite but those same conversations -in terms of dealing with inequity- have not always been engaged with the people who need to be a part of them (minorities). From observation, Rayford describes the politics of the institution as "thick" and therefore she does not engage people if she does not have to.

Susan Johnson

Susan Johnson is a mid-level administrator. She spent a large part of her career as a professor at a HBCU until she decided to go into university administration. She served as an interim administrator there until she felt that the provost was not willing to invest in her career as an administrator, therefore she migrated to Broussard University for more opportunities. Since arriving at Broussard, Johnson decided to stay in administration because she did not want to undergo the pressures and politics of receiving tenure again. She also wanted to expand her role in helping as many students as possible inside and outside of the classroom.

Outside of doing good work, Johnson contributes her persistence to understanding how to blend in and use a tactic that she refers to as *play the game*. She owes her knowledge of being able to play the game to her experiences as a professor matriculating to tenure. Johnson believes that her ability blend in makes people feel comfortable around her. According to her, "You have to be like one of them." In addition to being able to adjust, Johnson also cites advancing her credentials to stand out, being very independent and determined, and her ability to create new programs as how she persists as an administrator.

As an African American administrator Johnson acknowledges race is an issue because of other people's perceptions. Therefore she admits that she "code switches" depending on the

company around her. She acknowledges that there are certain conversations that she can have with African Americans that White individuals would not understand without first judging her. Johnson states that she views her race as an asset among other peer administrators when an African American female perspective is needed.

Findings

There were a number of themes that emerged during the data analysis that provided insight into the experiences and persistence strategies of African American administrators. The primary themes were verified across all if not most of the six participants' transcripts. Therefore the categories presented do not represent the experiences of each participant in the study because no two people will have the exact same experience. Neither does a "prototypical case" of the persisting African American administrator exist despite many African Americans having shared the legacy of struggle in their experiences as a result of living in a race and class conscious society (Collins, 1990). Thus, the approach is to place the narratives in the most appropriate context to provide an expansive illustration of general experiences of using criteria for the best fit rather than exact fit (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Research Questions

In this study, four research questions were composed to collaboratively explain the phenomenon of persistence and persistence strategies used by African American administrators at a predominantly White university. Each of these questions serves as a category of the phenomenon in question that will be discussed more in detail. The data was gathered and organized into various themes. Descriptive statements via direct quotes were used throughout the discussion where applicable to give a richer context to their experiences, perceptions, and

persistence strategies. Also, the participants' verbatim interview responses served to support my interpretations of the phenomenon.

<center>**Persistence Strategies**</center>

Question One: What strategies do African American administrators use to persist at their PWI?

The persistence strategies of African American administrators is a category that captures the various ways in which participants shared their thoughts, feelings, and experiences on how they have been able to make decisions to navigate their post within a PWI. From the participants' perspective they often feel the need to develop within their profession and remain competent despite their knowledge of cultural and structural barriers within the institution. Several themes emerged from answering the aforementioned question that will be discussed in more detail. These themes include *Maintain Professionalism, Manage Your Brand, Deconstruct to Understand Culture, Deconstruct to Understand Race, Maintain Values, Master University Politics,* and *Support Networks.*

Maintain Professionalism

When I asked about persistence strategies all participants mentioned the need to remain a professional at all times. Most of them indicated that while they are knowledgeable of certain cultural and institutional barriers against racial minorities, they must continue to represent themselves as if unaffected. To the participants that means maintaining proper appearances, always being prepared, and above all else, remaining competent. According to Moore, keeping up proper professional appearances instills a sense of racial pride and positive image. She recalls those feelings as well as the advice given to her that she still uses to as a persistence strategy when she first became an administrator:

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I say get to work on time. If you say you are going somewhere then go there. Let

someone know where you are if you don't stay long. Dress well. Don't ever come to

work not looking good. Buy yourself a black suit, a brown suit, and a grey suit. Dress

the part and speak correctly when eating in the union. In my day, we (African

Americans) ate with pride. We didn't just go in and eat. We sat correctly and used our

knife and fork because we knew we were displayed. We also knew that we had to be

good with such matters.

Wright adds to the conversation by mentioning that while he is aware of his race as a minority

administrator, he places more emphasis on professional preparation and competence on the job.

I think less about my race and I tend not to judge things that happen to me or for me

based on my race. I don't even try to think about it that way, but it does not come to my

mind that they made that decision because I am Black. That doesn't come to my mind. It

can. I'm not suggesting that I'm ignorant to that, but if they did I don't care. I'm going

to bring so much data to the table that whatever decision we need to make they are going

to say, "Gosh this brother thought it all the way through and it's going to be tough for

them to say yes or no based on what he has brought to the table." I pride myself on being

as thorough as possible regardless of my age and my race.

Wright goes on further to add:

I always do my best. Whatever I submit I try to submit it thinking that it's going to the

president's office no matter where it's going whether I am sending it to a student, if I am

sending to a parent, if I'm sending it to a colleague. I try to put in the time and thought

into making sure the detail is correct and accurate. I tell the people in my office not to

half-ass anything. It's coming out of my office. That's going to have my signature on it

and people are going to associate it with my office. Therefore, in all of our publications

we need to read them through line by line, letter by letter, making sure so that we all do

our best. For people that work for me that is the thing that I ask them to do because their

work is a reflection of me. If they are not doing their best people think that I'm not doing

my best.

In addition to being in agreement with his fellow participants, Williams feels that while

he maintains his professionalism as an administrator, his professionalism derives from his own

constant reminder to remain articulate and informed due to his experiences and observations with

the institution.

You have to remember now that this is a predominantly White institution. Most of them

(PWIs) are like this one where the percentage is from 86 to 87 percent White. So when

an African American comes in you will be perceived as the minority person that does the

minority thing, whatever that thing is. Be prepared for some of that. Be prepared for

some of that and then be able to get above and beyond it. Be so articulate and so

informed that you can carry the day and the conversation and the responsibilities

wherever you are. Whether you are around Whites, Blacks, or a combination of all that,

you are going to meet people that have poor attitudes. Blacks can be as hateful and mean

and difficult as any White person that comes with any of those perceived ideas.

Overall, a majority of the participants shared similar thoughts. They each chose not to

allow the perceptions of others to adversely influence their professionalism. Participants are

aware of the barriers presented within the institution. Most of them acknowledge that some of

the challenges are race specific. However, all of them agree that their disposition is to fulfill

their individual roles as dictated by their job descriptions within Broussard. At the end of the day, getting the job done is what matters.

Manage Your Brand

All participants reported that one of the most common variables in their persistence strategy is best categorized as managing their brand. To *manage your brand* means to maintain a good image as associated within one's own particular field and inside their institution. For the participating administrators that meant gaining the proper credentials, becoming involved in national and international conferences, workshops, researching and publishing in their field. However, before any of those components are considered, each and every administrator spoke of hard work being the key component and catalyst. Mary Moore describes her experience as it relates to managing her brand and posits that beyond the foundation of being a hard worker, her credentials are a major factor to her persistence.

> I believe in hard work and I just trust God. I can't say that I got any real break from anyone because when I wanted to work here I was told that my credentials were too scientific and too medical. Therefore I was told to get some training in educational methodology and teaching. I did that and it worked out well for me in my department. In addition, fusing my scientific background into educational methodology made me a better administrator.

Like Moore, Wright also believes in hard work, however he makes it a point to work harder than his peers. Despite everyone else's performances, Wright states that he feels the need to do more in order to stand out as a professional.

> Always work hard. Get up early stay up late. Do more than what people think is acceptable. When people say you don't need to put that presentation in power point print

slides, have it three ring bounded, and hand it out don't listen to them. Make it like you are always submitting to the president or to the board of trustees. Raise the bar. As Russell Simmons stated, "Don't play small because you want people around you to feel comfortable."   Play big, work as hard as you can, always submit your best so those you are presenting to feel like you are setting a new bar. Now you are going to have some haters they are going to be some people that are going to say "look at him showing off". I rather have them say that about me than "here comes some slack presentation again". That's not the brand I want to communicate. You have to manage your brand and how to produce the best brand possible.

When asked about maintaining relevancy in the field in regards to her brand, Johnson spoke on the importance of having established credentials and constantly engaging in professional development:

Well I think that you have to go in having credentials. Well this is just me speaking as a Black female. I have to have just as much if not more than the next person. I may not or can't just have a master's degree or a certificate. I have to have more than the next person, and that's why I decided to get my PhD. I didn't have to because that wasn't a requirement for this job, but that strengthened me as a professional. Having a PhD makes you more attractive to people or to your dean per say. In addition, I go to conferences. I conduct workshops. I have done a couple of online workshops. I read a lot of articles. I have this journal that I get called Diverse Higher Ed. Further, I read a lot of journals, participate in workshops, and talk to a lot of different people. I also attend national conferences for my field.

Deconstruct to Understand Culture

Many of the participants in this study spoke of their experiences and knowledge gained from observing the culture around them as administrators. Reading and deconstructing to understand culture proved to be vital as well as being able to contextualize the institution's history in addition to what is considered the "historical landmines" of the profession. Some administrators spoke candidly of lessons learned from observing their peers. Rayford describes her cultural observations at Broussard in relation to the university's tradition.

> It's a complicated culture to me. You have to know when to dig in or say, "You know what I'm going to let that go." You know what I mean? Sometimes it's not worth the fight. On some issues you might win the battle and lose the war. There is a culture here where people really do take pride in saying that this is how we really do things in terms of tradition. "That's the Broussard way." However, at the same time, they talk about change but they still hang on to the traditional Broussard way.

When speaking of using observation as a persistence strategy, Wright notes that it is very important to constantly pay attention to the consistency between individuals' words and actions. Furthermore, one should not only observe people, but it is critical to observe, deconstruct, and understand the institutional surroundings while working.

> I always pay attention to what people say, how individuals act, and what they do because it's easy for some to say one thing and do something else. I'm not always moved by people's verbal commitments, but I am convinced by people who are actually do what they promise. I pay attention to the environment is so important. I think that so often we get into this line of work and get so involved that we are not paying attention to what's going on around us. I think that's where people of color make the mistake in that they get

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so committed to the craft and they fail to notice their surrounding environment. While you are working your tail off, suddenly people around you are plotting. If you are not paying attention you won't even realize what's going on until the hammer falls. Then you are surprised. You are going to feel like "whoa I didn't even know what was going on". What's paramount is to learn how it's done here and then innovate. If you don't have this foundation you are setting yourself up for failure.

Rayford understands Wright's notion and adds that she often consults a third party -that has been at the institution a little longer- to help her deconstruct what she witnessed or experienced in order to gain clarity.

If I experience something and it's kind of unsettling or I'm troubled by it I would generally pick up the phone and ask someone that has a historical or an institutional memory that can deconstruct it for me. Sometimes it helps. However, sometimes getting people who have been here for a long time to deconstruct things for you can actually create even more confusion. I say that because sometimes I sense that some people talk negative yet they allow for certain injustices to occur. They also say that they love the institution, but then you wonder "how can you possibly love the institution if allowing a status quo of inequity or a negative way of thinking are the things that you want to subscribe to?" That alone can be unsettling. Therefore I try to find somebody who can bring an objective perspective to whatever it is that may be creating questions in my mind.

