THE PROCESS BY WHICH BLACK MALE COLLEGE STUDENTS BECOME LEADERS OF PREDOMINANTLY WHITE ORGANIZATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A GROUNDED THEORY

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THE PROCESS BY WHICH BLACK MALE COLLEGE STUDENTS BECOME LEADERS OF PREDOMINANTLY WHITE ORGANIZATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A GROUNDED THEORY

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Educational Leadership in Higher Education

by
Eric J. Moschella
December, 2013

Accepted by:
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This study sought to understand the process by which Black undergraduate men on predominately White college campuses become leaders of predominately White organizations. Using the theoretical frameworks of Black and White racial identity development (Helms, 1990), Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), and Wijeyesinghe’s (2001) Factor Model of Multiracial Identity the researcher sought to understand the process, challenges, and strategies Black college men employ as they emerge as leaders at predominantly White colleges. Specifically the researcher sought to answer the following research question:

- What is the process by which Black men become leaders of predominately White organizations on predominately White college campuses?

Additionally the researcher sought to answer three secondary questions:

- What support systems do successful Black leaders develop and utilize?
- What challenges do Black men face in the leadership development process?
- What coping mechanisms do Black men develop when they encounter challenges in the leadership development process?

The researcher interviewed nine Black men at two large research universities in the southeastern United States who held leadership positions for a minimum of one year in at least one predominantly White organization. Using grounded theory methods of analysis, the Black Male Leadership Emergence on Predominately White Campuses (BMLEPWC) model emerged from participant stories. The BMLEPWC is comprised of five multi-dimensional process elements that describe the emergence of leadership for the
participants. The model chronicles a process that contained five thematic elements: the African American community, emerging leadership, threats to leadership emergence, strategies for leadership success, and establishing a leader identity. Each of the elements contained multiple thematic dimensions that illustrated a process originating in the support of the African American community proceeding through exploration of opportunities and cultural difference, developing strategies to counteract threats of bias, and resulting in a leader identity focused on social justice and representing a broad and inclusive campus community.

Results indicated the need for a greater understanding of threats to Black male leadership development, specifically in establishing a new paradigm for understanding the subtleties of bias, examining the relationship between RID status and leadership emergence, and the impact of multiple identity factors on leadership emergence.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my entire family for all of their encouragement; as I made this journey I carried a bit of each of you with me. To my wife Cindy, whose love, encouragement, and support since the day we first met has made all of this possible. To my children Rocco, Joseph, and Bella, whose smiles kept me going: I hope when you are old enough to read this you are inspired by the stories of these young men to always do your best. Finally, to the memory of Dr. Edward Grandpre whose teaching helped start this journey and whose inspiration will continue to move it forward.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the nine young men who agreed to participate in this study, your stories are inspirational and your leadership is exceptional. I also would like to thank my committee: Dr. Pamela Havice, Dr. Tony Cawthon, Dr. David Fleming, and Dr. James Satterfield for their insight and encouragement. In particular I would like to thank my chair Dr. Havice for being such a wonderful educator and mentor. Your dedication to my success has made all the difference. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Debora Lidell and Dr. Elaine Richardson, your confidence and faith in my ability over the years has opened so many doors and helped me to grow academically and professionally: thank you.
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Introduction

Supporting the learning and development of today’s college students is without question a complex and dynamic endeavor. With the demographics of students and faculty changing and diversifying, the job of developing and maintaining programs to engage students becomes increasingly important (Planty, 2009). Although Black men are attending college in higher numbers than ever before, they only represent a disproportionately low percentage of the overall college student population (Carlson, 1997; Planty, 2009). Currently, Black men account for 4.3 percent of students attending college in the United States, the same percentage as in 1976. Additionally, almost 68 percent of Black men who started college never graduate (Harper, 2007). In every year since 1980 male enrollment in college has decreased in relation to female enrollment (NCES, 2012). While studies have shown Black females generally display more motivation and greater engagement in college than their male counterparts (Cokley, 2001), there is limited understanding of the phenomenon of under-engagement of Black men. Currently there is a 9% difference in the 6 year graduation rates of Black women vs. Black men (NCES, 2012). Furthermore, it has been well-documented that on predominantly White campuses, Black men are underrepresented as faculty, administrators, students, and most importantly, graduates (Cuyjet, 1997, 2006).

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) stated that race and ethnicity have been highly researched topics in higher education literature over the past decade, but the topic of how best to engage and retain diverse student populations has not been adequately addressed
by college administrators. Differential perceptions of campus climate by race and racial inequality were identified predominant themes in the student affairs literature (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Black men suffered with regard to racial inequalities on college campuses, with lower enrollment and completion rates (NCES, 2007), and lower reported involvement and engagement than their White peers (Cuyjet, 1997; Harper, 2007). Nowhere in higher education has student engagement become more critical than with Black men at predominantly White institutions (PWI’s) (Harper, 2007).

The challenges PWI’s face with the engagement and integration of Black men are many. The promise of scholarships, mentorship, academic, and social support have served to attract a diverse population of students, only to have these students disappointed by the racial realities of the campus culture (Watson et al., 2002). While 21 percent of all college students believed that racial discrimination is no longer an issue, a review of fifteen years of research on campus climate by Altbach, Lomotley, and Rivers (2002), revealed a different reality. Many predominately White campuses have not made sufficient progress in assisting and supporting Black men on their path to success (Harper, 2009).

Opportunities for and participation in leadership activities were reported as particularly important to Black men (Boykins, 1992). Black men involved in positions of leadership on campuses reported better experiences and higher gains from attending college than their peers who do not hold such positions (Cuyjet, 2006a). Participation and leadership in student organizations and activities has also been associated with increased psychosocial and cognitive gains as well as increased student retention, satisfaction, and
persistence (Cooper, Healy, & Simpson, 1994; Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001; Flowers & Pascarella, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Foubert & Grainger, 2006). If college administrators are to be successful in fostering the retention of Black men, opportunities for participation must take on increased significance.

Courtland (1991) stated, Students whose realities differ from the White middle class norms are often required to make adjustments in order to achieve success (p.102). The extent to which these adjustments affect the development and persistence of Black men, and the type and scope of these adjustments is often overlooked. Cuyjet (1997) recommended the study of Black male college students independent of their female counterparts because of the significant differences in experiences and marginalization on many predominantly White college campuses.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of attempts by college administrators, the engagement and retention of minority students at predominately White institutions (PWI) continues to be a challenge. Black men participated in leadership activities at disproportionately low rates when compared to their White peers (Cuyjet, 2006b). The benefits of engagement in campus activities has been well documented, but there is a relatively small body of literature on the importance of student involvement experiences for Black male students (Flowers, 2004). The studies that do exist have generated some disturbing themes in the experiences of Black students at PWI’s. These themes included a lack of role models on campus, personal identity sacrifice, issues related to racial loyalty and trust, and a dislike for being viewed as a leader (Arminio, Carter, Jones, Kruger, Lucas, & Washington,
Research on Black men has assumed racial homogeneity and not adequately explored the experience of Black men (Harper and Nichols, 2008).

Unfortunately the process by which Black men become leaders of predominately White organizations at PWI’s has not been adequately studied from a Black student perspective. Specifically, the ways in which this population develops interest, finds support, and achieves success in positions of leadership is largely unknown. The underlying belief systems, attitudes, values, and social systems Black men develop and use, as well as the barriers (both perceived and real) have not been sufficiently explored. The knowledge gained from such a study could significantly impact how administrators recruit and support Black men as they become engaged in leadership activities at PWI’s. Ultimately, a better understanding of the process by which Black men become leaders of predominately White organizations could impact the rate at which this population is retained at PWI’s.

Assumptions

Several assumptions guided the development of this study. First, it was assumed that race and gender significantly change the leadership experience of college students to the extent that students have to develop specific strategies for navigating the leadership development process. Secondly, it was assumed the leadership experiences of Black men in predominately White organizations at PWI’s are substantially different than that of Black men leading Black, or racially diverse, organizations at PWI’s or Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCU’s). Finally, it was assumed that the confluence of racial identity development, institutional and social values and attitudes, and majority
culture bias are the primary factors contributing to the differences in the Black male leadership experience.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to develop a grounded theory of how Black men experience the process of becoming student leaders of predominantly White organizations on predominately White college campuses in the southeastern United States. The study, grounded in the experiences and perspectives of the Black men who participated, adds to the literature in three ways. First, the study results provide increased understanding of how administrators and student affairs professionals can facilitate and encourage leadership involvement of Black men. Secondly, the study explored the dynamics of race relations and racial identity development within the context of leadership development, which is an area not sufficiently explored in the current literature. Although studies indicate intentional engagement in leadership activities can have a positive impact on social and cognitive development, factors related to race have not been adequately explored. Finally, the study explored the challenges, coping strategies, and support systems Black men at PWI’s use in the leadership development process. The understanding of these strategies and processes will assist higher education professionals in proactively identifying obstacles to the engagement of Black men on Predominately White campuses.

The literature documents differential patterns of engagement of Black men on college campuses; their disproportionately low numbers in positions of leadership at PWI’s was the foundation for the central research question as well as three secondary
research questions. The following questions were used to guide this study: The central research question was:

- What is the process by which Black men become leaders of predominately White organizations on predominately White college campuses?

Secondary questions were:

- What support systems do successful Black leaders develop and utilize?
- What challenges do Black men face in the leadership development process?
- What coping mechanisms do Black men develop when they encounter challenges in the leadership development process?

**Theoretical Foundation**

There were three theoretical frameworks used to develop this study: (a) Black and White Racial Identity development (Helms, 1990), (b) Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), and (c) The Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) (Wijeyseinghe, 2001). Each of these theories represented areas of significant contribution to the understanding of the Black student experience. These theories provided direction in the development of the study in terms of forming the initial question protocol as well as providing the historical context in which the study was situated.

Helms (1990) developed models of White and Black racial identity based on the racial identity development theory of Cross (1971, 1978). The primary departure from the Cross theory is that the Helms model considered the stages, which are very similar between the two models, to be more of an attitude or world view rather than a state
(Helms, 1990). Additionally, Helms has developed instruments to measure these identity attitudes and has considerable empirical evidence that points to their validity as well as several psychological correlates of the stages (Helms, 1990). This research has to a large degree been conducted in the counseling profession and has frequently been conducted at college and university counseling centers, making this empirically supported theory particularly relevant to the present study.

Helm’s Black Racial Identity development theory consisted of six stages or statuses that had specific themes and reference group identification features. These themes show a progression from a majority (White) centered world view through experiences of awareness of race, over identification with one’s own race, to a sense of balance and understanding of one’s self and racial identity (Helms, 1990).

Complementing this theory is Helms’ model of White Racial Identity Development (WRID) (Helms, 1990). Using the same theoretical underpinning as the Black Racial Identity Development Model, WRID illustrated an inverse view of oppression from the Black perspective. In the WRID model, the person from the majority (White) culture moves through experiences, from a passive (or active) racist identity (unawareness of one’s own role in oppression) to an autonomous and integrated understanding of the implications of race and social justice (Helms, 1990).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) originated in the mid 1970’s in the legal profession as a critical reaction to legislation and legal structures and systems that supported oppression and discrimination. CRT is defined as a lens through which to view the relationship among race, racism, and power, which takes into
consideration a broad range of issues often excluded or obscured from other critical theorists’ consideration. Economics, history, context, group and self-interest, feelings, and the unconscious are all dimensions incorporated into Critical Race Theory. CRT has four primary themes that can be traced throughout all of its interpretations and variations, specifically: (a) interest convergence (also called material determinism), (b) revisionist interpretations of history, (c) the critique of liberalism, and (d) structural determinism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). While the primary application of Critical Race Theory has been in the social change and legal literature, application of the theory to the present study provided a theoretical foundation for generation of qualitative research questions. CRT was particularly useful in understanding the impact of majority culture bias on social and institutional support structures, and offered insight into challenges Black students face on the path to becoming leaders in predominately White organizations.

The Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) (Wijeyseinghe, 2001) was based on research of Black and White multiracial adults. This model consists of eight factors that affect the choice of racial identity by persons who identify as multiracial. The model does not apply exclusively to minority races, and in fact does not specify any particular race, but it is a collection of factors that influence a person’s choice of identity (Wijeyseinghe, 2001). Unlike mono-racial identity development, this model does not have stages, is not linear, and assumes identity is to some extent a choice (either conscious or unconscious). The model presumes that the process by which we develop identity is unique, but the factors that influence the choice are common. The eight factors that compose the model are: (a) Racial Ancestry; (b) Physical Appearance; (c) Social and
Historical Context; (d) Other Social Identities; (e) Spirituality; (f) Political Awareness and Orientation; (g) Early Experience and Socialization; and (h) Cultural Attachment (Wijeyseinghe, 2001). Wijeyseinghe (2001) proposed that the interplay of these factors determine one’s identity and influence one’s cultural perceptions and social interactions.

Table 1.1 Map of Guiding Research Questions to Theoretical Foundation

<table>
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<th>Secondary Research Questions</th>
<th>Theoretical Basis for Question</th>
<th>Potential Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>What is the process by which Black men become leaders of predominately White organizations on predominately White college campuses?</td>
<td></td>
<td>FMMI</td>
<td>How did you become a leader? Why are you interested in becoming a leader? How long did it take for you to become a leader? What have you learned from your leadership experience? What was your first leadership position? What influenced your decision to become a leader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What challenges do Black men face in the leadership development process?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Critical Race Theory</td>
<td>What challenges did you face in becoming a leader? Tell me about power and leadership?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What coping mechanisms do Black men develop when they encounter challenges in the leadership development process?</td>
<td></td>
<td>RID</td>
<td>How did you overcome challenges in becoming a leader? What resources did you use on your path to leadership? How do you define leadership? Do you have any mentors/allies/role models that assisted you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What support systems do Black leaders develop and utilize?</td>
<td></td>
<td>FMMI</td>
<td></td>
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Overview of the Research Sites

The research sites for the present study were 2 large (over 15,000 students) public, doctoral extensive research universities in the southeastern United States. The first site was a highly selective science and engineering research institution located in a large metropolitan area with an internationally diverse student body. The second site was a rural land-grant research institution. These sites were selected based on the following reasons: (a) they had significant numbers of the student population necessary for the study; (b) the researcher’s knowledge of gatekeepers necessary to recruit the population; and (c) the diverse (in terms of programs offered and admissions criteria) yet culturally representative nature of the predominately White public universities.

Limitations

The limitations of the study included, but were not limited to: (a) the data is not generalizeable due to the qualitative nature of the study; (b) the researcher had worked at both of the institutions and was employed by one at the time of data collection, and may therefore have misinterpreted context and meaning of data; (c) the researcher may have had bias because he was experienced recruiting and retaining Black men as student leaders; (d) the researcher may have had bias due to his own racial identity development status and misunderstandings between his experience and that of the student participants; (e) the researcher may have made methodological mistakes as he has had limited experience with qualitative research methods; and (f) the data was be student self-reported and subject to errors in memory and interpretation.
Definition of Terms

- **Ascribed Racial Group**—The racial group or groups that are applied to an individual by other people and social institutions based on factors such as physical appearance, racial ancestry, and the social construction of race at a given point in time (Wijeyesinghe, 2000, p. 130).

- **Black**—An ascribed racial grouping of people based on skin color.

- **Chosen Racial Group**—The racial group an individual chooses to identify with, which may or may not be the same as their ascribed racial group (Wijeyesinghe, 2000).

- **Grounded Theory**—A research methodology developed by Glasser and Strauss (1967) for the purpose of building theory from data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Components of Grounded Theory include: simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis, constructing codes and categories from the data, theoretical sampling, and the using the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006).

- **Historically Black College or University**—A college or university established prior to 1964, whose mission was, and continues to be, the education of Black Americans (Higher Education Act of 1965).

- **Leadership**—A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northhouse, 2004, p. 3).
• **Predominantly White Institution**—A college or university that grants degrees across many programs with students who are predominantly descendants of Europeans, typically these institutions are over 80% White (Burley, 2007, p. 203).

• **Predominantly White Organization**—A student club organization or group whose membership is over 80% Caucasian.

• **Race** – A socially constructed concept that divides the human population into subgroups based on real or perceived differences such as physical appearance or place of ancestral origin (Wijeyesinghe, 2000, p. 130). Viewing race as social construction places the emphasis on an individual’s perceptions, belief structure, and interactions with other members of society (Strom, 2009, p. 122) rather than just physical appearance.

• **Racial Identity**-- A racial category or categories that an individual uses to name him or herself based on factors including racial ancestry, ethnicity, physical appearance, early socialization, recent or past personal experiences, and a sense of shared experience with members of a particular group (Wijeyesinghe, 2000, p. 130).

• **Racial Identity Development**—The psychological implications of racial-group membership. The belief systems that evolve in reaction to perceived differential racial-group membership (Helms, 1990, p. 4).

• **Student Leader**-- Any fulltime enrolled, 18-24 year old, student in a paid or unpaid position of influence over their peers on a college campus in an institutionally recognized student club or organization.
Chapter Summary

Chapter One introduced the study to the reader. Themes in the literature regarding enrollment, engagement, and retention of Black male students at predominately White institutions of higher education were explored. The lack of understanding of the process by which Black male college students become leaders of predominately White organizations at PWI’s was presented as the catalyst for the present research. The purpose of the study; to contribute foundational knowledge to the understanding of Black male leadership development at PWI’s was discussed along with the need for additional institutional support for this endeavor. Black and White Racial Identity Development (Helms, 1990), Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), and the Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) (Wijeyseinghe, 2001) were introduced as the theoretical basis for the study. Finally, the research sites, limitations of the study, and definitions of key terms were discussed.
A review of the literature reveals the complexity and depth of issues relevant to the study of Black male student leaders at predominantly White institutions. Supporting and engaging Black men in meaningful leadership activities at PWI’s has been exacerbated by the long history of social, economic, and cultural forces that create developmental challenges to the retention and success of Black men (Lee, 1991). Researchers have documented unique involvement and retention issues for Black men at PWI’s (Watson et al., 2002), (Cuyjet, 1997), yet any large scale change in the way this population is supported has been non-existent (Harper, 2008). To a large extent, research in Higher Education has minimized racist institutional norms (Harper, 2012) while racism-related stress threatens the academic performance and motivation of Black students (Reynolds, Sneva and Beehler, 2010). It is well understood by those advocating for Black men in higher education that the need for Black leaders calls for an Afro-American understanding of the leadership development process (Berry, 2001). Additionally, campuses need to create open, supportive and inclusive environments for the discussion of issues meaningful to Black men, with Black administrators and faculty in the forefront (Grier-Reed, Madyun and Buckley, 2008).

Unfortunately the understanding of student leaders has primarily been explored from a majority student perspective (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005) or from the perspective of Black students at HBCU’s (Terenzini, Yaeger, Bohr,
Pascarella, & Amaury, 1997; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Hale, 2006). These perspectives offer little insight into how Black men navigate the path to leadership of predominately White organizations at PWI’s; a perspective that is increasingly important as the diversity of college students increases. There is a need for highly structured race-related discussions on campuses (Quaye, 2012)

To support the present study, literature on college student leadership and Black college students (including men specifically) is explored in the following section. Additionally, the Black and White Racial Identity Development theories of Helms, Critical Race Theory, and the Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (Wijeyseinghe, 2001) are presented as the theoretical constructs guiding the development of the study.

College Student Leadership

It is evident from the research on college student leadership and engagement that leading students to and through involvement opportunities has important implications for developmental outcomes in college students. The literature has documented several positive outcomes including social and cognitive gains, persistence in college, moral development gains, and several post college quality of life factors (Kuh, 2000; Astin, 2001; Pascarella, 2005). In researching the development of student leadership identity, Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen, (2005) noted that, although there is much literature on theory, behavior, practices, settings and outcomes, there is a lack of understanding on how leadership develops or how leadership identity develops over time (p. 593).
In response to this lack of understanding the Leadership Identity Development model sought to increase the understanding of college student leadership, albeit from a majority culture perspective (Komives et. al., 2005). The result of a qualitative investigation into student leadership among students at a large mid-Atlantic research institution, this cyclical model set within the context of developmental influences, highlighted a multi-dimensional process of considerable depth. Additionally, the Leadership Identity Development Model identified a leadership reflection process occurring at a group (the group the student is involved with) and at an individual student level. The Leadership Identity Development model remains the only such leadership development model specific to the college student leadership experience to date.

According to the Leadership Identity Development Model (Komives et al., 2005), students move through states of Awareness, Exploration/Engagement, Leader Identified, Leadership Differentiated, Generativity, and finally Integration/Synthesis. Through each of these states the leader is repeatedly experiencing the processes of Developing Self Awareness and Confidence, Engaging in and Learning From the Group, Changing View of Self with Respect to Others (from Dependent to Interdependent), and Broadening View of Leadership. These states occur within the context of other, broader, developmental influences in areas such as social, moral, and cognitive development (Komives et al., 2005).

The complexity of the phenomenon of leadership development, with regard to skills and outcomes to be measured, is perhaps why the literature on college student leadership has not evolved beyond simple outcomes assessment; and likely why minority
populations have not been researched in greater depth. Cultural bias, differential views of leadership across cultures, and historical oppression likely contribute to a different experience of leadership for minority students. Komives called for further research into diverse populations who may not hold leader-centric views of leadership (Komives et al., 2005, p.610).

In an extensive five year quantitative study examining student leadership among women and ethnic minorities Kezar and Moriarty (2000) used results from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey (CIRP) and the College Senior Survey follow up, to study the leadership development of 9,731 students at 352 institutions. The sample included 4,437 White men, 4,730 White women, 209 Black men, and 355 Black women. The researchers hypothesized: (a) White men would indicate higher self-rated leadership ability than White women, Black women, and Black men; (b) Positional leadership (a ranking position) would be more important to skill development (self-rated) for White men than White women, Black men, and Black women; and (c) Involvement in non-positional leadership experiences (being an active member in clubs and organizations) would be more closely related to leadership skills than leadership ability for women and Black students (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000).

Kezar and Moriarty (2000) found men rated themselves higher in leadership ability than women both initially and upon leaving college. Black men had the highest social self-confidence and ability (self-rated) entering and leaving college, with White women being the lowest both entering and leaving. The results indicated that men consistently rated themselves higher in leadership ability. Women and Black students
saw greater gains in skills and rated themselves higher on ability upon leaving college (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000). Additionally, Kezar and Moriarty (2000) found that non-positional leadership experiences resulted in greater gains in skills for White women and Black men than either of the other groups. The four demographic groups in the study each had different types of experiences that lead to significant gains in leadership skill, suggesting that different populations benefit from different types of experience. For Black men, volunteer work opportunities yielded the greatest skill gains. For White men and Black women, elected office saw the greatest gains; whereas White women saw the greatest gains from involvement in student organizations (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000). The results support the study of leadership among college students through a variety of demographic and developmental lenses.

Differential leadership experiences have also been investigated through phenomenological methods. Arminio et al., (2000), investigated the leadership experiences of students of color to gain insight in the lower leadership activity participation rates on many college campuses. The study of 22 Black women, 12 Black men, 18 Asian American women, 25 Asian American men, 12 Latinas, and 17 Latino men was conducted at a mid-sized state college and a large research institution over a span of 3 years. The researchers sought to understand, through the lived experiences of the participants, how the cultural values and developmental progress were manifest in the meaning of leadership experiences. Analysis of the interviews revealed five emergent themes in participant experiences: The Leader Label, Personal Costs of Leadership, Role Models, Group Demographics (same race, predominantly White, multiracial), Group
Orientation (racial), and Gender Differences. In each of the categories, themes highlighted incongruence between the experiences of students of color and traditional understandings of college student leadership (Arminio et al., 2000).

The Leader Label was viewed by Black participants as inaccurate as many did not consider themselves leaders, despite the positions they held. Some Black participants even attributed negative connotations to the term leader; they viewed being a leader as becoming part of a system responsible for oppression. The Black participants often viewed their participation in these organizations more in terms of collaborative participation and less in terms of leadership, which the authors refer to as contrary to conventional notions of leadership and individualism. (Arminio et al., 2000, p. 501).

With regard to the themes of Personal Costs of Leadership and Role Models many students of color cited that they lost something by becoming leaders and found the attention they received from both same race and White peers to be difficult to manage (Arminio et al., 2000, p. 501). Many Black leaders cited there were contradictory expectations which were hard to navigate and cited a balance they had to achieve between acting Black and White (Arminio et al., 2000, p. 502). These Black leaders also had difficulty naming on-campus role models, and the men in particular often named well know figures that were no longer alive (Arminio et al., 2000).

Participants involved in predominantly White groups described several differences between their interactions in those groups and Black student organizations. Black students perceived White organizations as: less honest, less direct, having experienced a cultural disconnect from the organization, having less opportunity for
input, and having to defend or speak up on behalf of their race (Arminio et al., 2000). Additionally, minority and female students expressed their orientation toward the group in terms of working for the entirety of the group and developed themselves as leaders to help others and/or the group improve. Whereas White males pursued leadership individually, in a more traditional sense (Arminio et al., 2000). In the study, gender differences primarily manifested themselves in perceptions of ability to lead in certain situations, and the burden of double oppression for minority women.

Arminio et al., (2000) recommended that leadership development literature and the language used within may not articulate the values minority students would place on leadership positions. Rather than using terms such as leader, it was suggested that programs could use language that embraces collateral relationships with groups, de-emphasizes hierarchical relationships, and focuses on involvement, association, and commitment (Armino et al., 2000, p. 505).

In a subsequent study assessing the developmental outcomes of leadership activity involvement, Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, and Burkhardt, (2001) examined longitudinal data from 875 students at 10 institutions. Using CIRP data and 20 supplemental questions on the follow up CSS survey, the researchers asked participants to rate their level of involvement and perceived gains. Students involved in leadership activities reported higher conflict resolution skills, ability to plan, civic responsibility, levels of co-curricular activity, interest in developing others as leaders, ability to set goals, and sense of personal ethics (Cress et al., 2001).
Examining developmental gains after four years, Cress et al., (2001) looked at five variables based on the skills cited above: Leadership Understanding and Commitment, Leadership Skills, Personal and Societal Values, Civic Responsibility, and Multicultural Awareness. Using independent variables based on academic factors the researchers found gains in all students regardless of race and gender in Leadership Understanding and Commitment, Civic Responsibility, Leadership Skills, and Multicultural Awareness. The results indicated that college student participation in leadership activities is beneficial regardless of demographic variables (Cress et al., 2001).