Johnson recounts an experience and learned lesson from observing a fellow colleague who didn't last long at Broussard. From surveillance she internalized and developed her own insight on how to better conduct herself as a professional. In essence, Johnson believes that it is best to fit in:

You have to be like one of them. You have to allow them to feel comfortable around you

to be permitted in their environment. And that's playing the game. You just have to

know how to deal with all types of people. I don't like people that go "Black power,

Black this, and why Black people…" I had a friend that did that while she was here and

she didn't make it.

When asked to elaborate on what Johnson feels is "making it" as an African American in a

predominantly White institution she had this to say:

Well they like a person with charisma that looks the par; an individual that dresses

similar to their environment. You can't come to work with jeans on. I don't think that you

should come to work with a lot of long dreads. I don't think that you should have long

fingernails. I think that when it comes to business environment you have to take away the

social characteristics of a Black person. Take that out, put it aside, and be "normal". You

need to be the normal person that dresses nice, look and act the par, and actually does the

job.

Williams adds to Johnson's viewpoint in stating that sometimes it is best to go with the flow if

one wants to remain at the decision making table as an administrator.

You want to be known as one who is not going to make too much fuss and that's not a

bad thing, but it's inappropriate because fussing about wrong is something I have the

right to fuss about it. However, they don't expect you to challenge authority and the

decision making. If you do, then one of the things they do is exclude you from the

meeting. That sends another message. If you talk too loud you won't be invited back.

Deconstruct to Understand Race

The participants spoke of how their understanding and deconstructing of race influenced their type of persistence strategy when navigating the institution. The interviewees spoke of two forms of racism that affected them: institutional racism and individual racism. They described incidents that pointed to institutional traditions, perceptions, and every day practices that disadvantaged them on the basis of their racial group. While many administrators acknowledged race as an issue, many found ways to continue their administrative duties despite these overt or covert experiences. Moore firmly believes that African American mobility and sustainment is possible. However, all African American administrators have a greater responsibility to uphold:

> You can do anything from here at Broussard University. You can write, publish, and travel. You just have to do your job well. And always remember who you are, where you are, and remember that you are representing not just yourself. I don't know if that's a burden. This is just one of those things that come with being an African American administrator. You are representing your community. You are representing your church. You are representing your race. Know who you are because there are going to be bumps in the road. Don't take it personally as an attack. I know we are human and you may feel that certain presented institutional barriers or acts of racisms are a personal attack. Don't let it absorb you. In fact, let me hasten to say "don't act like it's not happening." My mother use to say "there's a bug under every chair you just need to pick up the chair and look at it." However, once you see it, just know that bug is there and be careful how you move.

On the other hand, Wright does not recognize race as a barrier when performing his duties. He internalizes issues of race as other people's problems rather than a burden that he has to carry around with him the workplace.

> People feel like this is a racist environment and "I can't do this or do that". Racism is their problem. That's your problem if you are challenged by my race. That's not my problem and I'm not about to make it my problem. If there is something that I need I am going to make a case for it. I'll go for it. I'll rally the troops and I'll do whatever I need to attain it. Once again, let me state that my race is not my problem. I've lived with it all my life and I have no problem with it. It might be your problem and that's fine, and you have the right to have your own problem, but it's not going to be my problem. I try to tell young African American men, women, and other administrators of color to stop getting caught up in their problems. Stop limiting yourself because people don't like you due to your race. If you don't then you have accepted their problem. Now you have made it your problem.

Wright goes on to state that race serves no correlation to job performance. Therefore, it is important to continue being competent despite the racial views held in the workplace.

> I've learn to say that's fine go ahead and hate me because I'm Black, but you are not going to outwork me. Furthermore, anything that I stand up and talk about I'll be competent in. I may not be the world's authority. You might have studied this in school, but when I stand up in and speak up about whatever the topic is, I'll be competent. If I don't know it I will find out, but you not going to outwork me; and that has nothing to do with race. Work ethic is personally motivated it's not race driven. They can't take my work ethic away from me.

Clark, being from the area, spoke of a noted historical experience with race experienced as a former student at Broussard University:

> As a student there were challenges back then. They were having this confederate south parade and the confederate south parade was something that was not welcomed by many African Americans. They felt like allowing that type of activity to happen here on campus was very piercing and humiliating. The images in the parade reflected a very painful past. Now many of those things were put to bed so that progression and development for a deeper appreciation for other races may happen.

When asked to elaborate further on the parade and if his racial experience influenced his role as an administrator, Clark responded simply by stating:

> I can't really think about it off the top of my head, but of course Broussard has had its history of diversity challenges. Over my years here I have not personally overheard or been privy to conversations about diversity and the need to maintain exclusion. Yeah I heard those type of things were going on, but I can't really speak on that.

Williams, another resident born and raised in Broussard spoke specifically of the confederate south parade and his knowledge of other institutional practices and traditions:

> White fraternities would have a parade where they would march around campus in basic southern heritage. The girls would dress in hoop skirts and the guys would dress in confederate army gear and carry these big giant confederate flags while marching around campus. Some of them painted their body in purple. They didn't do it in black because it would look bad. However, we know that was the idea. They would walk around acting like slaves with rags around their heads to look like a mammy, "Aunt Jemima", or other slave characters. That particular practice went on for years until the university finally

stopped it. At first, the university didn't have the nerve to tell them that they can't do that anymore. Those students were never called out on it until finally the president said this is Broussard University and this hurts the image of the institution. I remember how they would march around the campus every year. There were never any Black people in the parade. We just stood on the side and watched in disgust. It was embarrassing to some Whites, but I remember watching a lot of them as students enjoying it.

When asked about his understanding of his historical experience of race and its influence on his role as being an administrator, surprisingly Williams admits that race does play a role with his position. He feels that he sympathized and worked better with Whites due to a poor first impression and initial rejection by a group of peer African American administrators upon his arrival.

In the late 1990s I became a high level administrator. I was in the job a week and I showed up at a black caucus meeting on campus where all African American faculty, students, and administrators are. I was attacked. I just showed up. I haven't done anything. I haven't been in the job long enough to have done anything offensive to them. I was just unmercifully attack and I never went back. That experience colored my reaction and relationship with them from that point on; even to this day. We have never gotten along the way we should have despite being on this campus, in this skin, and having a shared past experience as African Americans. We just didn't get along. Don't get me wrong, people may disagree but there is a way to do it. So my communicating with them and my approach in helping to resolve issues was totally different with Whites. I basically felt that if I was to be treated like that by my own kind then I should make me a new set of friends and see what I can get out of it. And guess what? I benefitted to a

point because I didn't have to do anything but my job. I didn't have to face scrutiny from

my African American peers. So yeah, I knowingly treated them differently.

I asked Williams if he could further elaborate on how he treated his African American peers

differently he states:

I just disagreed with their method of action, but I didn't oppose their understanding of the

history of Broussard University. They thought the university was moving too slow.

Meanwhile, I and other White administrators were behind the scenes trying to say "Okay

how fast are we going do this or where are we going do this?" My African American

peers would get mad at us because we wouldn't agree with them. Conflicts among us

were bound to happen when we served on committees that would address racial issues.

For example, a discrimination lawsuit ruling provided money that was made to hire more

African American faculty. We didn't have enough qualified African Americans to apply

so we chose to start hiring African faculty. Some of us would disagree with that for the

sake of hiring people of color. Meanwhile we thought that if that's all you have to work

from then we will settle. However, my African American peers were ignorant and

adamant about just hiring southern African Americans. So one day in frustration I turned

to them and said fine, let's do it. Bring it on. Let's do it. Situations like that were why

we couldn't get along.

Susan Johnson admits that she consciously code switches around different races when she

communicates. She claims to do so because she is aware of general negative stereotypes against

African Americans. Therefore, she is more sensitive to her own perception as an African

American when around her White peers. Johnson explains her view through examples:

Just like kids, they tend to migrate to kids that are most like them. In high school you have the Black kids hanging with Black kids, White kids hanging with White kids and so on. It's the same thing with me as an administrator. I have a lot of White friends around here. We do have communicative differences but you don't talk about it. Say for instance, if I was at a meeting with a Black administrator and my brother just got put in jail I can tell her that. However, I can't tell the White administrator that because us going to prison is already a stereotype with Black people anyway. Consequently, I always keep it professional. You just don't talk about things going on with your family to everybody because we as African Americans are already stereotyped from the beginning.

Maintain Personal Values

Another factor articulated by several participants that served as a persistence strategy revolves around maintaining personal values or a strong sense of self. A strong sense of self helps to combat the pressures of assimilation on minority administrators by majority groups (Cross, 1991; Helms 1990). Many of the participants of this study attribute their personal values to being a hard worker and having good ethics. In most cases, administrators in the study feel that doing the right thing takes precedence over persistence. As Rayford provides her input:

I walk a very fine line because I do have some ethics and values. There are things that I value in terms of who I am as a professional and I don't compromise those for anybody. You know young people have this saying "keeping it real" and that's what I try to do. In roles like this you are either damned if you do and damned if you don't so you might as well work through your own value system and hold on to those things that make you an ethical person. Besides it's so easy to be misguided or misdirected by some of the other

things that I have seen people engage in around here, and doing that still does not

necessarily attain or sustain your job.

Clark contributes and further defines good ethics by specifically expounding on what he feels are

the necessary values are that has helped him continue to persist as an administrator:

I rely on core values and core convictions that are going to guide me through. Those are

a commitment to fairness, an appreciation for equity, an ability to make sure that I am

going to listen, a strong desire to be supportive of everyone that's around me, and I bear

that in mind here or at any institution.

Wright concludes in expressing what he considers are central strategies that he uses daily in

order to reinforce and make value guided decisions:

One strategy that I always think of is "seek first to understand and then to be

understood". I really focus on and I often think to myself that even though the situation

looks odd that might be something about this situation that I don't understand. If I had

this piece of information or this piece of data and it would make what I'm observing

make sense. So maybe I don't know. The other thing that I've been willing to do is to

spend time listening. Just going to different pockets of the university students, faculty,

staff, alum, parents, the community, and just saying tell me what you see.

A majority of the administrators in this study feel that they do not compromise themselves in

order to persist as a minority administrator. Wright best sums up this point in stating personal

values minimize the thoughts of having to persist at Broussard University, "I am not worried

about my next job. I feel like I worked my tail off here so my next job is going to take care of

itself, because my reputation is going to proceed me in whatever I do next."

Master University Politics

A pertinent strategy revealed in the aiding of persistence for African American administrators is mastering university politics. To the interviewees mastering university politics are defined in two ways: political correctness and alliances. Wright begins by first contrasting the differences between university politics and corporate politics in regards to decision making as an administrator:

> The politics of decision making in a university is very different on the politics of decision making in corporate America. It's not always about what the data says or what the most efficient process is or what the right thing is. Sometimes we have to make decisions based on image, reputation, and who's friends with whom. I think that political atmosphere happens a lot more at institutions than they might in corporate American.

Wright elaborates further on his statement by addressing what he acknowledges as a specific type of politics that encompasses and even overrides data informed decisions.