Expanding on the experiential aspects of leadership rather than the outcomes, Logue, Hutchens, and Hector (2005) conducted a phenomenological study of the student leadership experiences of undergraduates at a large southeastern university. The emergent themes were Positive Experience and three figural themes of People, Actions, and Organization. Within this framework sub-thematic elements emerged falling into place under each of the above themes as Leading People, Team, Helping People; Getting Things Done, Success, Busy Lifestyle; Defining Events, Leaders vs. Members, and Structure respectively (Logue, Hutchens, & Hector, 2005, p. 398).

Logue et al. (2005) stated within the theme of People students spoke of their experiences as positive interpersonal experiences in the context of serving and helping others. Participants noted that without this valuable interaction and caring, their leadership would be meaningless. Within the Actions theme participants described their lives as busy and themselves as energetic, with an emphasis on accomplishing tasks and achieving goals. Organization referred to the identity which each participant developed in
relation to the organization and to each other, and how people and events defined and redefined each other and the organization (Logue et al., 2005).

The authors concluded that for all participants these leadership experiences were significant parts of their college experience, in terms of developmental processes and interpersonal skill development (Logue et al., 2005, p. 406). These qualitative findings support the significance of student leadership opportunity outcomes such as those researched by Cress (2001) and Kezar (2000) as well as the findings of Arminio (2000) that leadership is considered (particularly by minority students) to be a highly social, collaborative service to others.

**Black College Students**

In a study reviewing the experiences of Black students in college Craig (2006) found five key factors that influenced Black student success in college. The factors were: (a) economic and social exposure, (b) prior academic preparation, (c) motivation to excel, (d) role models and mentors, and (e) college environment. Noteworthy is the observation that of the five factors listed, Craig acknowledged that four are actually pre-college experiences that influence college outcomes. The impact of pre-college experience and family expectations on college success is not surprising, nor is it surprising Craig concluded that HBCU’s make up for deficiencies some Black students have in these areas through the engagement and involvement of their students. This conclusion was supported by research conducted by Astin (2001) and Pascarella (2005). A secondary, yet no less important, theme in Craig’s (2006) comparison of HBCU’s and PWI’s is that
Black students at PWI’s must possess in advance, or rapidly acquire, several of the above mentioned prerequisite experiences in order to be successful.

Pruitt-Logan (2006) extended this argument with what she called Inclusiveness Rules of Engagement (p. 193). Developed from qualitative analysis of Black student experiences, these rules are what she believed to be necessary for Black students to be successful at PWI’s. The rules of engagement included: recruiting Black faculty; having a significant population of Black graduate students; preparing faculty to teach students that are diverse; developing cultural sensitivity among faculty; and administrative leadership that is aggressive in seeking change and diversity. Similar themes of inclusiveness and multiple positive, same-race role models can be found throughout the literature (LaVant, Anderson, & Tiggs, 1997; Cuyjet, 1997; 2006; Harper, 2008; Hawkins & Larabee, 2009).

Reviewing results from the College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ), Cuyjet (1997), found male and female Black students have very different experiences in college from their majority peers. Specifically, Black men were less engaged in their courses, more frequently engaged in recreation (at campus recreation facilities and student unions), and were four times less likely than Black women to be involved in clubs, organizations, and activities (Cuyjet, 1997). Subsequent research by Flowers (2004) reported involvement in sports and recreation and attending social events at the student center to have a negative impact on developmental outcomes such as understanding science and technology and thinking and writing skills. Cuyjet (1997) concluded that, due to significant differences in pressures and realities, Black men should be studied independent of Black women.
Social Integration

In a qualitative study of 88 Black students, Guiffrida (2003) investigated the social integration of Black students at PWI’s through Black student organizations. Results from the focus group interviews indicated that Black student organizations on predominantly White campuses assisted Black students in their integration to the campus culture. Specifically these organizations were found to: (a) Provide out of class professional connections with faculty; (b) Offer an opportunity for Black students to give back to other Blacks on campus; (c) Increase comfort by providing an opportunity for involvement and leadership in groups of students with similar backgrounds and experiences and not have to be constantly concerned with stereotypes and racism issues; and (d) Opportunity for exposure and connection with Black culture (Guiffrida, 2003). According to the study, Black organizations served a significant role in the retention and development of these students and provided a gateway to other opportunities on campus.

In a study of 36 Black and 34 White students at a private northeastern university, Walton and Cohen (2007) explored the impact of belonging uncertainty on achievement and persistence. Belonging uncertainty is defined as a global uncertainty about the quality of one’s social bonds in academic and professional domains (Walton & Cohen, 2007, p. 90). This study found that even though Black students had similar amounts of friends and support, Blacks were more likely to lose their sense of fit and doubt their potential in a particular field than Whites when faced with external challenges. If Black students were told there were few Black students in that particular field, they even discouraged their Black peers from participating. Additionally the researchers found approximately 60% of
the variance in Black’s sense of fit in college could be accounted for by the adversity level faced that day, as opposed to White students with only 4% (Walton & Cohen, 2007). The researchers explored social explanations of racial achievement gaps with the intent to develop social-psychological interventions. The interventions were targeted to reduce factors that undermine minority student persistence and success. The findings reinforced the importance of opportunities and intentional support that can be developed by student affairs professionals.

Investigating the relationship effects of social support, comfort with the university environment, and self-beliefs on Black student persistence at a PWI, Gloria, Kurplus, Hamilton, and Willson (1999) found that social support and comfort with the environment were the largest predictors of persistence. The sample of 98 Black undergraduates at a large southwestern university was given a battery of ten scales which measured the three constructs of interest. Although all data collected was self-reported, results are consistent with the previously reviewed literature, indicating the importance of social support and a supportive campus culture.

In a similar study Johnson et al., (2007) examined the relationship between sense of belonging and first year students from different racial groups. The national sample of 2,967 first year students at 34 institutions was selected to represent the 2004 racial diversity of U.S. college students. Results indicated Black students perceived a less strong sense of belonging than their White peers and all other racial/ethnic groups. A socially supportive residence hall climate was found to be the most influential factor in all minority student perceptions of belonging, followed by a smooth academic transition,
interaction with diverse peers, and positive perceptions of racial climate (Johnson et al., 2007). Results revealed the importance of daily interactions for minority students as well as a network of institutional and student support, and highlight the importance of environmental factors to social integration and Black student success.

Constantine and Watt (2002) examined collective self-esteem and perceived social support as predictors of cultural congruence for Black and Latino students at a midwestern PWI. The authors found that women scored higher than their male counterparts on cultural congruity scales. Cultural congruity was defined as the extent to which there was congruence between the student values and the values of the college (Constantine & Watt, 2002). The participants completed the Collective Self Esteem Scale, the Social Support Questionnaire, the Cultural Congruity Scale, and a demographic questionnaire developed by the researchers. The sample was 65% male and 35% female. Black women reported higher levels of cultural congruity than Black men. The researchers suggested that a possible explanation for this is the considerably lower number of Black men on campus. Recommendations for student affairs professionals included assessment of student of color comfort levels on campus and within organizations. The researchers also found that higher scores on self-esteem and social support satisfaction were predictive of higher cultural congruity scores (Constantine & Watt, 2002). The authors highlighted the importance of supportive environments to the success of students of color, and called for qualitative research to explore the role of social support in shaping the experience of minority students at PWI's.
In a study of performance expectations of minority and majority college students on an academic task, Mayo and Christenfeld (1999) found that White men rated themselves as equally able to perform a given task as their peers. In the sample of 150 students at a PWI in California, women tended to rate themselves lower and their peers (other women) higher than themselves on performing the task. Members of minority groups were found to rate themselves as performing lower, and they predicted their minority peers would perform lower (Mayo & Christenfeld, 1999). This effect was most pronounced in Black men. Although the primary focus of the study was academics, thus making it difficult to generalize findings to leadership and involvement, this did provide preliminary evidence that self-efficacy is critical to minority student success and retention, and may very well have implications for student Black male involvement on campus.

Davis (2004) conducted phenomenological interviews to study the college experiences of 11 Black undergraduate students at a predominantly White large research state university in the southeast. The demographic characteristics of the participants represented a cross section of majors, genders and ages of students enrolled at the institution. Interpretive analysis of interviews yielded five dominant themes: Unfairness/Condescension/Sabotage, Isolation and Connection, Being Different, Having to Prove Worthiness, and Invisibility and Supervisibility (Davis, 2004, p. 424).

Unfairness/Condescension/Sabotage refers to incidents experienced by students that lead to the perception of a non-welcoming environment. These incidents were experienced by all participants form a range of people and the institution; including
students, faculty, staff and the community at large. Incidents recalled were not seen as isolated by the participants in the study, but rather part of everyday life (Davis, 2004).

Isolation and Connection was described as the challenge of making successful connections with other segments of the university including students of the same race, campus groups, faculty/staff, employment, and extracurricular activities. Particularly students described the difficulty of always having to initiate and maintain the contacts, feeling distant from White students and having to be cautious about whom they connected with (Davis, 2004).

The theme of Being Different was reported to be a frustrating and isolating experience by Black students. For several participants it was the first time they were aware of how different they were and what the implication of that difference meant to them. Some participants tried to be different from other Black students by not acting or speaking Black (Davis, 2004).

The feeling of Having to Prove Worthiness was derived from the pervasive perception that Whites on campus saw Blacks as inferior and unable to learn. Participants reported having to work harder than their White peers to overcome these preconceived perceptions of inability (Davis, 2004).

Invisibility and Supervisibility were developed from reports of participants having to constantly represent all Blacks or being one of the few (and therefore highly visible) minority students. In contrast the Black students cited many examples of being deliberately ignored by other students and faculty (Davis, 2004).
Davis (2004) noted that the attitudes of the participants shadowed various stages of racial identity development, and that student perceptions of their experiences were certainly influenced by their developmental stage at the time. They concluded that there is a need for colleges (and researchers) to hear the stories of Black students at PWI’s in order to become culturally competent educators and create a positive and welcoming experience for Black students (Davis, 2004).

Hinderlie and Kenny (2002), in a study of Black students at selective private northern universities, found that parental attachment was a significant factor in Black student adjustment to college. Second to social support, maternal role models were found to be significantly associated with all of the measures of personal, social, and emotional adjustment to college as well as institutional attachment. The researchers also found the socio-economic status of the parent did not mediate this relationship (Hinderlie & Kenny, 2002). Of the 186 participants (100 women and 86 men), 18 percent indicated no paternal attachment versus 1% indicating no maternal attachment. While the no paternal attachment sample was too small to make any conclusions about direct effects, it did highlight the complexity of social issues related to Black student success. Hinderlie and Kenny (2002) concluded that their research study reinforced the importance of academic support by faculty, social support by peers, and parental support to the college adjustment of Black students, and suggested that parents may be an underutilized resource for administrators.

Comparing the experiences of minority and non-minority students on their progress in college, Eimers (2001) found that the relationship between college
experiences and progress in college is similar for minority and majority students. The sample, drawn from the university system of Missouri, consisted of 763 White, 133 Black, 49 Asian, 11 Native American, and 12 Hispanic students. Independent variables were taken from section III of the ACT College Outcomes Survey (CO) in four areas: Faculty –student relations, academic atmosphere, campus climate, and overall assessment of their college experience. Dependent variables were taken from section II of the CO Survey: Math and science development, intellectual skill development, career development, and problem solving development. Significant differences were found between minority and White students on campus climate and overall assessment variable comparisons. Additionally, minority students reported significantly higher gains in intellectual and skill development. These findings held true across quartiles of ability based on ACT scores. Consistent with other research, as satisfaction with faculty-student relations increased, as did gains in all of the four outcome areas for both minority and non-minority students (Eimers, 2001). The study highlighted the importance of positive experiences for minority students on campus, and reinforced the significant role of the campus environment on college student outcomes.

Flowers (2004) examined the effects of student involvement on Black student development. Five scales from the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) were used as measures of the dependant variables of understanding the arts and humanities, personal and social development, understanding science and technology, thinking and writing skills, and vocational preparation. The independent variables of student involvement were measured with the CSEQ scales of Library Experiences;
Experiences with Faculty; Course Learning; Art, Music, and Theater; Personal Experiences; Student Union; Athletic and Recreation Facilities; and Clubs and Organizations. Control variables of demographic and pre-college experiences, institutional characteristics, and type of institution (PWI/HBCU, public/private, and institutional selectivity) were used in the regression model as well.

Results from the over 8,000 Black students in the sample indicated that similar to Eimers (2001), Black students reported the greatest gains in cognitive skills (vocational preparation, thinking and writing, understanding science and technology) from involvement activities (Flowers, 2004). Troubling however, was the finding that Black students reported participating only occasionally on all of the student involvement scales on the CSEQ. Flowers (2004) detailed five noteworthy themes from the study: (a) student involvement experiences can significantly impact developmental gains for Blacks; (b) black students participate in involvement activities at low to moderate rates; (c) academic related involvement experiences were more likely to have positive effects on vocational development for Blacks; (d) out of class recreational involvement had fewer positive effects on educational outcomes than did academic experiences; and (e) some student involvement experiences had a negative effect on developmental outcomes (Flowers, 2004). This indicated a need for careful planning of and further research into types of involvement activities designed and implemented for Blacks. Flowers (2004) further concluded that student affairs professionals should carefully consider involvement activities for Black students and intentionally implement those which research shows the produce the greatest gains for underrepresented populations.
Harper and Hurtado (2007) identified nine themes in unhealthy campus racial climates at five predominately White institutions. The findings included avoidance of race related conversations (by students, faculty and staff), racial segregation among students, gaps in social satisfaction by race, student awareness of racist college legacies, White student overestimation of minority student satisfaction, pervasive Whiteness (in space, curricula, and activities), and a lack of institutional understanding of the campus racial climate. These findings indicated a need for an institutional assessment of campus climate with the intent of action (Harper and Hurtado, 2007). This commitment on the part of majority students and administration for inclusion (as opposed to assimilation) of minority students is echoed elsewhere in the literature, (Chang, 2007).

**Black College Men**

Arguably the least studied yet highest risk population on college campuses, Black men receive somewhat secondary consideration in the literature. Cuyjet (1997) attributed the problem of Black men attending college at disproportionately low rates to two primary forces: (a) forces that prevent Black men from getting to college and (b) forces that leave them underprepared for college. This combination of social and political factors has long been discussed in the literature, yet relatively little progress has been made in developing solutions that improve student outcomes and engagement. Harper and Patton, (2007), advocated an anti-deficit framework for the study of Black men for the purposes of providing a positive view of the accomplishments, rather than excuses for poor performance.
In a mixed methods study, Hood (1992) examined academic and non-cognitive factors affecting retention of specially admitted Black men at a midwestern PWI. Findings indicated that although Black men and women had equivalent mean ACT scores entering college, Black women had higher GPAs and completed more credit hours than their male peers. The researchers concluded that there were likely other factors that lead to the lower performance of the Black men and conducted interviews to discover possible explanations (Hood, 1992). The interviews revealed three themes to which the Black men attributed their poor performance: (a) allowing racial issues to get to them; (b) not taking academic aspects of college seriously until it was too late; and (c) not asking for help when they needed it (Hood, 1992).

In a similar achievement-based study, Davis (2004) examined the relationship between campus environment and student achievement for Black men at HBCU’s and PWI’s. The study, a comparative analysis, used hierarchal regression to compare how the independent variables of academic and personal background, racial congruency, and college environment impact academic performance. The sample of 742 Black men from HBCU’s (55 percent) and PWI’s (45 percent), was given the Student Opinion Survey, all other variables were taken from academic records (ACT, GPA, etc.).

Results showed significant differences between the men enrolled at PWI’s vs HBCU’s. Specifically, the HBCU men had higher GPA’s, higher degree aspirations, were more integrated into campus life, and reported more racial congruity between their high school and college experience (their high school was predominantly Black and so was their college). Only on the factor of study habits did Black men at PWI’s seem more
successful (Davis, 2004). The author presented evidence that the profile of men attending HBCU’s is very different than those attending PWI’s in terms of academics and perception of environment. The author concluded that although the relationship between academic integration and academic achievement was not moderated by campus racial composition, the success of Black men in both campus environments was dependent on academic integration (Davis, 2004).

Using qualitative research techniques, Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, and Thomas (1999) examined the social adjustment of Black men at PWI’s. A sample of 126 fourth year Black male students from one institution were interviewed in focus groups. The interviews focused on three questions: What it is like to be a student at the PWI? What types of support is there from faculty and staff? What is your comfort level approaching faculty and staff? (Schwitzer et al., 1999, p. 191). Analysis of interviews using the constant comparative method yielded a four-part model that represented the social adjustment experiences of these students, The model consisted of: (a) a sense of underrepresentedness; (b) perceptions of racism; (c) difficulty in approaching faculty; (d) faculty familiarity (faculty that the students perceive as being very different from them) (Schwitzer et al., 1999, p. 192). The authors called for intentional interactions with Black students that bridge the gaps perceived by the students, and connect the students with the campus at large.

undergraduate men from a PWI and 24 from an HBCU in the southeastern United States. Focus group interviews were conducted and analyzed for emergent themes in the stressful life experiences of the participants. Nineteen themes emerged from responses to two primary research questions: (1) What are the stressful life events of Black college men? (2) How do these stressful events contribute to their mental health and health behaviors? (Watkins et al., 2007, p. 108).

Of the emergent 19 themes, four dominated the discussions at PWI’s but not HBCU’s: acceptance and fitting in; cultural conflict; racism and discrimination; and social support. Mistrust of the institution was discussed frequently at the PWI, but not at the HBCU (Watkins et al., 2007). The authors quoted many accounts of how the men at the PWI experienced additional stressors such as being too White, being too Black, representing all Black people, as well as feeling they were singled out or treated unfairly because of their race (Watkins et al., 2007, p. 113). These stressors were found to take a toll on the participants’ physical and mental health, with many developing unhealthy habits to cope with the stress such as poor eating, excessive drinking, giving up on physical activity, and isolating themselves from others. The researchers recommended culturally appropriate gender specific, health promotion and peer support activities.

One of the primary effective coping mechanisms for the students studied was peer support (Watkins et al., 2007). Stopping short of making value comparisons across the two types of institutions, the authors recognized that there are many similar stressors at both PWI’s and HBCU’s. The additional stressors at the PWI call for the attention of
faculty, staff, and administrators if the retention and well-being of Black men are important institutional outcomes.

Hooks (2004) cited the reason for under-representation of Black men in positions of leadership and in institutions of higher education, has been that there is a social stigma attached to the success of a Black man in traditionally White organization. Additionally, Hooks argued that in order to be successful Black men have to sell out and act White.

In a qualitative study to investigate the internalization of racism, Harper (2006) conducted phenomenological interviews to understand the experience of being a successful Black man on a traditionally White campus. The study, conducted at six midwestern PWI’s, consisted of 32 academically successful Black men who participated in semi structured interviews. Participants attributed their success (in the following order) to: God, their own hard work, parents, and their peers (Harper, 2006). Additionally, participants repeatedly cited peer support and involvement in Black student organizations as key to their success. Many cited informal mentor experiences and a sense of pride as being important to becoming leaders on predominantly White campuses (Harper, 2006). According to Harper, there was no indication that the participants had internalized racism or felt that they had been perceived as acting White to become successful. Harper (2006) concluded that there are four practical implications of this study. First, support for Black fraternities, clubs, and organizations were key places where Black men develop leadership and where their success is embraced. Second, interest in these organizations should be encouraged and supported by faculty, administrators, and peers. Third, funding for involvement opportunities with other Black peer role models should be a priority.
Finally, programming should bring together different on-campus groups to discuss peer support and internalized racism (Harper, 2006). While it was not found that the men had sold out, the study was limited in that the experiences described by participants as significant were all in same-race organizations.

A subsequent study by Harper and Quaye (2007) focused on the impact of student organizations on the development of Black men. This qualitative study conducted at six PWI’s interviewed 32 undergraduate Black men to discover the experience of being a high achieving Black man on a White campus. Findings revealed that student organizations were used as a means for developing and expressing their racial identity, for assisting other minority students, and development of key cross-cultural skills (Harper & Quaye, 2007). The authors concluded that advisors of White student organizations should be mindful to create opportunity for discussion and inclusion of Black men. Harper and Quaye (2007) cite Cross (1971) and Helms (1990) Racial Identity Development theories as particularly useful in advising racially diverse organizations.

**Theoretical Framework**

Cross (1971), Helms (1995), and Jackson (2001) among others, developed theories that describe stages associated with defining one’s identity with regard to race. The theories offer insight into how racial identity impacts the actions and attitudes of a person progressing in identity development. Adams (2002) identified five core processes that span across the racial identity models of Helms, Jackson, and Cross. They are defined as: (1) transformed consciousness; (2) redefinition; (3) parallel development
tasks; (4) interaction of racial and ego identity processes; and (5) racial identity function (Adams, 2002).

For Black students, the process of moving from transformed consciousness to racial identity function is moving from an unawareness of racism through immersion in their own race toward a functional multicultural perspective. For Whites, the process is similar except the progression is from an unaware racist belief system, through coping with their part in oppression, to a non-racist multi-cultural perspective (Helms, 1995). It is this parallel progression across race that offers both opportunity for intervention and potential for conflict (Helms, 1990).

The Helms Black Racial Identity Development Model

The Helms Black Racial Identity (BRID) theory is one of the most widely recognized and researched models of racial identity development (RID) in the literature. This recognition is in part due to the RAIS-B (Helms & Parham, 1990), a scale used to measure racial identity attitudes that correlate with the various stages of the Helms BRID theory. This instrument and the corresponding BRID theory have been used to guide therapy and educationally appropriate interventions for decades within the areas of counseling and higher education (Helms, 2005). The measurement of racial identity attitudes provided an important insight into the developmental challenges Black students faced in college because the primary sample for the development of the instrument was college students (Helms, 1990). BRID theory was chosen as one of the theoretical constructs guiding the development of the current proposed research because of the longstanding connection with higher education. The extensive use of BRID theory in
counseling and higher education has built a solid foundation for working with Black college students (Helms, 2005),

Cross (1995) summarized the stages of BRID as Pre-Encounter, Encounter, Immersion/Emersion, and Internalization/Commitment. The distinct attitudes at each of these stages represent perspectives, from which an individual establishes a world view, and are of particular interest when examining Black/White and Black/Black interaction. The stages of the BRID are described below.

At the Pre-Encounter stage the individual idealizes White values and culture and uses a White/ European, nonblack reference group. At these stages the individual may even defend or contribute to racist stereotypes or belief systems (Cross, 1995). This defense of racism continues until they reach the Encounter stage.

When an individual enters the Encounter stage it is generally due to a sudden or unexpected event (or a series of smaller events) that triggers an awareness of racism. This new awareness of race is often accompanied by feelings of hurt, bitterness, and anger. It is through experiences during this stage that they begin the transition from a White reference group orientation to a Black reference group orientation (Cross, 1995).

As the Immersion/Emersion stage begins a new Black identity is formed and the individual idealizes Blackness and Black culture. The person completely immerses in the exploration of what it means to be Black. At this stage, role models can serve a particularly important function. As the individual learns more about Black culture and begins to define a Black identity, they view White culture from a negative and oppressive perspective (Cross, 1995).
At the Internalization/Commitment stage the individual develops a more secure understanding of personal racial identity and begins to develop a multi-cultural perspective. Eventually, as the individual reaches Commitment, the person seeks to advocate for all oppressed people and sees the value in multiple cultures, not just Black culture. Racial identity becomes stable, positive, and pluralistic. Often time people at this stage will become committed advocates for social justice (as opposed to simply racial justice) (Cross, 1995).

The Helms White Racial Identity Development Model

The Helms (1990) White Racial Identity Development Model offered a view of racial identity development for White individuals that parallels that of BRID. It consisted of two phases, Abandonment of Racism and Defining a Nonracist White Identity, and six stages: Contact, Disintegration, Reintegration, Pseudo-Independence, Immersion/Emersion, and Autonomy. As in the BRID model the individual progresses from unawareness of race and racism through a period of exploration, eventually arriving at an integrated, non-oppressive sense of White identity.

In Contact, the first stage of the model, the individual is unaware of either Black or White culture. In this stage, one is generally unaware of the White role and the benefits received from oppression; if the person exhibits racist behavior it is generally unsophisticated and weak (Helms, 1990). Rarely will a person in this stage be aware of the moral dilemmas associated with racism and oppression. An individual in Contact will have limited interaction with Black people other than the work/school environment, or where interaction is initiated by a Black person that seems and acts White. Typically
people who claim not to notice someone’s race are in the Contact stage (Helms, 1990). Persons with limited interaction with Black people are likely to remain in the contact stage longer than those who have more frequent and meaningful interactions.

The Disintegration stage represents the first awareness a White person has regarding oppression and racism. The individual realizes that Blacks and Whites are not equal. At this stage, the White person can choose to either develop a new belief system to resolve the incongruence experienced or may withdraw from interaction with Black people. The choice of how one resolves this stage may be largely dependent on the social environment in which the person lives. Because Whites can often remove themselves or Blacks from their immediate environment, they often do. The result is the prevalence of institutionalized racism and the continuing belief that Whites are superior. However, if the White person is in an environment that supports exploration of new belief systems or the interaction with Blacks is not avoidable then they will be forced to the next stage of Reintegration (Helms, 1990).

As Reintegration begins the White person believes that the cultural and institutional racism White people benefit from has somehow been earned. The belief is that the privilege and superiority they feel is deserved. At this stage similarities across cultures are minimized and stereotypes are adhered to. Feelings of guilt that may arise from oppression (either active or passive) are translated into anger toward Black people.

Since in the United States it is usually easy to self-segregate and remove oneself from any event that may cause a White person to seriously consider racial identity and racial belief systems, majority culture allows many people to remain in Reintegration
(Helms, 1990). However, should an event occur that does trigger this self-reflection, the White person can no longer justify a racist identity because it conflicts with other beliefs. At this point the person enters the Pseudo-Independent stage and phase 2; Defining a Nonracist White Identity.

As individuals enter Pseudo Independence, they start to question the belief that Whites are superior to Blacks. Helms argued that White people slowly acknowledge responsibility for racism eventually realizing that either actively or passively, they contributed to and benefited from racism. In interactions with other Whites, the Psuedo-Independent person will sometimes be treated as if they have violated White social norms by questioning racist actions or speech. This can cause considerable discomfort with their White identity, yet they cannot yet identify with Blacks (Helms, 1990). As the individual strives to discover a White identity that is not racist the Immersion/Emersion stage begins.

In Immersion/Emmersion, the White individual seeks to define a non-racist identity. At this point a person needs information about what it means to be White in the United States, and may seek others who have made this journey. The individual becomes interested in Whites who have successfully redefined themselves as non-racist and will explore activities that help facilitate reflection on belief systems, oppression, and how to change White people with the goal of eliminating racism. Unlike the Psuedo-Independence stage, where the White person would want to change the Black person to be better and thereby eliminate racism, the Immersion/Emersion individual strives to change White people to promote equality (Helms, 1990).
According to Helms, the Autonomy stage begins when the White person no longer feels threatened by racial issues, and understands the role of oppression. The person in the Autonomy stage is constantly processing new information about race, racism, and culture and redefining themselves. The Autonomous individual actively seeks out cultures that are different and is looking for new ways of thinking about racial issues (Helms, 1990).