> At the university, race politics are going on so as you make a decision -no matter how financially sound your decision is- there are moments where we still have to stop and think "What are the colors of the employees that I'm getting ready to make these decisions on, and how is this decision going to be played out in the media?" So for example, let's say that I had to make a mass layoff. The decision could makes sense financially and efficiency wise. However, the race politics would indicate that if you fire this group of employees who just so happen to be African American, you are going to get some flak from the community. Chances are that's what's going to rule the day. Therefore, we can't make that decision to lay off that particular group no matter what the data said.

Johnson feels that as an African American administrator she has to remain politically correct and accommodating to her dominating culture. She recalled her observations on how formal and informal aspects of professionalism vary in comparisons between a HBCU and a PWI:

> You have to know what to say and when to say it. You can say different things in a Black environment than you can say in a White environment. They are not the same. Working in a Black institution, there are a lot of things that I said to students that I can't say to students on this campus because the culture is different. That's what I mean by politically correct. I had a boss at my old HBCU and he was Black, and my boss here is White. The way we speak and interact is completely different. At a Black institution they are more professional. You have the "doctor this and doctor that". At a White institution a lot of the doctors allow the students to call them by their first name. It's more of an even kill environment it's not as stressful as it is at a Black institution because of the prestige. If you have a doctorate degree you need to call me doctor this or doctor that. At a White institution it's completely different. Therefore, being politically correct means being able to be "this" personality one minute and be able to be another the other minute because it's totally different.

In addition to maintaining his ability to remain politically correct, Williams contributes his persistence to having developed political alliances within the institution.

> My political savvy and astuteness has allowed me to be able to make good friends and good connections in high places. Those allegiances have protected me when situations don't go according to plan. You need to have those people that can run a little interference for you.

As Williams continues to address the need to maintain and make new connections, he feels that sometimes politics can backfire. He cites a past experience that has served as a hindrance to his ability to navigate within the institution.

It is critical to maintain those political connections, but you have to also establish new ones. You need powerful friends in high places so other people will keep their hands off you for awhile due to your affiliation with that connection. That happened to me for awhile until the upper level dynamics level changed. When those dynamics changed I was vulnerable, and that's why I am no longer a high level administrator. One thing you may not know about my situation is that outside influences became involved in politicization of the process to limit my access within the institution. Those individuals created a nasty situation for me. When we got a new president changed the person who hired me was no longer employed. Therefore the new president owed me no commitment, and so there I was.

While most of the participants chose to engage in university politics, others do not. Rayford choose to minimize her involvement as much as possible.

Because of politics being so thick around here I try to stay out of the fray of engaging people, especially if I don't necessarily have to. I think that a lot of people want to pair up or be connected because two they see something they can gain from you or it's the other way around. That's not something that I want to be a part of.

Support Networks

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was support networks. When examining support networks, the term *mentor* surfaced very often. However, participants admit that they rely on more than mentors. Many of the administrators spoke of mentors who have

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contributed to their professional development or socialization within the academy. In that capacity, mentors either helped by role modeling or through giving advice. Furthermore, the findings in the study revealed that a support network can be either internal to the institution, external or as in some cases both. Many of the participants emphasized that they had multiple mentors outside their home institution. Rayford speaks of this instance when she states, "When I want some real mentoring I call up my mentors outside my institution and those people have worked in PWIs for a long time and really understand that culture a lot better." At times, some relied on a specific mentor for a particular situation. For example, Johnson states:

> I have a lot of mentors. I have friends that are deans. I have friends that are in high positions and I speak to all of them on a regular basis. It's just not one person because I don't think that one person can give you everything that you need. It depends on what I'm looking for. If I'm looking for advice I will call someone to get advice on my job. If I am looking for personal advice I will call someone else. There are a lot of people that I call that are colleagues that I call that I may call my mentors.

In addition to mentors, Wright uses a created advisory team to solicit feedback or an external viewpoint on critical issues and decisions.

> I have identified a group of people internal and external that I can turn to and share my concerns. I also turn to them for critical advice. Building an advisory team is important because you can turn to this group and tell them your most controversial decisions and ask for their input outside of your work. Before you make the final decision you need a group of people that will tell you "Don't go that route it will cause you that problem." Sometimes you may not have anticipated that problem, therefore you need other people who can look at it from a different lens or perspective and help you think it through.

In addition to providing answers to specific questions and providing guidance, Williams spoke of

a mentor's role as one of guided access. He feels that a good mentor is the type of individual

who opens up doors to provide to opportunities. Williams recalls having that privilege during the

days he had a mentor:

> My mentors would share with me some of the pitfalls that I needed to avoid if I wanted to
>
> be successful in addition to the types of approaches needed to pursue different
>
> opportunities. I feel that a good mentor would advise you on the necessary steps to takes
>
> and situations to be cautious of. They also counseled me on who to build a working
>
> relationship with and who to avoid. A mentor would advocate on your behalf. They
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> would say, "No, no, I think that he or she is the person that we ought of put in that spot or
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> I recommend for this or I recommend for that." This is why your mentor should be a
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> person that's already established on the campus, has a little clout, credibility, and has the
>
> ability to pick up a phone and say, "Hey I'm calling on behalf of Jason Williams" and
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> that door ought of open just to give you the opportunity. Now you may not get the
>
> position, but you will at least have the opportunity. Sometimes as African Americans we
>
> don't even get the opportunity because there is no one to advocate for us to say, "You can
>
> trust him, he's okay, he qualifies, he has degree training and experience. He'll be okay."
>
> That's what we don't always have and that's unfortunate.

Beyond mentors, Williams feels in having top down support networks. In particular, he feels that

the person who hired you should continuously stand by your side and be loyal.

> You have to find somebody that's going to be loyal, hire, and support you. Whoever
>
> hires you in a position is going to have to support you come hell or high water. You may
>
> make some bad decisions. You may make some challenging decisions. You may make

some missteps, and you are going to need that person to say, "I still stand by this person."

Whether it's the board of trustee member or the president you need someone to advocate

on your behalf. If not, then you are on your own and that is unfortunate because the poet

was right, "No man succeeds alone. No man is an island to himself.   Everybody needs

the support of somebody else to be the success they hope to be, and in this case that still

holds true.

Further, Williams notes that as an administrator one should build up a support network by

investing in the staff below them to keep the organization running smoothly.

One of the simplest rules that I always use is to get the people beneath me or who report

to me ready to replace me. Now if I do that it means that I'm teaching or insuring that

those people are taught what they need to know in order to take my place. What that does

create is a smooth or fairly well run organization. Therefore, I don't have to keep

teaching people what to do in their jobs because they will be well trained. Furthermore,

they'll be encouraged by me.

When addressing the topic of support networks, Moore usually results to what she was

first taught since becoming an administrator at Broussard. Her original mentors and friends were

her mentors that instilled in her a sense of discipline and responsibility to others in the

community. However, since their departure, she prefers to keep her distance.

When it comes to dialogue I am a very pleasant person. I tend to talk to everyone. I don't

know anyone that I try to avoid. My best friends and mentors -who are Black- are now

gone so now I just have casual relationships with Blacks. I have casual relationships with

Whites. It's hard for me to say goodbye to my friends. Several of my friends have left

three or four years ago. Therefore, I am very careful about getting involved again in

those kinds of relationships. I have staff people Black and White that I build up as a

support network, but I try not to get close to them. As their supervisor, sometimes I find

myself wanting to get involved in their personal business and I find myself having to pull

back.

In addition, Moore speaks of building up support networks for others by giving back to those in

the surrounding communities. She alludes to taking great pride in helping out individuals that

are native to the Broussard area.

When I took this position years ago I had an opportunity to truly diversify the staff, and I

went out and sought qualified people to come in and work in this particular program. I

hired men at a level with salaries whereas they can support their families. That was

something very different. We have people who are indigenous to the population who

work on programs. I was able to bring them into full benefits, and got them from being

part-time employees with no benefits to full time benefits with opportunities to

participate in a retirement system with benefits. That is how you give back and help

people. I feel that it is important to help those in the community who are indigenous to

the population. They were making minimum wage and we are now paying them more

than the university would allow us to pay them. To me, that is just phenomenal. Now

they brag about their jobs at Broussard University which means that they can influence

their children to aspire more out of life.

Perceptions of Persistence

Question Two: What are the perceptions of African American administrators regarding their

own survival at a PWI?

How do African Americans view their own persistence in a predominantly White institution? African American administrators in this study described how they perceive themselves in terms of their race and persistence strategies.   Perception and the negotiation of one's identity in the academy is a continuous process (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). How we choose to identify ourselves is important to our understanding of worldviews, values, and beliefs. In essence, it is difficult to separate our individual identities from the group memberships because we hold on to how our identities are constructed in relation to others and the cultures in which we are implanted (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). In order to better understand how African American administrators perceived themselves in relation to the use of their own persistence strategies, participants were asked a series of questions on how they assign meaning to themselves while working in a PWI. The emerging themes indicated mixed results, ranging from assimilation to rejection of predominantly White institutional culture as a means of survival. The following themes are: *Going Along to Get Along*, *Defiance*, and *Steadfast Competence.*

Going Along to Get Along

This theme refers to the nature in which participants have contributed their survival to blending in to the dominant culture at the institution in an effort to avoid conflict.   Thoughts and feelings were shared to describe viewpoints of going along to get along. For instance, Johnson notes that she chooses to get along with everybody as a means of blending in. She claims that that she owes her frame of reference to her workplace experiences at a HBCU:

> Well by working in a HBCU for years I have learned that it is very important to be able
>
> to get along with people, and I have actually taken workshops on how to deal with
>
> difficult people because. Sometimes it's hard dealing with difficult people so I took a
>
> workshop that taught me about personality types. If you know your personality type you

will be able to deal with others. So that has helped me a lot. That is the first thing that I have been able to do; which is to learn me as a leader or an administrator, or understand me so that I can understand others and deal with them accordingly. In doing so, you will be able to get whatever you need done.

Johnson goes on to allude that she is well aware of the image she has to establish in order to survive. According to Johnson, it begins with monitoring her behaviors in and around Whites which she references as *playing the game*. When asked to define the concept, Johnson stated:

Well the game is you do what you have to do to survive. You have some people. I'll just say this. Some people don't know how to play the game, and I don't mean the game as in real game. It's just that you don't know how to cope or deal with certain people. If you are in a White institution you don't go in and say Black power, Black caucus, or Black this. You can't do that because White people don't like it. You have to know how to get what you need professionally without being a deterrent to the institution. You can't go in as I am the only Black in the department, and because I am Black in the department I have to get this job. You have some people that do that and you can't do that. Those who attempt that never progress though. You have to be like one of them. You have to have them to be able to feel comfortable around you to let you into their environment. And that's playing the game.

Additionally, Johnson admits that her perception on her survival reinforces her idea of shedding African American characteristics, "I think about that when it comes to business environment I think you have to take away that social characteristics of a black person and take that out and put that aside and be normal."

Other participants in the study revealed that they saw themselves as either being politically, socially neutral, or both. Clark tends to remain completely neutral socially and politically, only focusing on the task at hand. He does not think of himself as an African American administrator as much as he does as an administrator:

I don't think of it as here I am an African American in this role as an administrator in Broussard. I am very much mindful of that. No one has to tell me that I am an African American. I know it. I know it better than anybody. Therefore, in my role I don't know if I internalize that as much as I view myself as working towards being a great administrator.