The Helms RID Interaction Model

Helms (1990), argued that interactions between Black and White people are, to a great extent influenced by the racial identity stage of the two individuals. The Black/White Interaction Model was developed to explain how race, racial attitudes, and perceived racial attitudes impact the counseling relationship (Helms, 1990, p. 135). This model posited that the RID stage, corresponding attitudes, and the race of the people in the relationship produce particular social interactions with regard to trust, respect, and harmony within the dyad. The model also speculated on the length of the relationship, typical problems that will develop within the dyad, and likelihood of desirable outcomes. The model outlined four types of relationships within four racially different dyadic relationships.

The possible dyadic relationships outlined by the Helms Interaction Model (1990) are: Black counselor/Black client; White counselor/White client; Black counselor/White client; and White counselor/Black client. Within these dyads are four different types of relationships: Parallel; Crossed Progressive; Regressive (crossed); and Progressive. Helms argued that each of these relationship types, whether in same race or mixed race
dyads, will produce particular affective issues. These issues need to be resolved within the relationship or the relationship will not last and/or will not produce healthy outcomes. Additionally, it has been argued that these relationship types can be applied beyond the counseling setting into any social situation (Helms, 1990; Carter, 1990; Bradby & Helms, 1990).

RID theories and interaction models have been valuable tools in understanding the attitudes and interactions among Black and White students. They represent barometers of individual racial attitudes and are often used to understand one’s world view at a given point in identity development. Additionally, RID theories and interaction models aid in targeting interventions and to mediate conflict (Wing & Rifkin, 2001). This developmental understanding of individuals and relationship to race is important in student affairs work, but it is not in and of itself a solution to racial problems in the complex social and cultural environments at predominately White colleges today. While Black and White RID theory and interaction models can serve to help students understand the individual’s role in oppression and racism, the critical race perspective can illuminate the far reaching effects of bias and inequality both institutionally and culturally.

**Critical Race Theory**

Through the existence of Imperialism, the power of the dominant culture is exerted through complex political and economic relationships that promote Western cultural values and standards against which all are judged (Naidoo, 2011). Additionally, higher education has been “increasingly employed to assert sociopolitical influence
“worldwide” as the result of globalization and encourages specific western values to influence politics and economics (Naidoo, 2011 p.46).

Education systems function as gatekeepers of an “inequitable social order” that maintains the majority culture narrative and belief structures (Swartz, 2007). In order to address the multitude of biases imbedded in such institutions either intentionally or not, one must consider the role of privilege and power within any system (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Osei-Kofi, Shahjahan, & Patton (2010) state, “Although Higher Education research has focused on inequity, the field has historically lacked in critical engagement of social realities” (Osei-Kofi, Shahjahan, & Patton, 2010 p.328) and the higher education literature is filled with research that “objectifies the ‘other’ and silences the voices of oppressed groups” (Osei-Kofi, Shahjahan, & Patton, 2010 p.328).

Critical Race Theory can assist the dominant culture in understanding the impact of oppression, and the oppressed in changing the dominant culture narrative to include new perspectives and alternate explanations (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) is a valuable lens through which one can view the relationship among race, racism, and power. This theory takes into consideration a broad range of issues often excluded or obscured from other critical theorists’ consideration. CRT has four primary themes: (a) interest convergence (also called material determinism); (b) revisionist interpretations of history; (c) the critique of liberalism; and structural determinism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Interest convergence referred to the belief that White majority culture tolerates advances for racial justice only when it is in the best interest of the White majority
culture to do so. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Within this tenet of the theory are two distinct perspectives on the nature of racism and discrimination. Idealists believe that racism is a social construction resultant from attitudes, categorization, and a misinformed thinking process, not a reality. Idealism explains that racism can be eradicated through education and restructuring the socialization process. Idealists argued society needs to change the language and thought processes of the majority culture to eliminate racism. From the idealist perspective, Brown v. Board of Education was about protecting and serving the social interests of White Americans.

Materialists assert that racism and discrimination are the means by which society allocates privilege, wealth, and status. Materialists question the seemingly altruistic nature of civil rights legislation, saying that things such as Brown v. Board of Education were actually about protecting and serving the material interests of the White majority.

Delgado (2001) argued Civil rights gains for communities of color coincide with the dictates of White self-interest, little happens out of altruism alone (p.18). A more centrist view within CRT, from the perspective of race reform, views both material and social forces operating together in a synergistic fashion to protect White interests. Both perspectives support a re-interpretation of historic events in a manner that more accurately reflects the experience of oppressed people, also known as a revisionist interpretation of history.

Revisionist interpretation of history looks at historic events and replaces common majority interpretations with interpretations that more accurately reflect the experiences of minorities. This reexamination is often based on information that has been suppressed
by majority culture, or information that has been trivialized despite its importance. A Materialist would say that historic information was repressed to benefit the material interests of the majority culture. An Idealist would argue that historic facts were suppressed due to majority culture belief systems about minorities such as inferior intelligence and abilities. In either case the revisionist interpretation of history is a means of correcting the historic record of majority oppression.

The critique of liberalism refers to the belief of CRTs that liberalism and the color blind and neutral principals used for support are an inadequate framework for addressing racial issues. Behind this critique is the argument that personal rights are procedural (i.e. due process) and not substantive (i.e. food, housing, education) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Delgado argued that our current system puts in place initiatives that allow for equality of opportunity, but resists programs that assure equality of results. Delgado noted that rights are frequently cut back when they conflict with the interests of the powerful (p. 23).

Structural determinism refers to the inability of the current system by reasons of its structure and vocabulary to redress certain wrongs (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 76). The very structure of the social systems within the United States limits the ability of individuals to understand the entirety of the race problem as it occurs because there exists no point of reference from which to understand it. Until the cultural experience of the majority population within the United States broadens, and awareness of problems associated with institutionalized racism are realized, the majority culture has little to no idea that there is a problem. While the primary application of Critical Race Theory has
been in the social change and legal literature, application of the theory to the proposed study provides a theoretical foundation for generation of qualitative research questions examining social and institutionalized manifestations of racism.

*The Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI)*

The Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) (Wijeyseinghe, 2001) consists of eight factors that affect the choice of racial identity by persons who identify as multiracial. The model does not specify any particular race or apply exclusively to minority races. It is a collection of factors that influence a person’s choice of identity and unlike mono-racial identity development, has no stages, is not linear, and assumes identity is a choice (either conscious or unconscious). FMMI has two primary presumptions: (1) the process by which one develops identity is unique; and (2) the factors that influence identity choice are common. The eight factors that compose the model are: (a) Racial Ancestry; (b) Physical Appearance; (c) Social and Historical Context; (d) Other Social Identities; (e) Spirituality; (f) Political Awareness and Orientation; (g) Early Experience and Socialization; and (h) Cultural Attachment (Wijeyseinghe, 2001). Wijeyseinghe proposed that the interplay of these factors determine one’s identity at a given point in time. Wijeyseinghe (2001) made a clear distinction between theories of racial identity development which describe a process, and racial identity. The latter being a result of the confluence of factors and experience within and between groups that account for choice(s) of racial association. The eight factors affect racial identity at various times and in a variety of ways. Additionally,
Wijeyseinghe claimed the factors exert differential levels of influence over one’s lifespan.

Racial Ancestry (Wijeyseinghe, 2001) refers to the racial groups found in the family history of an individual. Many people base their racial identity on the makeup of their families. Familial interaction may be the first source of exploration of racial issues and many multiracial people may choose to identify with one or more of the racial groups their family is comprised of. Often times the choice of racial identity is tied to how the person perceives the role of a particular part of the family history on daily lives.

One of the strongest factors in Wijeyseinghe’s (2001) FMMI is Physical Appearance. At an early age, physical appearance begins to impact racial identity in many ways, including hair, body shape, eye color and shape, body structure and skin tone. These physical attributes are powerful both from within a cultural group (preferred cultural features) as well as externally from other cultural groups with which the individual may or may not identify. Physical appearance may also determine if a person identifies as Multiracial or Monoracial, regardless of their actual racial composition.

Early Experience and Socialization provide subtle cues and messages regarding racial identity. Exposure to music, food, family structure, holidays and language, all provide cultural experiences that impact chosen identity. According to Wijeyseinghe (2001), these early experiences also provide a support structure when confronted with racial challenges. Early parental assignment of racial identity provides a child with an initial sense of racial identity which may or may not be retained for the entirety of their life.
The retention of early childhood experiences and racial ancestry influences of a particular culture is referred to as Cultural Attachment (Wijeyseinghe, 2001). The extent to which one identifies with various aspects of a particular culture can be related to a multitude of the factors in the FMMI including physical appearance and ascribed identities, but may also be impacted simply by personal preference.

Wijeyseinghe described Social and Historical Context as the response to issues of race, racism, interracial relationships, and multiracial people at a given time in history (Wijeyseinghe, 2001, p. 141). The idea of multiracial identity is relatively new, and has not been widely considered by mainstream society. As such, multiracial people have historically been forced by society to select monoracial identities (as in a job application or the census). The extent to which an individual’s social situation allows for the options of choosing multiple racial identities will influence how that person thinks about and identifies racially.

Wijeyseinghe (2001), outlined Spirituality as the degree to which individuals believe in, seek meaning from, or are guided by a sense of spirit or higher power (p. 143). This sense of spirituality can serve several functions. Spirituality can be a coping mechanism when faced with racism, a common experience that brings a culture together, a source of meaning and strength in the process of racial identity development, and a common meaning that transcends racial differences.

There are times where Political Awareness and Orientation may influence the choices people make about their racial identity (Wijeyseinghe, 2001). Becoming aware of the social and political implications of race, racism and identity within both a current and
historical context can be an empowering or frightening experience. Choices one makes about identity can carry powerful social and political messages. Mixed race marriages, membership in certain organizations (political, social, or race related), and activism can change a person’s self-perception of experiences, self-definitions, and the perceptions of others.

The final factor identified as a significant influence on racial identity is described as Other Social Identities. This factor is comprised of a variety of racial and nonracial social identities such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class (Wijeyasinghe, 2001, p. 142). Additionally, Wijeyasinghe (2001) asserted that nonracial social identities may take on a more prominent role than race… and can mediate the choice of racial identity and issues of identity may not be related to race at all but be based on nonracial aspects of Multiracial peoples experience (p. 143).

As is evident from the complexity of the factors in the FMMI, choices of racial identity are often influenced by the interaction of social and cultural factors that extend beyond simple definition of race. The dynamic interaction of these factors and individual experience can best be understood through a lens that accommodates the complexity of social behavior. The FMMI illustrates how racial identity progresses and fluidly evolves through individual experiences.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Two outlined research on Black college students in several areas. First, the importance of college student leadership and its positive social and cognitive student outcomes were discussed. Then literature on issues and challenges for Black college
students were presented, leading to themes in research on the support and engagement of Black college men. The need to study Black men independent of women was discussed with a specific focus on the need for stronger support, engagement, and retention efforts for this population.

The theoretical framework for the study was presented, drawing on the Psychological (RID), political (CRT), and social (FMMI) theories that impact Black student development and experience, both in college and beyond. Helms’ (1990) models of Black and White racial identity development were outlined along with a model of Black/White interaction based on RID status. Major tenets of Critical Race theory (CRT) were highlighted as a means to understand the political issues of power and class that complicate the Black student experience. Finally, the Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) was presented as a means of understanding the complex social influences that impact a student’s sense of self and perception of experience.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was a qualitative exploratory study of how Black college men experienced and navigated the process of becoming leaders of predominately White organizations on predominantly White campuses. This section outlines key techniques associated with the grounded theory research paradigm including sampling, data collection, and data analysis. This chapter provides an overview of the philosophical orientation and rationale for the qualitative exploration. Additionally definitions are provided for key terms used throughout the study.

Research Design

Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as an inquiry process with specific methodological traditions used to explore a human or social problem. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) described qualitative research as involving the collection of a variety of empirical materials that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives (p. 2). The qualitative research process requires the researcher to develop a complex and holistic picture based on the study of words, documents, and various artifacts collected in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). The qualitative tradition also employs multiple methods, involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach the subject matter, and attempts to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 2).
Miles and Huberman (1994) identified three significant features of qualitative research: (a) it is a source of well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts; (b) it gets researchers beyond initial conceptions and helps generate or revise conceptual research; and (c) the narrative structure of qualitative reports provides a quality of undeniability and a concrete, vivid, and meaningful flavor that is convincing to the reader (p. 1).

For this study, grounded theory techniques developed by Corbin and Strauss (2008) was used to generate a model depicting the process by which Black men experience becoming leaders of predominately White organizations on predominantly White campuses. Grounded theory is appropriate for studies where exploration of the topic is required, there is no theory to explain the phenomenon, there is benefit to the study of the phenomenon in a natural setting, and there is a need for a detailed view of the topic (Creswell, 1998). Grounded theory was originally defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a methodology for the purpose of building theory from data. Corbin and Strauss (2008) later added a grounded theory is a set of theoretical constructs derived from qualitative analysis of data (p.1).