He then goes on to state:

My role as an African American administrator is to bring a perspective of an African American to the table. Sometimes it's the perspective of an African American male. I view those as a value added. Especially in an institution like Broussard; I think that it's always good for all of us to have a great diverse perspective about individual opportunities and challenges. It is very beautiful to have individuals from very different backgrounds to sit around table to discuss issues that hopefully could prove to be long term beneficial for the institution.

Williams also tries to remain as neutral as possible so that he can do what he feels is the right thing to do. Unfortunately, for him, Williams claims that his social neutrality when working with Whites often sends an unintended wrong message to other African Americans.

White administrators expect you to be a team player even at your own sacrifice sometimes. They expect you -once you are on board- to be a team player even when sometimes it calls into question your historical and cultural allegiance. You will be

accused, just as I have been, with being called an "Uncle Tom" because you decide to

stand up for what's right and in your position but you have to make the tough decision.

Despite the unintended perception, Williams insists that he is staying true to himself and doing

all he can to remain neutral until he has to make a decision on which side to choose. "When you

are in the middle of two powers you have to remain neutral as long as you can and then when

time comes you choose who has your best interest. Just never compromise." William continues

on and shared an experience in which his well intentions of neutrality conflicted with the

behaviors he felt were expected of him in his role as an African American leader.

> I was involved in a situation where a suit was going on and it was a discrimination suit. I
>
> was asked to help mediate it, and it involved some Black employees as plaintiffs. In this
>
> position, I was working with the university administration on one hand and the minorities
>
> on the other. Before I realized it I was right in the middle. I tried to help resolve I, but
>
> the downside was that on the minority side they assumed that I was an Uncle Tom. I
>
> wasn't. On the other end of the spectrum the university administration didn't know if I
>
> was telling the whole truth so I was labeled negatively and accused either way. The way
>
> I see it, you have to decide where and who you are going to sleep with. On the
>
> administrative side I was glad what I did because I was helpful, but I took a lot of abuse
>
> by people who didn't even know the real deal. People accused me of things that wasn't
>
> true. They called me this and that and the other and it didn't even involve them. The two
>
> people involved were happy and excited that about resolving the situation.

Defiance

When asked about perceptions, only one participant spoke of being somewhat defiant. Moore's defiance results from not wanting to take part in the traditional social activities within the institution that other administrators may take part in:

> I always felt like I would rather be alone by myself than alone in a crowd. There have
>
> been events that I have been invited to or mandated to attend and I knew I was there to be
>
> the show person. I call that being alone in the crowd. I am not always comfortable in
>
> those kinds of settings, so now the older I have gotten; I have chosen not to participate. It
>
> doesn't matter who put it on. I don't participate.

Moore focuses on the characteristics she feels that are necessary to survive as an African American administrator. These traits are also the advice that she passes on to incoming African American administrators arriving at Broussard.

> Be tough. Don't take any hostages. When they come after you, and they will, it's on and
>
> act like it. I am a firm believer in needing to stand for something and stand strong
>
> regardless, even if you have to go back and apologize. Whatever you do be right.

When asked about the ways in which she handles conflict within the institution, Moore had this to say:

> What I do is I tell people upfront that I'm trying to be transparent. I am like Don Juan, I
>
> have no secrets. I reach and meet them head on. I speak the truth to power. It's not a
>
> very popular position to take whether it's here at the university, at home, or at the church.
>
> Speak the truth with power. Speak the truth to power. A truth pressed to the ground will
>
> still rise. So if there is a conflict and people draw me into it I speak the truth to power
>
> and I move on. I also try my best not to hold a grudge. I try to put everything behind me

and press on. Each day has its own set of challenges and one thing about life is that if
you live it long enough, it's going to change.

Moore addressed what she feels is expected of her socially as an administrator. Unlike other
administrators who tend to open up about their personal lives and be more engaging, Moore
refuses to do so and feels that may be a perceived stigma attached to her character.

> I do not party with anyone here. People expect you to. I don't come here on the
> weekends, and people expect you to. I don't. I heard a wonderful presenter at the
> leadership institute this year. He got fired from Disney World because he was from
> Buffalo, NY and he had come South and he did not interact with the people. And he said
> that he was told flat out those people they expect you to ask them about their families.
> They expect you to tell them about your family and I thought, "Oh that's part of my
> problem." I don't spend time doing that chit chat unless I really have a lot of time on my
> hands. I noticed that those are one of those things we are expected to do. I guess people
> call it having good social skills. However, I've learned since attending separate but equal
> schools that if I worked hard enough everything is going to be alright. The rest shouldn't
> matter, but that doesn't work out that way. The issue in these settings is that we are
> expected to talk and tell people about our family issues and all those kind of things. I
> don't do it and I probably should but I don't. It's not something that I don't intend to
> start either.

Steadfast Competence

The theme *steadfast competence* is a theme revealed the participants are not concerned
with perceptions of race at all when it entailing their persistence. They are more concerned with
maintaining and developing new competencies for more attractive employment opportunities.

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Two participants, Wright and Rayford's perception of their own survival at Broussard gives credence to this theme. When asked about their persistence, neither of them does not really see themselves as persisting as an African American in a PWI, instead their focus is on developing their own skill sets for new opportunities. For instance, when Rayford was asked about her persistence strategies, she had this to say:

> I don't really see myself as persisting. I think of it as being positioned for the next opportunity because that's how I function. I never really looked for a job. Jobs sort of found me in that regard, or positions have found me. Therefore, whenever that next opportunity presents itself, if it's one that I think is worth pursuing, I'll probably do that and it may or may not be in higher education or in higher education administration.

Wright is not concerned with his race as it applies to his administrative post and persistence. He reveals that his focus is also on developing his skill competencies. In saying so, Wright shares his views on his own persistence and behavior as it applies to various generations.

> The generation before me worked for a company for 20, 30, 40 years and that's what my parents and their parents did. My generation now…? Before we are 40 years old we would have worked for five companies five or six companies. We might do five years on the average at every company. So in our lifetime we might work for 10 or 15 companies or institutions. Therefore job security to me, for my generation is less about focusing on pleasing the boss and more about constantly developing my skill set. When the day comes that my boss says we no longer need you here I will be leaving with a skill set that I can take somewhere else.

Wright goes on to speak of his views on job security as an African American administrator in higher education:

I always like to think that no matter what happens I can get a job. I can get hired

somewhere. I am less concerned about job security in the job that I am in. I am more

concerned about the skills that I'm developing so that when this job disappears I am

marketable for the next one and that's job security for me and that's skill development.

My focus is constant skill development. Keeping myself sharp and in tune so when it

happens I'm ready to go, but if I can stay I will stay as long as the institution expresses an

interest in having me serve in this role.

Rayford supports Wright's perception but also points out that for African Americans, "You are

either damned if you do, or damned if you don't." When asked to further elaborate, she states

that there are no guarantees when it comes to job security and for African Americans challenges

will always be present:

In my view it's how bad do you want to stay here because ultimately the decisions that

people have to make is what compromises are you willing to make to do that. When it

comes to African Americans I think you always walk a fine line if you are in

predominantly White situations. I think that's just something in that your job is not

necessarily secure.

Minority Status and Persistence Strategy Influence

Question Three: To what extent does African American administrators' understanding of

working as a minority within a PWI culture influence their persistence strategies?

The aforementioned categorical question described the participants' viewpoints on what

influenced their persistence strategies as a minority in a PWI. In particular, does their perception

of the White culture around them impact the way that they choose to participate in the academy,

and if so, to what degree? In the interview, respondents were asked a series of questions about

their cultural history as it pertains to the academy, various experiences that may have served as a reference point, and their interpretation of various experiences and observations. Several themes emerged from the transcripts: *Perceptions of Prejudice, Scrutiny, and Double Standards*; *Feelings of Separation or Difference*, *Historical Landmines in the Institution*, *Unwritten Rules and White Privilege*, and *Institutional Communication*.

Perceptions of Prejudice, Scrutiny, and Double Standards

The theme perceptions of prejudice, scrutiny, and double standards refer more to attitudes and the culture of unfairness experienced by the African American administrators in the study. Participants were asked to describe what they feel are perceived notions of their institutional climate as an administrator. Some reported a hostile stigma placed upon the qualifications of African Americans and their ability to perform on the job, while other participants spoke about perceptions about their adjustment to the culture.   For instance, Williams stated that as an African American administrator, "You got to have thick skin because you hear a lot of stuff a lot of things about us that are inappropriate. A lot of attitudes that you go up against you just have to roll on through." When asked to give an example of what he felt was inappropriate, William shared an experience of being in a meeting and discussing the lack of African American administrators. In particular, he recalled overhearing White administrators' consensus response on the hiring of African American administrators from HBCUs to work at Broussard:

> I've been told by other White administrators that they are not sure that African Americans that come from say a HBCU will have the background, experience, cultural skills, or political savvy to manage or survive in a place like this. I heard that while I was in a meeting among some upper level administrators some years ago discussing the lack of African American administrators here. That was their explanation when I suggested

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that we hire someone from a HBCU to work in upper level administration with us. White

administrators were not sure if African American administrators from HBCUs would be

able to manage at Broussard University.

Stories like Williams are familiar according to other Moore, who also shared a similar

experience on a hiring search committee alongside her administrative peers:

I sat on a committee that brought a high level African American administrator to the

campus around 20 years ago. Some of the discussions that we heard on the search

committee were almost unprofessional. The way they went after his credentials. This

man graduated from a flagship among HBCUs and received his PhD degree from one of

the most elite predominantly White universities in the nation! Yet, people questioned

whether or not he was qualified to come to Broussard University? Eventually we lost

him to another PWI because we were not quite ready for leadership par excellence. He

would have been an excellent leader on this campus if we allowed him to stay. However,

people didn't want him here in the first place. He was one of the best administrators I

have ever witnessed, but they were not willing to promote him any higher than his

recruited position.

As some administrators spoke out on some perceptions regarding African American

hiring, Johnson viewed the topic differently. To her, it is all about becoming acclimated and

seeking approval from her peers within the university. When asked about her own ideology

regarding knowing how she has been acclimated as an administrator at Broussard, Johnson had

this to say:

Well I think that you have to be engrossed in their culture. You have to take yourself out

of your normal environment. When I was in a HBCU environment it was different. It

was interesting, but the environment was harder for me at a HBCU; but you have to get acclimated to the culture. It's like the "good ol' boy system" if they like you. If you are liked and they know that you work hard, you will do whatever it takes to make the university look good, and that you are a representative of that department, then you are basically acclimated. If you can last longer than a year and they are not stressing you and telling you that we are having problems with this or that you will be fine. Better yet, if you can stay three years and they don't bother you; and they pat you on the back then you are acclimated.

Later in the interviews I asked what they feel are the labels attached to African American administrators at the university. The general perceptions from most participants that see race as a factor believe that their credibility and qualifications are always being called into question. Williams best sums it up in stating that having his qualifications scrutinized is still one of his biggest challenges.

One of the biggest challenges I face as an African American administrator is the accusation that we are not qualified to do our job. That's the number one issue. I feel that we always have to prove ourselves no matter how good we perform, communicate, manage, or generate positive outcomes. They always have a way to put the question in our mind of if we belong. It's the same question I faced as a college freshman on this campus to what I face as an administrator. "Will my work be seen on the same quality as others. Will I be valued for what I do and not diminished because I'm seen as an African American first." That issue seems to never change. That same issue is also my number one stress.

When asked how he navigates beyond that challenge, Williams added:

You have to have a good sense of who you are. It's an internal thing that you have to come to realize. Your experience teaches you this. It is a mind game. If you are good at what you do and you qualify in terms of having the proper credentials. If you know how to manage and you been in some of the positions, like I have, and done a lot of things then you know that you have to ignore that distraction. You have to not allow yourself to get caught up in trying to constantly prove yourself because your presence alone is evidence that you belong. I have the three letters behind my name so I don't have to prove the intellectual issue. If you think back historically that's the same thing Whites said to freed slaves seeking a new life. "You may not be use to this because you may not be qualified. We will help you. Just trust us and do what we tell you to do." They try to put you in that mindset where you believe that we need to depend on them to through this. That's a lie. You don't have to deal with that. You can do this on your own and do it well.

Despite the perceived prejudices, Wright cautions that one has to be able to control themselves in the face of such scrutiny. African Americans should be careful to note give off the feared perception of the "angry Black person" when communicating.

Any too much show of passion appears to others as the angry Black male. That's not where I need to be, so my demeanor and posture at work and with my colleagues is always with a level head. If I need to be frustrated or be angry I need to take that home, or I need to take that elsewhere to express it. Either way it is essential to always keep your cool no matter the situation.

Feelings of Separation or Difference

Another theme that emerged from the data is that of experiencing feelings of separation or difference when working at a predominantly White institution. When asked, all participants spoke of being disconnected or feeling isolated as a regularly occurring phenomenon within the institution. Wright sums up all the participants experiences regarding their isolation:

Yeah that probably happens once a week on a regular basis. I'm in the South at a predominantly White institution. A number of my administrative colleagues are Caucasian I might be invited to an event, reception, or a development or an alumni event, and when I walk in the room I notice that I'm the only person of color. However, it doesn't bother me at all, but I notice it every time. Being the only person of color in the room still doesn't stop me from doing whatever I came to do.

While all participants in the study spoke of isolation as being one of the few African Americans in the room, Williams feels that the isolation could also be two-fold. Speaking from his own experience, Williams state that he felt isolated in a room full of his African American peers.

I've been in some of those circumstances where it was deemed that there needs to be some "coloring" and I have also been in meetings among other African Americans and other minorities, and that's why it's two-fold. You can be in a room and you don't really connect with people. I think it is worst being in the room with other African American administrators and we don't have a great working relationship. There's a little tension that begins to surface. I just push through it. I know that those type of situations involving other African Americans grow out of and draw from the relationships and experiences after years when I first arrived here. They colored my reaction towards them too, so when there were things that we show up at for example, Black History activities

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we keep our distance. We all show up because it's right for those students. Since I don't really relate to them, I just kind of just go get with another group of individuals. That's not good, but that's what it is.

Historical Landmines in the Institution

In some instances, African American administrators described what they felt are historical landmines to either their position or to the climate in general. All participants agree that the institution has made considerable growth since times of desegregation; however one must still be aware of some of the racial vestiges at Broussard. As Wright gives this piece of advice:

> It's an open and receptive culture. There are historical landmines that you need to learn about. So pay attention. This is the south but it's kind of the new south. It's not the same state it was of the 60s and 70s that people remember so vividly from television. We are living in an environment where people are a lot more educated than they were in the past. I've learned that whatever department that you are in, focus on learning about the history of the position, so talk to people. Try to find out who held your job before and learn from them…. What's critical is to learn how it's done here then innovate. If you don't have this foundation you are setting yourself up for failure.

Wright further elaborates by specifically speaking to university landmines associated with his professional roles in the university:

> I think that in every position there are things that your predecessor may have done or didn't do that you have to watch out for. Enemies that your predecessor may have made that are sitting around waiting on you to make that mistake. They are sitting around thinking, "he's going to do it like the last guy did it." There may be good relationships

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that the predecessor made that you need to tap into that you may need to develop and

flourish. Understanding the history of your position and the history of your department is

important because there are some landmines where you department has gone down that

path before and it came up blank. Not to suggest that you shouldn't go down that path,

but you need to go down that path with knowledge of what happened before. Today may

be a better time to make sure that you are doing it right, but you want to make sure that

you have knowledge of what has happened before you. Broussard has been here for a

long time so everything I may want to try chances are someone has already tried it

before, so it's going to be helpful for you and me. Therefore it is paramount to learn how

the action went down before, what stopped it, and maybe this time when I try it I'll have

a great chance of success.

Moore, the oldest and longest serving administrator in the group believes that this institution still

has a long way to go. She states that while although progress has been made, the university is

still very much so structured in a way that change has to be forced at times through civil

litigation. Moore states that this is the reason why there is a multicultural affairs office in the

first place. She recounts her knowledge and history with Broussard and the shift from

desegregation to diversity:

Unfortunately, the positions that we hold here in my department, I doubt it that they

would have happened without a civil rights litigation. The civil rights litigation helped to

establish the office of multicultural affairs. When the case was in the judicial circuit

that's when all the racial issues started changing from desegregation to diversity. Then

you have what is now the office of multicultural affairs and diversity. That all happened

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as a result of litigation. I think that when it comes to this university we have not been willing to move forward without some stimulus or I should say some stimuli.

Williams further stated that the history of the institution plays a huge role in not only due to civil litigation and remedies such as affirmative action; the history also establishes a perception of some administrator roles held by African Americans. Williams shares his advice and experience in relation to this regard:

I would just tell people that inspire to be in administration that is a person of color or a different culture at a conservative HWI. It is one thing to be of one color in a particular HWI, but a conservative one such as Broussard is a little more challenging. They are going to color and see everything through those lenses first history and all. As for what you want to accomplish, you are going to be handicapped and hamstrung by those racially biased attitudes and there are plenty of people that don't want you to be successful and succeed because you are a person of color. That just comes with the territory. Some are hateful because they think that you are an affirmative action child. Some are hateful because, for whatever reason, your blackness has gotten you the opportunity that… Listen, a White gentleman told me the other day that he wouldn't go after certain job because they would be primarily looking at African Americans. He then tells me because he is a White male he wouldn't apply for it because "recruiting African Americans is hot now".   Yes, it's going to be some of that. To know that you are not going to have any real colleagues because people are going to wonder what you are on because of their own loyalty to a larger peer group. You need to be aware of all these things because every time you come into a room they are going to assume a lot of things about you.

Unwritten Rules and White Privilege

Some of the participants argue that one of the influencers to their persistence strategies are the unwritten rules and examples of common place White privilege that is encountered in day to day duties. Fields and Pence (1999) describes White privilege as a set of advantages enjoyed by White people beyond those commonly experienced by non-white people in the same social, political, and economic spaces. As other participants, Rayford posits that this type of behavior (White privilege) continues because those who are in privilege do not understand:

> If I say something I don't know if it's going to be received because the person receiving it has to have some understanding that what they are doing is morally inappropriate. The question of White privilege has a moral underpinning, and on some level they have to acknowledge that.

In this section, respondents address what they felt were noteworthy moments of unwritten rules and White privilege through various attempted exercises of their administrative powers. For instance, Moore relates examples of both in contrasting the differences of what she can and cannot do versus her White counterpart when attempting to discipline her subordinates.

> The written and unwritten rules… Ok. If I am ready to discipline an employee I better be ready to follow a policy, 1,2,3,4,5. As for my counterpart, they can go directly and talk to the HR (human resources) person and the HR person will give them advice on how to whereas if I want to do the same thing I have to make sure that I am doing 1,2,3,4,5 without question. Does that make sense? Whites are given more assistance in the "how to" and are aided. If I was to discipline an African American it would be okay, but I am to discipline a non-African American then I better be sticking to the rules.

Moore also cited frustrations with constantly being challenged on some of her administrative

decisions when dealing with individuals of a different race. She further elaborated by recalling a

situation over a hiring decision:

> I have people who want to dibble and dabble in my budget. They want to control what I
>
> pay people if I make a recommendation for a salary. I already know that somebody else
>
> who is above me or who can will counter my offer. They will counter saying "I don't
>
> think you should pay that because you have someone else in your department that's not
>
> making that." I already know when I put it out there that someone is going to counter
>
> and not say that's a good idea Mary. I know why and they know why, but they won't say
>
> it directly. That's what I'm up against. No matter whatever the recommendation is, I
>
> already know that it's done. I'm not recommending anything that's new or different.
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> Other people have done it. They are doing it for other people. Perhaps they have been
>
> doing it on that day. However, when I put it out there it becomes an issue. Case and point,
>
> I once hired someone on temporary services. I wanted to pay the woman $20 per hour.
>
> She has two degrees. However, what they did was go back and search the files and found
>
> someone that made less and they recommended that I pay her the same. These people
>
> who I pay that amount barely have a high school diploma. So what's the point? The
>
> difference is that this woman is Black. Come on now. We do it all the time. We pay some
>
> people $25 per hour. I requested $20 per hour and it became an issue. Of course now I'm
>
> only able to pay her $13.80 per hour. This is a woman that has been unemployed for
>
> three years. She's been in temporary services for two years. She was never referred to
>
> one office and she has two degrees from here at Broussard. Now what's wrong with those
>
> degrees if she got them here in Broussard? Are you telling me that she's not even

qualified to be a secretary? Come on now. That's one of the reasons why I am here. Someone brought her resume to my attention and pulled her application. I went ahead and asked her if she'd come work in our temp pool but we couldn't even pay her $20 per hour. We could only give her $13.80 per hour. That bothered me.

Wright's knowledge of some institutional practices and White privilege makes him more cautious on his decision making. While he notes that there are unwritten rules and privileges between the races in regards to decision making, some things are better reserved for deferment:

I would say that I'm a lot more cautious about my decision making. Things that my White male counter parts may get away with I think I might not get away with it because I haven't been here long enough I haven't built my reputation yet. I might want to take my time on that decision and play my card. For example, one of my family members is interested in working here on campus. Specifically, they are interested in working in a department that reports directly to me. They qualified for the position, the department wants her them work there, but the university has a nepotism policy on spouses or siblings working in a chain of command that includes their parent or spouse. Therefore, they could not work in any area involving a department that reports to me according to university policy. There are multiple examples of other people that have done and gotten away with that. However, I decided that we don't need to fight that. We need to leave that alone. That might work for somebody else. That might work for them, but we are not going to take that on as our challenge.

Institutional Communication

Institutional communication is another theme that emerged from the data. It refers to perceived messages that are sent either through symbolism or policy. To the administrators in

the study, the most common and highlighted message is the institution's commitment towards diversity. When remarking about the institution's commitment to diversity, some participants feel that the university sends messages about the type of individual they are willing to embrace. Although it is not directly communicated in memo or policy, the communication is clear to minorities. Moore stated she believes that the university methodically allows for certain actions or decisions to be handled in a way that avoids what is considered to be the real issue at hand surrounding African Americans and other people of color.