The defining characteristics of grounded theory research are: (a) simultaneous data collection and analysis; (b) the construction of analytic codes from the data; (c) using the constant comparative method; (d) using memoing; (e) sampling for theory construction (as opposed to population representation); and (f) using the literature review after the data analysis (Charmaz, 2006). The grounded theory research process is cyclical
in nature and as such requires a well defined yet flexible set of methods for data collection and analysis.

Grounded theory methods were appropriate in this instance as there were no generally accepted theories of how Black men become leaders in college in the current literature. The detailed exploration and understanding afforded by grounded theory method could have significant impact on developmental outcomes of Black college men, as supported by the review of the literature. Specific techniques of Grounded Theory research as specified by Corbin and Strauss (2008) are presented below as they apply to the present study. Additionally, question protocols outlined by Charmaz (2006) and Creswell (1998) are described as they offered additional structure and guidance for the novice researcher.

**Site Selection**

The research sites were identified for initial sampling for several reasons. Charmaz (2006) described *initial sampling* as the process of establishing sampling criteria for people, cases, situations, and setting before you enter the field (p.100). The researcher sought to achieve three goals with the initial sample: (a) identify campuses with a population of Black male leaders that would yield at least 15 eligible participants (total); (b) identify campuses that had similar (majority and minority) attendance and graduation rates; and (c) identify campuses that were in diverse geographic locations (urban vs. rural) within the southeastern United States. Table 3.1 highlights institutional demographic information of the research sites (NCES, 2011).
Universities one and two met the goals for the initial sample. First, all institutions were large public research I institutions which afforded the researcher greater access to

Table 3.1 Research Site Demographic Profiles (NCES, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Demographic Profiles*</th>
<th>University 1</th>
<th>University 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2011</strong></td>
<td>20,768</td>
<td>21,557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total enrollment</td>
<td>Undergraduate enrollment 16,562</td>
<td>14,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate enrollment</td>
<td>Undergraduate transfer enrollment 1,158</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate enrollment</td>
<td>4,206</td>
<td>7,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate Attendance Status</strong></td>
<td><strong>Full time</strong> 94%</td>
<td>91%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part time</strong> 6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate Student Gender</strong></td>
<td>Male 54%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female 46%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian 2%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black or African American 6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino 3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White 84%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two or more races 2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Race Ethnicity Unknown 1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Resident Alien 1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate Student Age</strong></td>
<td>24 and under 96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 and over 4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate Student Residence</strong></td>
<td>In state 61%</td>
<td>51%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out of state 38%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign countries 1%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td><strong>Admission Test Scores</strong></td>
<td>SAT Critical Reading</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25th Percentile 550</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75th Percentile 650</td>
<td>690</td>
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<td><strong>SAT Math</strong></td>
<td>25th Percentile 590</td>
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<td></td>
<td>75th Percentile 680</td>
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<td><strong>Retention Rates for First-Time Students</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Overall Graduation Rate (6yr)</strong></td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<td><strong>6-Year Graduation (Bachelor’s)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian 88%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black or African American 78%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino 73%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White 83%</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Race Ethnicity Unknown 74%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Resident Alien 56%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from NCES, 2011
potential participants. All selected sites had similar demographic profiles in terms of race/ethnicity, age of students, graduation rates, and retention rates. Additionally, all had a population of Black men and similar opportunities for leadership activities. Secondly, the researcher had worked at each of the research sites and had access to gatekeepers at each institution. Access to gatekeepers significantly improved the ability of the researcher to recruit participants for the study. Finally, each of the sites was located within a similar geographic region, the southeast United States, yet represented very different geographic settings. University one is located in a rural setting; University two is located in a large metropolitan setting with a significant population of racially diverse people. All research sites were within a 200 mile radius of each other, a convenience which afforded the researcher reasonable access to participants for interviews, follow ups, and observations.

**Research Questions**

For the present study the review of literature generated a central guiding research question and three secondary research questions. Creswell (1998) stated qualitative research questions should be open ended, evolving, non-directional, and few in number (p. 98). The questions represent both *topical* and *issue* questions, which provided significant opportunity for in-depth exploration of the phenomenon. Creswell (1998) recommended using both types of questions in grounded theory research. *Topical questions* seek to develop the general categories that may emerge and look for context, strategies, and causal conditions within the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 1998). *Issue questions* on the other hand, address the major concerns and complexities to be resolved (Creswell, 1998, p.101).
Central Guiding Research Question

- What is the process by which Black men become leaders of predominately White organizations on predominately White college campuses?

Secondary questions

- Issue Q1: What challenges do Black men face in the leadership development process?
- Topical Q2: What support systems do successful Black leaders develop and utilize?
- Topical Q3: What coping mechanisms do Black men develop when they encounter challenges in the leadership development process?

Several potential interview questions were developed to support the semi-structured interview protocol called for by the grounded theory method (Creswell, 1998; Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Charmaz (2006) stated interview questions must explore the interviewer’s topic and fit the participant’s experience (p.29). While interview questions should be open enough to allow for emergent themes to arise, research must go through an institutional review and approval process requiring that questions asked of participants are outlined in detail (Charmaz, 2006). While this is contrary to the conceptual underpinning of grounded theory research, semi-structured interviews can allow for sufficiently open questions so as to encourage the emergence of themes while accommodating the necessary structure for assurance that ethical research methods are followed and participants rights are respected (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).
Charmaz (2006) identified three categories of questions that can be used in semi-structured interviews. Initial open ended questions introduce the participant to the nature of the questions that will be asked in the interview process and are used at the beginning stages of the interview process. Intermediate questions probe deeper into the phenomenon under study and help the researcher develop a better understanding of the participant’s experiences. They are generally used as participant comfort increases with the interview process and rapport develops between the researcher and the interviewee. Finally, ending questions are asked to encourage participant reflection on their experience of the phenomenon and illuminate strategies for coping with the phenomenon under investigation. Table 3.2 provides a sample of each question type. A copy of the proposed semi-structured interview protocol adapted from templates suggested by Creswell (1998) and Charmaz, (2006) is included in Appendix A.

**Participant Information and Selection**

Important to any study is the method by which participants are selected. For this study, there was an initial sample based on the theoretical framework developed from the
review of the literature. Issues of race, identity development, institutional history (predominantly White vs. non-predominantly White) were all considered in the selection of research sites so as to maximize the availability of eligible participants.

An initial sample of four Black men from predominantly White colleges in the southeastern United States was selected for interviews. The researcher then used selective sampling to identify five additional Black student leaders for participation. For the purpose of this study, ascribed racial identity was used to identify participants. Ascribed racial identity is the racial identity applied to the individual by other people, groups, or social institutions based on physical appearance, racial ancestry, and the social construction of race at that point in time (Wijeyesinghe, 2001). This identity may be the same or different than their chosen racial identity or identities, which is the racial group the individual themselves identifies with (Wijeyesinghe, 2001). For this study, the term Black and African-American were used interchangeably. Skin color was the ascribed identifier often used by both non-majority students and participants at the predominantly White institutions. All the predominately White colleges selected had a Caucasian student enrollment greater than 60% historically.

A historically White student body and White Euro-centric administration created and perpetuated what Harper (2009) and Cuyjet (1997) recognized as conditions for institutionalized racism in higher education. Both authors identified institutional racism as a primary barrier to Black student engagement and success at PWI’s. Each of the research sites had student race and gender demographics that were typical of large research I PWI’s in the southeast.
Participants for the study were recruited based on the student’s ascribed identities of Black and male. Participants had to have held a position of leadership for at least one academic year prior to the study to ensure that they had sufficiently experienced the process of becoming a leader. For the purpose of this study, leadership was defined as “A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2004, p. 3).

Since the researcher had worked at both institutions he had several contacts at each research site. Site administrators were contacted by email early in the fall semester to ascertain preliminary interest in the gatekeeper role. This email (see Appendix B) provided a description of the research and the role of the gatekeeper. Gatekeepers are defined as individuals who can provide the researcher access to the research site and whose purpose is to guide the researcher to information and participants relevant to the study (Creswell, 1998).

These administrators acted as gatekeepers, and were asked to forward an invitation letter (see Appendix C) and demographic questionnaire (see Appendix D) that described the study to all students within their respective areas of responsibility. This letter asked for voluntary participants that self-identified as Black men. By returning the demographic questionnaire to the researcher via email, participants gave informed consent to participate. After the researcher reviewed the demographic questionnaires for experience as a leader and self-identification as a Black man, the researcher selected participants for an initial one hour interview.
Role of the Researcher

Due to the interpretive nature of qualitative research, it is important that the researcher disclose any information about themselves that might influence their interpretation of the data including biases, experiences, and assumptions (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the researcher was a White male in his mid-forties with sixteen years of professional experience working in student affairs.

As a child, the researcher remembered receiving mixed messages about race relations between Black and White Americans. On one hand, at his elementary school they were having birthday celebrations on the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday and celebrating his achievements, while simultaneously the news was filled stories and images of race riots over mandated school desegregation.

Having lived in the Northeast and Midwest his entire life, the researcher moved to the southeast in 2000 and witnessed racism and bias from a different perspective with the controversy of the Confederate flag flying over the state capitol. Seeing people who had family die in the civil war argue passionately with others whose family members had been slaves illustrated for the researcher the void of compassion and understanding that consumed race relations.

The researcher first encountered the topic of the emergence of Black male leadership on a predominately White college campus while he was working at a large southeastern university as a residence hall coordinator. It was during the researcher’s tenure as a residence hall coordinator that he was asked to recruit Black men for resident assistant positions and was unsuccessful despite there being many eligible candidates on
campus. The reason why the many Black men on campus were not interested sparked an interest in the research topic and reflection on his own history and reaction to racism and bias. The 2008 election of President Barack Obama brought back the odd juxtaposition of hope and hatred that the researcher had witnessed as a child and prompted the researcher to contemplate the question: “What is the solution?”

The researcher determined that increasing his own understanding of this void of understanding across races was an obvious first step, and began this study anticipating rejection and criticism from both Black and White alike, which has come in subtle and interesting ways. When he is asked (and he is frequently asked), why he decided to study the leadership development of Black college men, the researcher often replies “because I was a college man and a student leader as well” to illustrate the racial bias inherent in the question. As a result of this study, the researcher has developed an even greater respect for people of all races who actively stand up for the values and beliefs they hold, particularly when they are in the minority, and the great personal risks they take in doing so. It was the hope of the researcher that the voices of the emerging Black leaders studied could inform the practice of student affairs professionals on predominantly White campuses.

Participant Demographics

Nine undergraduate men from two selective southeastern universities served as the sample population for the study. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 23 years old with a mean age of 21 indicating they were all traditional age college men who enrolled in college the fall after they graduated from high school. All men self-identified as
currently enrolled Black or African American undergraduate students serving in positions of leadership within predominately White student organizations. Only one participant self-identified bi-racial identification as Black and Hispanic.

All participants indicated they had prior leadership experiences in high school, with five of the nine participants having come from predominately Black high schools (as identified by the participants). The remaining four participants indicated their high schools were predominately White or mixed race high schools. All four of the men from predominately White or mixed race high schools attended institution two, a highly selective urban university. The five participants from Black high schools all attended university two, a rural land-grant institution.

Participants ranged in class standing from first year students to fifth year seniors, with each having started their first college leadership position within the first year of college in either the first or second semester of enrollment. At the time of interview, the participants averaged 23 months of college leadership experience with a high of 48 months and low of 12 months. Additionally, participants averaged eight college level leadership positions to date, with a high of 18 positions and a low of 2. All men indicated they had at least one leadership position that was in a predominately White organization (PWO) with several men indicating they had served in more than one PWO. Average time in their current PWO leadership position was 13 months with highs of 24 months and a low of 2 months.

The researcher removed all organization names and position titles from the data to protect the identity of the participants. All participants met the qualifications of
participating in leadership defined as: A process whereby an individual influences a
group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2004, p. 3).

Additionally, they served in at least one PWO as defined by the researcher as
consisting of at least 60% White membership. All participants indicated that they were
the only Black men in the PWO’s they led, and that frequently they were the only
minorities. Table 3-4 details the demographic and leadership profiles of the participant
men. In addition to the undergraduate Black men interviewed, two administrators who
work closely with Black male undergraduate leaders were interviewed as part of the
validation process.

Table 3.3- Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>HS Leadership</th>
<th>HS Demographics</th>
<th>1st year in college</th>
<th>1st year of college leadership</th>
<th># months in any college leadership position</th>
<th># of leadership positions to date</th>
<th>Time in current leadership position (months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Black/Hisp</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Black/AA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PW</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Black/AA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PW</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Black/AA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Black/AA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PW</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Black/AA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Black/AA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Black/AA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PW</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Black/AA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection

Interviews followed a semi-structured protocol. This protocol was a series of pre-
determined open ended questions that the interviewer selected from as the interviews
progressed. This protocol guided the interview but did not limit participant responses or
follow a pre-determined coding scheme as a structured interview protocol might (Denzin
(Lincoln, 1994; Creswell, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). While unstructured interviews are preferable for grounded theory research because they allow the researcher latitude in exploring emergent themes in the data as the interviews progress (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), the semi-structured interview was appropriate for this situation as the researcher was a novice and IRB approval was required for the study (Charmaz, 2006).

Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for later thematic coding and analysis. Each participant was assigned a unique number to protect confidentiality. The number, key and the transcripts were kept in separate, locked locations. No personally identifying information was kept on the interview transcripts, and access to the number key and transcripts was only available to the researcher.