> When it comes to people of color, African Americans in particular, there are things that are done. There are issues that are addressed, and sometimes it's not the real issue. When the university is talking about a racial issue they want to avoid a lawsuit or the accusation of being too exclusive. "We don't want to be viewed as being a racist." We want to avoid that so we talk about issues from a surface level, but the real issue is covered somewhere else. That is a tactic guided by the unwritten rules underpinning the conversation in the room. "We are going to talk about this, but we already know what we are going to do about the issue. We just don't want it to seem too obvious."

Johnson agrees and states that certain institutional messages reflect a culture of acceptance that is reflected upon minorities. She recalled witnessing what she felt was an example to such an institutional communication towards supporting diversity:

> I remember there was a Black football coach that was in the pool to be the head coach. He was married to a White woman and they didn't want that. Therefore he wasn't hired. I know it's wrong, but sometimes the environment and being in this state you can't change it easily. People are not ready for that. That's very important in knowing your history. We are in a conservative state but when you are up in Illinois, the District of

Columbia, or California it's different because they have a multitude of racial

backgrounds. In this state you don't so you have to understand the culture of this

environment more than anything.

I asked Moore what was her reaction of certain institutional communications regarding the

culture and perceptions toward people of color and she had this to say:

There are always decisions being made in predominantly organizations that are ran

predominantly by White males. The decisions are made prior to the meeting, an

exclusive meeting is held, and then a meeting is called where you are summoned to the

meeting. You already know that the decision is made and you just have to determine

how soft or how hard you want to fall. The decision is still mine to decide, and you know

that the decision was made in an effort to support the number on policy exclusion. That's

not uncommon here or at any level, or unit that I have participated in from the university

president's office. Personally, I decide how much am I going to be drawn into it and if I

want to win this battle or the war long term. I just try not to always react verbally. Wait.

Listen. Focus. Stay focused because the conversation that you are listening to may not be

what the real issue is; but if you wait, stay focused, and listen you might get something

better down the road that you can use.

Most administrators felt that the clearest message of institutional communication is best

stated in the diversity make-up of its leadership or individuals in key decision-making positions.

Every respondent mentioned the lack of African American deans at Broussard University.

Williams best sums up all of the respondents' views on diversity leadership at the university"

I tell you one thing that's funny to us. You don't have one dean on this college on this

campus that is black. In the dean's council meeting, you see the dean's council. The

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provost is White and everybody else in the room is White unless there is support staff.

The current chief director of diversity may have been there another individual, but they

are not deans. The chief director of diversity is African anyway. You talk about things

that are done that send an exclusionary message; you talk about the make-up of the deans.

Wright sees that the problem goes beyond the lack of African American deans at Broussard.

According to him, there are others racial minorities that are just as under served if not more:

The other thing I see is how many Hispanic administrators we have here? How many

Hispanic faculty members do we have here? How many Hispanic students do we have

here? Hispanics are the largest growing minority population in the United States. We

don't have them here. Our neighboring states have tons of Hispanics. We don't have

them here. Who is advocating for them? There isn't a seat on my staff that has one

Hispanic person. Not one. So as a Hispanic student coming to tour this campus I

wouldn't come to school here because there is no one Hispanic to look up to here.

Advice to Other Professionals in the Academy

Question Four: What actions can PWIs and already present African American administrators

take to increase the persistence of African American administrators at the university level?

The final research question addressed the "so what" component of this study. While the

previous research questions addressed the persistence strategies, experiences, and various

perceptions of African American administrators; this inquiry sought to understand what steps

could be taken to strengthen minority persistence at a PWI. Participants were asked questions on

advice they would give to peer administrators or executive level individuals such as the

university president to combat the lack of African American administrators. Several themes

emerged from the interview questions: *Recruitment and Retention*, *Grow Your Own*, *Develop an*

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Intentional Minority Pipeline, *Top Down Structural Modeling*, and *Administrator Activism and*

Accountability.

Recruitment and Retention

This theme refers to the institution's ability to attract and maintain people of color.

Respondents felt that not only the institution, but administrators all play a role in the recruitment

and retention of African American administrators to Broussard University. Clark best sums it up

when he states that recruitment and retention needs to be a priority, "There needs to be ongoing

recruitment and great efforts to retain African American administrators and faculty members at

White institutions. There also needs to be and some of the retention ties over into this." In

saying, so Clark argues that the key to retention is derived from supporting mentorship. He talks

of his own experiences with having a mentors and the need for such a relationship culture at the

university.

> There needs to be a great mentor. Mentoring needs to be supported. Mentoring for me is
>
> something that doesn't have to be nurtured through formal relationships. I think that
>
> mentoring is a lot more in depth. Mentoring has to have that informal component where
>
> you are learning the job, processes, and university policies. From them you get a sense of
>
> the difference between policies versus practice. You get a sense of how to make
>
> decisions and how the dots connect. I also think that great mentoring occurs in an
>
> informal setting. You should have access to the individual that mentors you, and be able
>
> to ask questions that may have nothing to do with the professional life. It may have
>
> something to do with the personal aspect of things. Those type of relationships makes the
>
> environment more manageable for minorities.

Grow Your Own

The second theme of this study advocates developing the type of leadership and the diverse participation needed at the university level by simply investing in those individuals that are already present. The desired outcome is to give them the skills and knowledge to become better groomed for an administration post. According to Rayford:

One of the things that I advocate and I say this everywhere that I go that White institutions –Black institutions did it first- that there needs to be a model to grow your own. In doing that, the likelihood of you being able to stay here should be very slim as with other institution. Broussard has a track record of hiring their own. Rather than do that, they should grow individual is such a way that the person can go off and get some other experience and come back to the institution rather than rely on this institution as a familiar base to them.

Williams agrees with Rayford, and specifically states his idea for an administrator development program. According to him, Broussard University already has one in place, however the program fails at capturing individuals who fall below the usual acceptance pool of administrators or tenured faculty members. Williams feels that the current administrator development program should provide more opportunities for other supervisors beyond a pool low level administrators or faculty members.

We should extend our administrative development program and start at the supervisory level. From there you chart or track where people based on their experiences and education or some combination of both so they can eventually work their way up to assistant VP or VP depending upon their track or field. Let's take facilities for example, let's say that I'm a cabinet guy I do carpentry. I need to have the opportunities to take

classes and get more responsibility over different unit sizes so that I can keep applying

for promotable opportunities. All of a sudden I go from being a cabinet guy to maybe a

facilities supervisor and I work my way up an administrator position.

Develop an Intentional Minority Pipeline

The third prevalent theme suggests that administrators should start grooming future

African American administrators as early as their undergraduate years. Wright claims from

experience that the field of higher education is little known to students despite the profession

being all around them. He argues if students start early enough they would have a better chance

of making it into the qualified administrators' pool.

> We got to start at the undergraduate and graduate level. We have to get brothers and
>
> sisters to pursue PhDs and Master's degrees in teaching professions and administrative
>
> professions. You are not going to become a dean of students at any of these schools if
>
> you do not have a masters' degree or a doctorate in higher education administration. It's
>
> not a field that's well known. They see us as people who teach them. They see us as
>
> those who discipline then when they get in trouble. They don't see it as a career option
>
> until they graduate and someone taps them on the shoulder and says get in there.

In addition, Wright states that in addition to tapping students of color early, administrators

should introduce students to the field and sponsor them. "More of us needs to be pulling would

be higher ed professionals of color into the field and introducing the field to them and then

giving them that break of getting a job or writing them a letter of recommendation." Johnson

agrees and supports the "pay it forward" mentality. She feels that graduate students should be

brought under the tutelage of other administrators to continue a cycle of administrator grooming:

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We need to do what administrators are doing with graduate students. You hire them as a GTA (graduate teaching assistant) and hire them and mentor them. Everyone has to do that. When you get out you have to continue the process to help the next person. Whatever it takes to help that person you are going to get it back tenfold. It may not be monetary but it will make a difference because it ups the pool. Hopefully by the next 10 years we'll have our pool and it'll continue to double. I know a lot of people that don't do that so well. Especially in the earlier years when there were a lot of Black people that had their PhDs and didn't really give back. Some people feel like they have it and you really got to get yours. I don't feel like that. I feel like if the person is really committed to doing it you really need to do whatever it takes to help them get it. You don't do the work for them but you make your lives conducive enough for them to get theirs and continue on the process.

Beyond reaching out to students and developing them early to become administrators, Wright feels that the role of recruiting administrators of color needs to be a full-time job. More importantly, the task of generating more administrators of color should be on that is data driven. A need for African American administrators should be shown.

I still think that it has to be somebody's job like I can't just go to the Black administrator downstairs and say you need to get more African American to work here. I need to say that to the director of affirmative action. There needs to be a statistical analysis of what we have here. Then you need to be able to use that analysis to make a case for why we need more African Americans here. That needs to be a full time job. Not me telling someone else they need to do it. There needs to be someone who puts that in place and

let us know whether it's successful or not successful. The same thing goes with enrolment management.

Top Down Institutional Modeling

Structural modeling alludes to the various institutional changes that need to occur to make the climate for hospitable for other people of color. As Rayford states,

> You can have a group of people like myself and others how are in these positions and say you ought to do this you ought to do that. However, there needs to be an institutional shift in commitment to make sure that when you bring these people in they are going to be welcomed and comfortable.

Rayford goes on to add, that the problem is beyond bringing people of color to the institution. Institutions themselves have to make changes from within if they are to be more attractive to, recruit, and ultimately retain minorities. Having these diversity policies are not enough.

> That's what happens at a lot of institutions is you know that the laws have mandated that you have students, but nothing has changed the institutions structure so what's the point? Until that happens, and like I was saying, you have to look at the structure first and say that's what you need to work on. Otherwise I would be a hypocrite to say "come on in the waters fine' and then you take two steps and you start drowning.

Williams adds to Rayford's claim in stating that if an institution truly values having diverse leadership then the institution must really start at the top and work its way down.

> The board of trustees has to say we have to hire more, and then the president has to say, "Put a pool together and interview me some good prospects and in that final pool I want an African American, or I want a female." He has to say that. If he doesn't then it's not going to happen. That's the crux of this matter.

Administrator Activism and Accountability

The last theme is one that highlights the importance of being engaged as leaders in the academy. Many of the study's participants spoke of messages that they would provide to other administrators already established in the field. These messages include collaborating and supporting other African American administrators and standing up for future administrators of color. Moore, a civil rights activist, believes that executive leaders should be more proactive in promoting equality.

> We need not to wait for litigation to treat people fairly and equitably. I think that president needs to take the lead in insisting that provosts in academia and the research provost look out among them and get qualified people who have graduated from historically White universities to come to these universities to work. We need to give them a mentor and shepherd them through the process so they can become a tenured faculty.

Moore also believes that other African American administrators should be held accountable. According to her, already available administrators should be more proactive and even be willing to sacrifice their careers to pave the way for other up and coming administrators as the administrators before them.

> We need to hold the administration accountable. We need commitments from African Americans now that we have African Americans in different positions now as a result of litigation and the advocacy by people who put their careers on the line. Those people need to be committed to helping other people. That's the only thing that's going to work, but now some of us had gotten comfortable. We become professors or become associate provosts and assistant vice presidents and we are working, but we are working in my

opinion, we are working in vacuums instead of working for the whole as we once did

when we didn't have anywhere to go in the administration.