**Interview Information**

The researcher interviewed the nine participants and two staff members on each of their respective campuses. On campus one, interviews took place in a private study room in the library. On campus two, interviews were conducted in the researcher’s office who was employed as an administrator on campus two at the time. The researcher had no prior interaction or involvement with any of the participants interviewed.

The interview protocol was designed to last approximately one hour in duration. Actual interview length ranged from 45 minutes to one hour and forty-five minutes with an average of sixty-eight minutes. All interviews were recorded by handheld digital recorder with the permission of the participants. Recorded interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist and verified by the researcher for accuracy. Verified
interviews were stored and analyzed with Nvivo10, a qualitative analysis software product.

**Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed using the *constant comparative* method (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) which compares pieces of data for similarities and differences. Based on those comparisons, codes were created and *in-vivo* codes were used wherever appropriate. *Coding* is defined as developing concepts from data and *in-vivo codes* are concepts labeled using the actual words of the research participants rather than being named by the analyst (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 65).

Corbin and Strauss (2008) defined *open coding* as a process that breaks data down and delineates concepts that represent larger collections of raw data. This is the preliminary process that develops concepts in terms of the *properties* of the concept and the *dimensions* or variations of the property encompassed by that concept (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). *Axial coding* or the process relating concepts and categories to each other will occur concurrently with the open coding process. As categories become linked they also become more elaborate and developed thus allowing for the eventual emergence of themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Diagrams and memos were developed from the resultant codes. Corbin and Strauss (2008) defined *memos* as written records of analysis (p. 117) the researcher uses to develop themes and guide future interviews. Memos were written in response to collected and coded data and consisted of thoughts, questions, observations, reflections or feelings about pieces of data that helped the researcher clarify and make connections
among emergent themes. A cycle of interview, open coding and axial coding continued as part of the simultaneous data collection and analysis process, as did comparative analysis of codes.

Subsequently theoretical sampling was used to explore emergent themes. Corbin and Strauss (2008) defined *theoretical sampling* as sampling on the basis of concepts derived from the data. The goal of theoretical sampling is to collect data from places, people, and events that will maximize opportunities to develop concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 143). The primary goal of this sampling method is to uncover relationships in the data and explore the conceptual meanings in depth as they present themselves (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Theoretical sampling of people, documents, and events continued until saturation was reached. *Saturation* is the point when no new data is emerging and represents the complete development of categories in terms of their properties and dimensions. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008) it is at this point, the delineation of relationships between concepts is apparent and data collection can end (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Context and process was identified with relation to the phenomenon studied, and the relationships were analyzed as integration of the various categories began. Corbin and Strauss (2008) defined *context* as structural conditions that shape the nature of situations or problems to which individuals respond by means of action, interaction, or emotion (p.87). Conversely identification of *process* refers to the flow of action, interaction, or emotion that occurs in response to events, situations, or problems (Corbin et al., 2008, p. 87). This process of analysis and identification proceeded through
theoretical integration, defined as the linking of categories around a core idea to refine a theoretical formulation resulting in theoretical saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Theoretical saturation was the point in analysis when all categories were well developed in terms of properties, dimensions, and variations (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.263).

Microanalysis and Open Coding

Corbin and Strauss (2008) recommend microanalysis at the initial stages of open coding. Microanalysis as defined by Corbin and Strauss is a more detailed type of open coding designed to break open the data to consider all possible meanings.(p.59). The researcher conducted microanalysis in the early stages of open coding in order to generate ideas, more closely and deeply examine the data, and to try and see data in new different ways that lie outside of conventional thinking. Constant comparison was used throughout the process to classify pieces of data and compare them for similarities and differences, eventually yielding a descriptive concept. Micro analysis allowed the researcher to think outside his traditional frame of reference and explore alternate or unfamiliar interpretations of data. Table 3-5 provides an example of microanalysis process used by the researcher.

The researcher coded each transcribed interview line by line, breaking the data into topical fragments. As these fragments accumulated, similar topics were grouped to form initial concepts (see Appendix E for example); defined by Corbin and Strauss (2008) as words that stand for groups or classes of objects, event, or actions that share common properties. Through open coding (see Appendix F) the researcher generated free
nodes which were sorted into 182 initial codes that shared similar properties or meanings.

From the 182 initial codes 8 initial categories were created.

Table 3.4- Sample of Microanalysis process

Example from Participant One interview:
I felt kind of positive in the beginning. Initially like when I thought about the idea, I felt positive about doing it. I felt like it was good and I’m willing to make the time commitment and be there, you know, whatever I feel is pertinent or valuable to us, I would let us know about it. I felt good about it, I wish more people would have done it because that’s the only way we can really make a change or something. If I’m voting against a bill because it’s just, I don’t think that it’d be best for like my community, I mean I’m pretty much the only one who can give that opinion. But other than that, I feel good with going there and putting the time in.

Initial codes:
- Advocate for change
- Representing the community
- Positive attitude
- Only one
- Lack of peer involvement

Final coding:
- Seeking social justice
- Representing the A. A. community
- Positive focus
- Isolation
- Cross cultural reflection-minority norms

Rationale:
Advocate for change as a label did not sufficiently capture the desire for equality and fairness expressed in the majority of subsequent stories.
African American was added as for clarification as participants later described representing multiple communities.
Positive attitude was changed to Positive focus as a category because stories revealed that attitudes, actions, and reactions focused on the positive, making it a multi-dimensional category.
Only one became Isolation because participant stories indicated that there were multiple ways they were isolated.
Lack of peer involvement was one of many ways participants reflected on frustrating norms within their same race community. Peer involvement in itself was not developed enough to stand alone and was therefore subsumed by reflections on same race norms.

Axial Coding

Axial coding brings data fractured during the open coding process back together and allows the researcher to reassemble it through the identification of subcategories and the relationships between categories previously created. It transforms text into concepts and integrates categories and subcategories. Additionally axial coding begins to identify conditions, actions, interactions, and consequences (Charmaz, 2006). During the axial coding process the researcher recoded and regrouped the data yielding the categories in
Appendix G. Through this process the researcher discovered 18 specific categories with 26 related subcategories.

**Selective Coding**

Selective coding is the integration of categories and relationships among the data to develop a theoretical framework. Selective coding specifies the possible relationships between the categories and as integrative process, moves the story created through analysis in a theoretical direction (Charmaz, 2006). Through selective coding the researcher identifies the central category and its relationships, moving the research from description to theoretical explanation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The researcher discovered themes and regrouped the 18 categories to represent that represent the process of becoming a Black leader of a predominately White organization on a predominately White campus represented in Appendix H. This process has a thematic framework containing context, a central phenomenon, intervening conditions, coping process, and the outcome; establishing a leader identity in a predominately White organization.

**Theoretical Sensitivity**

Birks & Mills, (2011) define theoretical sensitivity as “the ability to recognize and extract from the data elements that have relevance for the emerging theory” (p.59). Additionally Birks and Mills (2011) identify several important characteristics of theoretical sensitivity: (a) the researcher must understand and reflect on their own personal, professional, and experiential history, (b) use tools, techniques and strategies to enhance sensitivity, and (c) spend significant time immersed in the data (Birks & Mills,
2011). To develop the theoretical sensitivity the researcher addressed each of these characteristics.

The researcher began by defining his role within the study and providing a detailed description of his experience with the phenomena being studied. This allowed for reflection on the personal and professional experiences with the subject understudy. Additionally the researcher reflected on literature he had read previously on the subject, and explored ways in which that might increase or detract from sensitivity at various points in the analysis process. Aware that knowledge of theory could either increase or decrease sensitivity to the data, the researcher consistently reflected on codes and categories to question influence of meaning outside of the data.

Secondly the researcher engaged in discussions with colleagues regarding the developing themes. Because they were external to the study and had varying experiences with the subject they often questioned the researcher on why emergent themes were significant. Finally, the researcher spent over one year analyzing the data and looking at it from a variety of perspectives, reviewing field notes, transcripts, and memos throughout the analysis process.

**Data Saturation**

Participants were interviewed until the researcher determined that all categories were saturated. Saturation occurs when new data no longer generates new insights nor reveals new dimensions or properties of categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As the researcher continued to collect and analyze data, saturation emerged after six interviews. As the determination of saturation is subjective, the researcher continued to interview in
order to confirm saturation. Each category represented in Appendix H represents at least one supporting statement from each participant. Three additional interviews confirmed saturation and produced no new concepts, categories, or relationships among the data. Glasser (1998) and Stern (1994) supported the use of small samples such as the one the researcher used in this study, as grounded theory seeks to develop conceptual categories, highlight the properties of those categories, and show relationships between the categories.

Audit Trail

The audit trail is described by Creswell and Miller (2000) as a detailed account of the researcher’s decisions and activities. For this study, the researcher took field notes during interviews, created memos during analysis, and kept notes and photographs of the emergent categories and theory. These documents provide an audit trail of the process through which the theory developed, and allow an outside researcher to understand data interpretation and analysis used in this study.

Field Notes

Field notes were handwritten immediately after the interviews concluded so as not to distract from or influence participant stories as they were being told. The researcher used field notes to record participant emotions, reactions, behaviors and researcher thoughts and reactions as participant stories emerged. The researcher also used field notes as part of the data analysis process to enhance and refine emergent themes as they developed. The field notes along with researcher memos established an audit trail of the conceptual development of the emergent theory.
Memos

The researcher created memos throughout the data analysis process. Memos were used to capture researcher thoughts, observations, and reactions to the data. Additionally, memos served to outline emergent theoretical concepts and connections amongst the data and allowed the researcher to follow emergent themes and combine and create categories of data and theoretical definitions linked to participant terms. Memos were created and refined and directly attached to participant stories, data categories, and theoretical concepts as they emerged in Nvivo10. These linked memos in addition to researcher field notes served as part of the audit trail.

Verification of Findings

Ultimately, the value of any piece of qualitative research rests on the ability of the researcher to verify, to the extent possible, that the results obtained are accurate descriptions of the phenomenon under study and the theory generated is relevant and meaningful. To this end, the process of verification of findings was conducted throughout the grounded theory research process. Creswell (1998) identified eight methods of verification for qualitative research. They are: (a) prolonged engagement in the field; (b) triangulation; peer review negative case analysis; (c) clarifying researcher bias member checks; (d) rich thick description; and (e) external audits (Creswell, 1998).

For the current study, three sources of verification were identified for use. These verification methods were selected based on common practice within the grounded theory research paradigm, the novice researcher’s ability to effectively and accurately employ the particular verification procedure, and the nature of the data collected. Creswell
(1998) recommended that a minimum of two verification procedures be conducted on any qualitative study. To ensure rigor and accuracy as well as develop new research skills, the researcher chose the three methods described below for this study.

**Detailed description** is central to all traditions of qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). This thick rich description of the grounded theory allows the reader to make decisions about the transferability and accuracy of findings because the reader is given so many details of the participants and setting(s) under study (Creswell, 1998). Detailed description occurred throughout the entire study was included the memos, participant quotes, in-vivo codes, and observed behaviors all of which bring the reader into the world of experience of the participant.

**Member Checks**

**Member checking** involved bringing data analysis, conclusions, interpretations, and summaries to the participants and asking them to evaluate the accuracy and credibility of the researchers account. The participants were asked to provide critical feedback on the researcher’s initial draft interpretations and had opportunity to correct error and bias with their own alternative language/suggestions as suggested by Miles and Huberman,(1994) and Creswell, (1998). Member checks confirm consistency between researcher and participant understanding of meaning.

The researcher conducted two stages of member checks while interviewing and analyzing data. For the first member check, the researcher emailed participants a copy of their transcribed interview, asking if the transcription accurately represented the interview conversations. The participants were encouraged to reply indicating any
discrepancies or inaccuracies. Additionally, they were asked to elaborate on anything contained in the transcript that they wanted to clarify for the researcher. Two participants asked to have organization names removed from the transcripts and one participant responded asking to have some grammatical errors corrected on the transcript.

For the second round of member checks, the researcher developed a short description of the emergent theory and a diagram and asked participants if it accurately described the process by which they became leaders of predominately White student organizations. Participants were encouraged to respond with comments, corrections, and reflections. None of the participants responded with any comments, corrections, or problems with the researcher’s analysis, interpretation or integration of the data. One participant, who had become interested in student affairs as a career path requested the literature review conducted for the study.

Triangulation

*Triangulation* of data sources is defined as the use of multiple, different data sources, methods, and theories to provide supporting evidence for the themes developed (Creswell, 1998).

Triangulation occurs when concepts within a study are repeated, tested, or affirmed by multiple sources. Multiple sources of triangulation contribute to a more robust study with concepts that are solidly grounded in the data (Creswell, 1998).

The researcher used a broad range of sources for triangulation including: (a) observation of two months of meetings and office interactions of a Black leader within a prominent predominately White organization, (b) interview with a professional staff
advisor to a predominately White organization on their observations of Black leader development within their organization, (c) interview with a professional staff member who advises a program for African American students on a predominately White campus, (d) peer review of data analysis with a university instructor experienced with grounded theory methods, (e) review of campus webpages of the two research sights, related to student clubs, organizations, and leadership opportunities. Table 3-6 represents sources and artifacts used in the triangulation process. The meetings, interviews, and artifact reviews described were conducted throughout the data analysis process to verify and affirm researcher concepts and categories.