Moore also goes on to recall her experiences as an engaged administrator in her earlier years and

the observed method changes used to select administrators of color:

When we organized the caucus, we advocated for the office of minority affairs. We put

our careers on the line when we met with the president. We asked to be on the search

committees for the deans and the department heads so that we can try to get qualified

people. We knew that qualified people were applying. If you are not on the search

committee you can't say what the conversation is or you can't contribute to the

conversation. Oh yeah, he has experience in this area. This is where begin on the search

committee helps.

Moore then begins to further expound on her point by speaking directly to Broussard

University's past decrees handed due to litigation:

The court order says that a part of the settlement in the civil rights case against Broussard

University was that African Americans are to be on every search committee. I was just

reading the other day. It says that recognized African Americans organizations on

campus should have a representation on each search committee for deans and department

heads. The university goes elsewhere. The person appointed is not necessarily an activist

or advocate for minority causes. I'm not saying that they are not good people, but they

don't always advocate on behalf of African Americans. Another thing that they do is tend

to go with other minority groups which is what diversity means. Therefore, I think that

we need a cadre of people that are willing to hold folks accountable.

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CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers...

(Eph. 6:12 King James Version)

The study was designed to investigate the experiences and persistence strategies of African American administrators at a predominantly White institution pseudo-named Broussard University. Phenomenology was used as the qualitative research method to guide the inquiry. Semi structured interviews were utilized to collect data, explore and create narratives from the participants' responses. The data were structured by the participants' explanation of their experiences and the researcher's interpretation of those descriptions. In this investigation, a transcendental phenomenological approach was used to explore the thematic meaning of persistence as articulated in participant accounts of persistence strategies and experiences.

This chapter will present a reiteration and a summary of the inquiry's findings. The total corpus of accounts consisted of approximately 22 hours of in-depth, semi-structured and transcribed interviews with six participants. Further, I will describe the emergent themes from participant interviews, essences of the phenomenological study's findings, revisit the proposed conceptual model, recommendations for further research, and conclusions that may be drawn from the study.

Study Overview

This research study was an exploration of the lived experiences of six full time African American administrators employed at a PWI with the pseudonym Broussard University. The

study addressed (a) the strategies that African American administrators used to persist at their PWI; (b) the perception of African American administrators regarding their own persistence survival; (c) the influence of working as a minority in PWI has on persistence strategies; and (d) the advice that study participants would offer to professionals at the administration level and above to increase the persistence of African American administrators in a PWI. The study also used critical race theory as an analytical tool to investigate the findings in order to gain a better understanding of African American perceptions as minorities in a leadership position within a PWI. The researcher chose university administrators as a sample because of the degree of influence administrators holds over institutional policy and culture. A conceptual model was created from the literature review to test against the findings and ultimately describe the phenomenon.

Statement of the Problem

The problem was that African Americans represent a disproportionate part of higher education administrators in the U.S., especially at upper professional levels; and while it would be advantageous for them to have greater representation. Scholars have researched the barriers that African American administrators face at a PWI, but there is a diminutive amount of information on how they (African American administrators) persist. A comprehensive review of literature suggested that despite a considerable amount of scholarship about the status of African Americans in higher education, there is a scarcity of research on African Americans at the administrator level at PWIs. Research focused on African American administrators is either limited to student affairs practitioners (Holmes, 2004; Jackson, 2000; Watson, 2001) or to administrative roles directly related to the diversity mission of the institution—such as multicultural affairs (Rolle, Davies, & Banning, 2000).

Research Questions

The overarching question of the study: What are the persistence strategies and experiences for African American administrators at a predominantly White institution? Follow up research questions included:

1. What strategies do African American administrators use to persist at their PWI?

2. What are the perceptions of African American administrators regarding their own survival at a PWI?

3. To what extent does an African American administrator understanding of working as a minority within a PWI culture influence their persistence strategies?

4. What actions can PWIs and already present African American administrators take to increase the persistence of African American administrators at the university level?

Thematic Discoveries

The study participants offered open, in-depth, candid descriptions of their experiences and persistence strategies as minority administrators at a PWI. Within this context, the structure of persistence centers around four research questions on persistence strategies, perceptions of persistence, minority status and persistence strategy influence, and advice to other professionals in the academy. Within each research question -or area of intentional focus- interrelated sets of themes served to structure its meaning. Seven themes described the essence of persistence strategies. These are: (1) maintain professionalism, (2) manage your brand, (3) deconstruct to understand culture, (4) deconstruct to understand race, (5) maintain personal values, (6) master

university politics, and (7) support networks. The essence of the second research question –

perceptions of persistence- consisted of three themes: (1) going along to get along, (2) defiance,

and (3) steadfast competence. The essence of the third research question –influence of minority

status on persistence strategy- embodies five emergent themes: (1) perceptions of prejudice,

scrutiny, and double standards, (2) feelings of separation or difference, (3) institutional historical

landmines, (4) unwritten rules and White privilege, and (5) institutional communication. Lastly,

the fourth research question –advice to other professionals in the academy- entails five themes:

(1) recruitment and retention, (2) grow your own, (3) develop and intentional minority pipeline,

(4) top down institutional modeling, and (5) administrator activism and accountability.

Essence of Meaning

Moustakas (1994) once stated, "When we look at something, what we see intuitively

constitutes its meaning; and when we reflect upon something and arrive at its essence, we have

discovered another major component of meaning" (p. 70). In order to ascertain this essence, the

researcher delved into the study participants' transcripts to reveal the textural and structural

essence of their responses to the interview questions (noesis—perceiving, feeling, thinking,

remembering, and judging meanings concealed from consciousness). Then the researcher

attempted to ascribe meaning to what the study participants perceived, felt, thought, or

remembered (noema). According to Moustakas, "Noema is that which is experienced, the *what*

of the experience, the object-correlate. Noesis is the way in which the *what* is experienced, the

experiencing or act of experiencing, the subject-correlate (p. 69).

Persistence Strategies

Participants voiced that there were a myriad of strategies that contributed to their

persistence as African American administrators in a PWI. A majority of the persistence

strategies had to do with maintaining a healthy self image, understanding their environment, and establishing some form of a support system. For all administrators, their number one priority was maintaining professionalism. The participants all understood that no matter the circumstances surrounding their administrative post, getting the job done is all that counts. In stating so, sustaining that healthy self image while being competent establishes and manages their brand as an administrator. Respondents felt that their brand is what makes them marketable beyond the institution, therefore the pressures of maintaining job security is minimized.

In addition, participants felt that deconstructing to understanding culture and race in its proper context helps to better navigate the institution. Participants conceptualized culture through the observation of the many formal and informal relationships among various members of the academy. From examination, participants learn the rules, traditions, and social etiquette that others use daily. How each individual internalize those observations determine the method used to navigate the academy. Respondents felt that the culture at Broussard University is politically hostile and biased towards an older southern university tradition. Participants felt that their observations were a reminder to stay guarded due to the fickle nature of politics and the history of the environment in which the institution exists. Further, some participants felt that it is best to seldom challenge authority. Doing so, will exclude them from the privilege of being part of the decision making process within the institution. Another keen observation of the culture is the communicated message of their Afrocentricity serving as a deterrent from fitting in with other administrators within the institution. Consequently, administrators either ignored the validity of the message or internalized and responded in an appearance to be more accepted among their administrative peers.

Participants addressed what they felt were the conceptualization of race on their persistence strategies. Interviewees spoke of two forms of racism encountered: institutional and individual. They spoke of experiences in which institutional racism occurred in everyday practices and institutional traditions. Having recalled and lived those situations, participants referenced those instances as reminders of their perceived value as minorities within the institution. For many, their knowledge of institutional and regional history better illustrated the inherited boundaries and identification towards their own classified racial group. Rather than fight the perceptions tied to the conflicts between majority and minority racial groups directly, many respondents chose to understand and work around the issue so barriers presented by race or culture does not become a distraction to their performance.

All administrators felt that their personal value system guides them through many of their decisions. They defined their value system as being fair, having good work and personal ethics, and staying true to one's self. A majority of respondents felt that they did not have to compromise themselves in order to serve their administrative post as minorities, while others did. Those who did not compromise themselves comfortably accepted that no matter the decision there is always going to be some type of negative feedback. Therefore administrators felt that it would serve them to best make decisions that they are comfortable with rather than trying to please others. Meanwhile those who compromised their identity did so knowingly to attain positive result that benefits all involved. Consequently, they either assimilated or accommodated themselves within the dominant administrative culture to negotiate their decisions.

Politics is an aspect of university culture that participants felt guided their decision making ability. African American administrators posit that unlike non-academic institutions, politics extend beyond data driven decision making. Due to the culture of the institution and its

function within the surrounding community, certain decisions may result in poor public image for the university. Therefore, in mastering politics, the participants understood how and why some pronouncements are not utilized. Administrators felt that politics can be very frustrating and a distraction. As a result, respondents chose to utilize either one of two strategies to master politics: play the game or make alliances. Those who chose to play the game did so in choosing to consciously code switch while accommodating and sometimes assimilating between environments and contexts. Those who preferred not to engage in such behaviors made sure that they had an alliance with someone of a higher power to buffer or back their decisions.

African American administrators relied heavily on support networks as they navigated their way through the academy. Respondents viewed support networks in three ways: mentors, employer support, and building a constituency base through service. Participants all spoke of the need for a mentor to help guide their decision making as an individual or as an advisory team. Their mentors provided a point of view and a reference that helped to better understand the environment, various experiences, or possible consequences to certain decisions. Also, mentors played a significant role as a sounding board to vent work-related or personal frustrations. In addition to mentors, the administrators in the study also utilized employer support to sponsor their more challenging decisions. Having the public acknowledgement and sponsorship helped to ease the political tension and possible workplace opposition to a decision. Lastly, participants created a support network by building up their staff to facilitate office efficiency. Well trained staff supported systems creates a community of trust and mutuality that sustains a sense of pride and a positive cycle of contribution. Therefore the role of building staff support created a trusting culture to increase workplace efficiency through loyalty and dependability.

Perceptions of Persistence

Participants viewed their own persistence as either going along to get along, being defiant, or remaining steadfast to competency as an administrator. Those who chose to go along to get along felt that the best way to survive as a minority administrator is to blend in with the dominant workplace culture. To the respondents that meant aligning themselves to share workplace ideologies and ideas or by choosing to accommodate, support, and empathize with the decisions of the ruling majority. Meanwhile other participants felt that it is their responsibility as African Americans to continuously fight for equity and stimulate change for all minorities. Therefore they chose to reject and attempts of organizational socialization within the institution. They did so by choosing to only address their counterparts on work related issues and not become involved with university traditions associated with the dominant culture. Lastly, some administrators chose to not focus on either acceptance or rejection. They preferred to work within the institution, socialize, and conduct business without feeling the need to sacrifice or compromise their selves to accomplish the task at hand. Instead of allowing the environment to shift or influence their way of thinking, the interviewees chose to focus on building and sustaining their competency as an administrator by remaining adamant of their department's goals and skill building.

Influence of Minority Status on Persistence Strategies

Arguably knowledge of being an African American administrator, a group that encompass less than five percent of all university administrators at Broussard University, influence a minority's persistence strategies. As members of said group, participants are conscious of prejudices held against them, scrutiny to their qualifications, and the double standards of status privilege. Participants suggested that many African Americans are

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negatively stereotyped, therefore that becomes a constant reminder to not share personal life details with other administrators that may contribute to a poor typecast. Rather than share their personal lives as others do so, respondents chose to offer little information as possible. Due to an identified history associated with African Americans and access in higher education, the respondents also stated that White individuals questioned their credentials and qualification due to the presence of affirmative action policies. Consequently, the African American administrators in the study feel that it is paramount to work harder and contribute more than their White counterparts to feel accepted within the academy.

Participants felt that their perceived constant reaffirmation minority statuses are evidenced through institutional communication. African American administrators felt that there are unwritten rules regarding privilege that are biased against them. For instance, participants have argued observations of their White counterparts receiving more organizational support and opportunities that are not made readily available to African American administrators. A re-occurring example that participants assert are the noticeable differences in how their White counterparts are more protected and supported when exercising powers on hiring and disciplining decisions. Specifically, respondents feel that their decision power is often limited or scrutinized for review and possibly overturned.

Also, participants spoke of isolation as an influence on their persistence strategy. For most, their isolation happens consistently in meetings or events for other administrators. To participants, being the only African American (or one of few) is a reminder to the institution's commitment to diversity. Furthermore, respondents have internalized their presence being needed for cosmetic purposes to highlight diversity. To some, being one of the few African Americans in the room with an administrator status has served as a divider between themselves

and other African Americans at lower organizational levels. In those instances, participants have spoken of feelings having their group racial identity questioned by their peers.

Advice to Other Professionals in the Academy

Participants felt that are various steps that could be taken to strengthen the persistence of African American administrators in the academy. In relying on their own experiences and observances as administrators, participants felt that the university has to demonstrate a commitment to recruitment and retention of African American administrators. Most participants believe that while Broussard University has made positive strides in recruiting administrators of color, there is little done culture-wise in order to keep them at the institution. Therefore, participants recommend using recruitment and retention as a persistence strategy. According to the administrators in the study, this concept is viewed through two lenses: (a) growing your own and (b) developing an intentional minority pipeline. To grow your own simply means that the university must look to promote and advance the careers of African Americans at the lower organizational levels. Efforts must be made to create administrator training programs to so pathways are created for inclusion and equity. In suggesting the development of an intentional minority pipeline, participants feel that disparities of African American administrators must be addressed as far back as the undergraduate level. African American students need to be made aware of careers in university administration so that they will be better prepared to enter the field.

Other ways to increase the persistence of African American administrators include top down institutional modeling and the promotion of administrator activism and accountability of those already present in the institution. Respondents feel that in order for diversity to be taken seriously as a core institutional value, the message must be reflected in institutional leadership at

the highest levels. According to participants, African Americans representation on all institutional levels shows that the university values their perspective at the table. Those who spoke of administrator activism and accountability suggest that some today's African American administrators have become more concerned about maintaining their position rather than providing access for others to join their rankings. Therefore respondents maintain that attention should be called to hold administrators accountable for demanding diversity at the administrative level. Furthermore, respondents argue that once access is provided, administrators share the responsibility of supporting one another and producing a culture of university inclusion.

Minority Persistence Strategy Model Revisited

A conceptual model was created from the review of literature in chapter two to explain the factors that contribute to the development of minority persistence strategies. Upon data analysis of 12 in-depth face-to-face interviews with six participants' new information has emerged to facilitate a revision to the original model (Figure 8). Unlike the previous illustration (Figure 1), the participants suggest that self-image and motivational factors are components of their individuality that is present with them in daily interactions with the institution. Furthermore, upon examination and in addition to already stated variables, the respondents indicated that their perception of institutional communication is generated from what they internalize as the university's commitment to diversity, various aspects of scrutiny, sponsorship of their representation, and opportunities for advancement. Persistence strategies that emerged from the study were added to complete the model. Lastly, participants suggested that sometimes through integration and observation alone persistence strategies are formed.

INDIVIDUAL

Abilities and skills
Professional goals/ aspirations
Professional track record
Job performance
Demographics
Self-Image
Motivational Factors

PERSISTENCE STRATEGIES

Develop Support Networks
Deconstruct to Understand Race and Culture
Brand Management
Maintain Personal Values
Maintain Professionalism
Master Politics

INTEGRATION & OBSERVATION

Interaction with peers (formal and informal)
Social awareness
Social politics
Social myths

INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION

Information gathering (access)
Decision-making power
Organizational support
Rules (formal and informal)
Property Value (position title)
Commitment to Diversity
Scrutiny
Sponsorship
Advancement Opportunities

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Group-based Social Hierarchy
Institutional Tradition
Mission
History
Surrounding Culture/ Society

Figure 8 Minority Persistence Strategies Model Revisited

Recommendations for Future Research

The investigator in the research project used semi-structured interviews to investigate the experiences and persistence strategies of African American administrators at a predominantly White institution. Due to the nature of the inquiry, generalizations cannot be made from the study. However, the study has contributed to the scholarship of persistence among minority administrators and new developments worth considering for future studies on African American

career navigation. Upon completion of the study, the following recommendations for future research are made:

1. To continue to examine the factors that contributes to the persistence and representation of African American administrators at a predominantly White institution through from a minority's perspective. In viewing the study through the eyes of the normally marginalized voice allows for a more complete picture of the narrative on disproportionate representation within dominating cultures. Additionally, beyond African Americans, there are other minority components to examine in culture. For example, the same concepts can apply to White administrators working at a HBCU, Latino administrators at PWIs, administrators with an alternative lifestyle among leaders in a culture that's dominantly heterosexual, and perhaps administrators with a religious sect considered unique among the dominating culture in power in the academy. Each variable has a different history, understanding, and context at their institution, therefore all interactions should be examined.

2. To continue examine the factors of minority persistence at PWIs on a larger scale through the use of quantitative research methods for all underrepresented groups.

3. To study and compare African American female administrators against their male counterparts in an effort to determine whether women are more marginalized in the profession than African American men.

4. Politics emerged as a strong theme within the study. A closer examination of power and politics is needed to increase the understanding of access, equity, and inclusion in

higher education. Specifically, politics could be used as a tool to contextualize means of navigation.

5. Several participants spoke of the institution in a way that personified a living emotional being. Some individuals felt that certain actions would result in a response from the institution. A closer examination of the construct of perceived institutional messages and its effects on African Americans at predominantly White institutions are needed.

6. The setting for this study took place in the southeast. In saying so, Broussard University's location determined the cultural context of this study with one minority group. However, other institutions in different regions will have different historical and cultural traditions to different groups which are all worthy of closer examination.

7. Throughout the study I began to notice that some questions were answered differently due to generational differences. Research should explore the differences in leadership persistence among administrators. Specifically, those who have experienced the civil rights era and those who are referenced as a post civil rights generation.

8. The researcher illustrated a conceptual model to explain how minorities as a group develop persistence strategies while working within the dominant institution's culture. Due to the findings lack of generalizability as a limitation, I feel that the model should be re-examined and tested for accuracy.

Conclusion

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the experiences and persistence strategies of African Americans as a minority group within a PWI. The focus was to describe the persistence

phenomenon of already surviving administrators. As a group, the participants in the study represented all aspects of university administrators. Six participants were given 12 extensive in-depth interviews resulting in 22 hours of transcribed data of shared life experiences of African American administrators. The findings of the study not only revealed their persistence strategies, it suggested that an individual's internalization of culture and environmental were influences to their method of persistence.

Critical race theory was integrated into the study to maintain the outsider-within stance to provide insight and vision to African American administrator retention at a PWI. The perspectives of minority administrators in their own voices provide critical insights into actions that PWIs can take to increase quality of life on predominantly White campuses. It is not just a matter of fairness, but administrator inclusiveness is central to the university's ability to provide appropriate and effective services to all of its constituents beyond the dominant culture.

Therefore the study may have significance for both practitioners and researchers in university administration. The findings, when kept in context, can prove to be helpful when determining policy or factors that may contribute to establishing an academy of leadership that is based on equity, inclusion, and diversity. For researchers, the results of this inquiry provide a counter-narrative to presumed neutrality of equal access and opportunity for African Americans, and to some extent, other people of color for university leadership. Additionally, this study provided participants an opportunity to reflect on their roles as administrators residing at a predominantly White institution.

In closing, as the racial and cultural demographics changes in the U.S. continue to take shape within universities across the land, leadership must be prepared to embrace and guide their universities to serve the on growing multicultural society. In order to do so, change must begin

within the leadership structure itself where policies are developed to ensure equity and inclusiveness for students, faculty, and staff. In addition, we must do more than just acknowledge diversity. We must include minorities in on the conversation and listen to their experiences, which may be difficult to accept because it is not consistent with the university's vision of itself. Coming to terms with such realities are not "black eyes" or re-opened wounds to a desegregated past of injustice, instead they are ultimately a hopeful act of redemption that gives us permission to move forward together.

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Appendix A

Auburn University IRB Approval Letter

March 22, 2010

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Brandon Wolfe
EFLT

PROTOCOL TITLE: "When Being Black Isn't Enough: Experiences and Persistence Strategies of Six African American Administrators at a PWI"

IRB FILE NO.: 10-037 EP 1003
APPROVAL DATE: March 15, 2010
EXPIRATION DATE: March 14, 2011

The referenced protocol was approved as "Expedited" by the IRB under 45 CFR 46.110 (7)**:**

"(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies."

You must retain this letter in your files, along with a copy of the revised protocol and other pertinent information concerning your study. If you should anticipate a change in any of the procedures authorized in this protocol, you must request and receive IRB approval prior to implementation of any revision. Please reference the above IRB file number in any correspondence regarding this project.

If you will be unable to file a Final Report on your project before March 14, 2011, you must submit a request for an extension of approval to the IRB no later than February 21, 2011. If your IRB authorization expires and/or you have not received written notice that a request for an extension has been approved prior to March 14, 2011 you must suspend the project immediately and contact the Office of Research Compliance for assistance.

A Final Report will be required to close your IRB project file. Please note that only copies of the approved, stamped versions of your consent documents should be provided to participants during the consent process. Signed consents must be kept in a secure location on campus for three years after your study ends.

If you have any questions concerning this Board action, please contact the Office of Research Compliance.

Sincerely,

Kathy Jo Ellison, RN, DSN, CIP
Chair of the Institutional Review Board
for the Use of Human Subjects in Research

cc: Ms. Sheri Downer
Dr. Maria Witte

Appendix B

Demographic Profile Form

Code Name: _____ Interview Number:_____

1. Are you male or female (Please circle one)?

2. What degrees have you attained and in what areas (start with highest degree attained first)?

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3. What is your current position title?_____

4. Do you consider your matriculation to your current position as faculty track or administrative track?_____

5. What positions have you held before your current position?

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6. How many years have you served in your current position?_____

7. How many years have you served as an administrator?_____

8. How many years have you worked at Broussard University?_____

9. How many years have you worked in the academy?_____

10. Was your undergraduate institution a PWI?_____

11. Was you your graduate institution a PWI?_____

12. Undergraduate Major:_____

13. Graduate Area of Concentration:_____