Table 3.5-Sources of Data Triangulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Artifact type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation of 2 months of meetings and office interactions of a Black leader within a prominent predominately White organization on campus 2</td>
<td>Researcher notes and memos on observations of interactions in meetings working groups, and office settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview with a professional staff advisor to a predominately White organization on their observations of Black leader development within their organization</td>
<td>Interview transcript. Field notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview with a professional staff member who advises a program for African American students on a predominately White campus</td>
<td>Interview transcript. Field notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer review of data analysis with a university instructor experienced with grounded theory methods</td>
<td>Phone and office conversations with university instructor reviewing data analysis and procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of campus webpages of the two research sights, related to student clubs, organizations, and leadership opportunities</td>
<td>SGA webpages, student life club and organization web pages, university housing webpages, greek life webpages, and leadership programs web pages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality

The quality and credibility of a grounded theory can be judged on a variety of criteria. Charmaz, (2006) presents seven criteria for judging the quality of grounded theory data which the researcher used in evaluating this study: (a) Is there enough data about persons, processes, and settings to understand and portray the contexts of the study? (b) Are there sufficient detailed descriptions of a range of participant views and actions? (c) Do the data reveal what lies beneath the surface? (d) Is the data sufficient to reveal change over time? (e) Are there multiple views of a range of participant actions? (f) Is there enough data to develop analytic categories? (g) Can sufficient comparisons be made between the data and do these comparisons generate and inform ideas? (p.19)

Additionally Corbin and Strauss (2008) provide the following criteria for evaluating the quality of grounded theory research:

Criteria #1: How was the original sample selected, on what grounds?

Criteria #2: What major categories emerged?

Criteria #3: What were some of the events, incidents, or actions (indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?

Criteria #4: On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? How did theoretical sampling guide data collection? Were categories representative of data?

Criteria #5: What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relationships among categories, and on what grounds were they formulated and validated?
Criteria #6: Were there instances when hypotheses did not explain what was happening in data? How were these discrepancies accounted for? Were hypotheses modified?

Criteria #7: How and why was the central category selected? Was selection sudden, gradual, difficult, or easy? On what grounds were final analytic decisions made?

Criteria #8: Are conditions and consequences included in the study?

Criteria #9: Are concepts systematically related?

Criteria #10: Do the theoretical findings seem significant and to what extent?

(Corbin & Strauss, 2008)

The researcher used the above criteria set forth by Charmaz (2006) and Corbin and Strauss (2008) in the design, analysis, and evaluation of this study to ensure quality and credibility.

Chapter Summary

This chapter began with an overview of the general study design and rational for using qualitative methods. The grounded theory research paradigm was explored as presented by Corbin and Strauss (2008) and rationale for site selection as well as site demographics was discussed. The central research question and three sub-questions were presented along with examples of interview questions and the interview protocol. Selection and recruitment of participants was outlined, and methods of data collection, analysis, and verification of findings were discussed.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

Interview data were analyzed using Grounded Theory techniques developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998). Initial or open coding, axial coding and finally selective coding procedures (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) were used to develop a model of the research question. Memos and field notes were also kept and used in the analysis. Member checking, theoretical sampling, triangulation, and expert review were utilized in order to increase validity. This chapter outlines the participant stories and emergent themes which make of the model. This model represents a process that answers the central research question: What is the process by which Black undergraduate men become leaders of predominately White organizations on predominately White college campuses? Additionally, it answers the three secondary questions: (1) What challenges do Black men face in the leadership development process? (2) What support systems do successful Black leaders develop and utilize?, and (3) What coping mechanisms do Black men develop when they encounter challenges in the leadership development process?

This chapter outlines the model that represents the process by which Black men become leaders of predominantly White organizations on predominantly White campuses, and provides description of the emergent themes through the words and experiences of the participants.
A Model for the Process by which Black Men Become Leaders of Predominately White Organizations on Predominately White Campuses

The Black Male Leadership Emergence on Predominately White Campuses (BMLEPWC) model describes the process by which Black undergraduate men become leaders of predominately White organizations on predominately White campuses. The model, presented in Figure 4.1, illustrates a process of leader development that begins within the support and mentorship of the African American Community, progresses through Emerging Leadership with its cycle of exploration, engagement and cultural comparison, encounters Threats to Leadership Emergence that necessitate leaders develop Strategies for Leadership Success, and ultimately concludes when emergent Establish a Leader Identity in a Predominantly White Organization.

Figure 4.1- Black Male Leadership Emergence on Predominantly White Campuses

The BMLEPWC model illustrates a complex leadership development process whereby aspiring Black college men emerge from the African American community on predominately White campuses to establish themselves as leaders in a predominately
White organization. It depicts a process of personal and cultural growth, leadership development, decision making, and strategic adaptation that assist emergent Black leaders in overcoming the many threats of racism and bias to emerge as leaders of predominately White student organizations. Additionally, it illustrates the personal philosophy of hard work and role modeling required for Black men to overcome the recurrent barriers navigating a predominately White institution presents. The model also depicts critical barriers that Black leaders encounter, the strategies they employ to become successful, and the balance they must achieve between campus and African American community obligations. Finally, the model represents the growth of the leaders’ membership and participation in an African American campus community to a broader campus community that they come to influence and serve as prominent and inclusive leaders.

While the BMLEPWC model is represented in a somewhat linear fashion, it is best conceptualized as a series of developmental processes that flow like a river. The processes and strategies eddy and recirculate as leadership emerges and the leader encounters and navigates challenges and barriers. The leader begins with the African American Community and observations of same race peers, continues through emergent leadership, and ultimately resulting in leading in the broader campus community as well as inspiring and leading within his own African American community.
The African American Community

The African American Community is the starting place and first phase of the BMLEPWC model and consists of two dimensional elements: Social Support and Mentors. The researcher found that Black men entering a predominantly White university rely extensively on the African American community for social and personal support. The community as it was referred to by participants served as the foundation from which the exploration and participation in leadership activities emerged. Often participants referred to the community as the focus of their leadership service. Early in leadership, community referred to same race peers and the cultural values they held. As leaders progressed in their leadership development, community came to mean the campus community as a whole and became a significant part of their leader identity as explored later in Establishing a Leader Identity in Predominately White Organizations.

Figure 4.2- African American Community

Community as a contextual element carries a variety of messages as an undercurrent to feeding leader actions, serving as support, motivator and sense of pride.
and at times frustration and challenge as evident from participant stories. The emphasis on community, at both African American and campus level is the source of support, challenge, and reward for emergent leaders and therefore the starting point for college leader development. The theme of the African American Community contains 2 main categories; Social Support and Mentors which proved critical to participant emergence as leaders.

African American Community: Social Support

Social Support describes the connection and comfort emergent leaders had with their African American peers and how peer support was something participants could rely on and feel connected to in an uncertain, predominately White college environment. Participants described community a place of comfort, familiarity, and support. Many participants mentioned the ability to talk about situations and ideas without worry within the context of the community.

Participant Two, a senior with 5 years of experience as a leader, provided a definition of community that expanded with his leadership engagement. He stated:

When I referred to community I was (initially) talking about the African American community obviously, but it’s kind of like a group of people that share a common history, common experiences, look like you, talk like you, act like you type of thing. But I would also say that that’s not my only community that I’m involved in, I’m in (name of PWO) community, (campus) community too, things like that, so I guess it’s the commonalities you share.
Participant Nine described how he came to appreciate the familiarity the African American community provided in his first Black organization, a kind of reprieve from the dominant culture. He reflected:

At first it was almost a way for the Black students to kind of separate from campus life, to kind of say, we’re a community here within the greater community. But as I was in them (Black organizations) I realized that it’s just an effective way for people who were like minded, you know. They come from the same backgrounds and stuff to come together and work together and stuff. It doesn’t really matter too much that it’s all Black because everyone is kind of on the same page.

All participant stories expressed appreciation for the respect and understanding the African American community provided, particularly as they progressed toward engagement in the White campus community. Participant One described his experience as he moved beyond leadership in a Black organization:

I would honestly say that I get from my Black friends, I get another level of respect. I don’t think that there’s ever been an instance where they would say, well you think you’re better than us because you’re in this, or, when you over there with them you saw us and acted like . . . big stuff. I think they are more proud and accepting of the fact that, you know, of course I’m a leader within my Black community (organization), but I’m also a leader at (university level). I think they see it as, one of us has gotten in and is doing well and is respected, not only by us, but by White students as well.
Participant Four gained perspective on what it means to be a Black man at a predominately White institution as he reflected on the African American community and its engagement in leadership opportunities. Further illustrating the grounding experience afforded by the African American community. He commented:

Of the Black people here, I’d say at least most of them are involved in at least 1-2 organizations, probably most of them will be Black organizations. I feel like them knowing that I do participate in student government or biology club or another Whiter organization; they’re like ‘oh I see you doing big things’, whereas Black (organization name), is like, yeah, you’re the leader, but you’re just leading us….’ I still get probably more respect from participating in White organizations, but I probably get more love from being in the Black organizations.

Finding their place in leadership positions relied in part on the support and respect of the Black community as they rose through the ranks of African American organizations and ventured into PWO’s. Many of the participants expressed the need to remain connected with the African American community as a source of racial identity. Participant Two summarized this well:

You have people that look like you, you’re more comfortable being a minority, just because, you’re with all your friends basically and you have something in common with everybody. You can talk about what’s going in your community and nobody is like uncomfortable about talking about situations because there’s a similarity with everybody.
As Participant Five saw it, through the African American community and its mentorship, leadership, and brotherhood, he was introduced to predominately White organizations with the support from same race peers. He explained:

By joining my fraternity, which is an African American fraternity, I’ve been entered into Greek life here on campus and I got to know a lot of the IFC guys and a lot of CPC women getting outside of NPAC and I really liked that, it’s a great.

Participant One articulated the strength of the African American community influence on the leadership positions he chose saying leadership in a PWO “must benefit something I represent.”

Social Support describes the connection and comfort emergent leaders had with their African American peers and how peer support was something they could rely on and feel connected to in an uncertain predominately White college environment. Participants also relied on the ability to talk about situations and ideas without worry within the context of the African American community.

**African American Community: Mentors**

Complementing the collective benefits of community support was the second element of The African American Community: Mentors. The importance of mentors to the Black leaders interviewed cannot be overstated. Mentors served a variety of roles, assisted in the process of leadership development and communicated expectations. Mentors were a link to the history of African American progress and inspiration for the future of leadership. They provided stability, information on navigating the PWO, and
pushed participants to become leaders. Mentors also served the function of catalysts for the decision to become engaged in predominately White Organizations. They were very visual role models for same race peers to emulate, and for White peers to learn about Black male leadership. The Mentor category emerged in three dimensions: Finding Mentors, Types of Mentors, and Roles of Mentors. Mentors ranged from close friends to historical figures, and were tremendously valued by these participants.

Finding Mentors

All men in the study discussed in detail the mentors they had, and several of the men suggested family members were their first mentors into leadership. There were two ways students found mentors outside of family members: (a) they were either part of a formal program for minorities, or (b) someone informally reached out to or inspired them in some way to engage them in a leadership experience. Almost all the men mentioned observing their mentors and being impressed by their leadership and engagement in both predominately White organizations and Black organizations.

Structured mentor programs early in the student’s college career provided opportunity for Black men to become familiar with the new campus environment in the context of the African American community on campus. Mentoring allowed connection to the campus in a safe and comfortable environment while beginning a leadership narrative that encourages African American community and campus community engagement. Participant Nine recalled the message and impact of his structured mentoring experience:
Well, over the summer I came to a program for minority students. And a lot of the counselors were saying come join these organizations; they are really good chances for you to get leadership experience early, to get involved with campus life. So I got into those. (Group name), had its own freshman component, so I got involved there, so we did community service projects, we had fundraising and stuff.

Participant Five had a similar experience with a first year mentor program. He recalled:

There was (program name), that’s a peer mentoring program, I’m involved with that and I was in it as a freshmen, as a mentee, and now I’m a mentor. I got directly involved with Black Student Union, I support them because (mentor name), she’s the coordinator of that and so I’m involved with that now.

Participant Seven enthusiastically described how his participation in the formal mentor program in his first year led to comfort with the campus and the opportunity to become a mentor himself, he described:

Coming to (institution one) I was involved immediately in the (name of) mentor program, which is basically a minority program that connects freshman with upper classman with similar majors to them and kind of, you have a mentor for your whole freshman year. We have monthly events with that and by the end of it I really liked the program. I felt like I belonged and I decided to become part of that for the next year and applied to be a mentor. And so since my sophomore year and currently this year I’m a mentor for that program too.
The second way Black men found mentors was through individual faculty, staff, and older leaders’ informal outreach. Obviously less structured than the programmatic approach, but very impactful if good connections were made. Participant Five’s multiple mentor connections, one of which was completely by chance and very short lived, provide a great example. He proudly remembered:

There was a student (name). I don’t know if you know him, he was an Alpha too, he was in student government, he was actually assistant AG and I didn’t really get to know him, because he died in a motorcycle accident winter break. I remember we had his shadow, like a case study, and when I went there that was like the first time I saw him, and I just thought it was something so great to see like a Black guy in a position of power and he seemed like he was really involved. Then he was in the fraternity and I didn’t even know that and so a little bit later, seeing him, even though I didn’t really get to speak to him much before he passed away, just what he did, just him being himself influenced me.

Participant Nine’s experience exemplified the informal network of mentors successful Black Leaders encountered and how that shaped their approach to leadership and to the college experience as a whole he stated:

Upper classman friends kind of influenced me a lot and my advisor also. Like in talking to them, they’re like it’s good to get experience for the work world while you’re in school, so that you don’t just get a degree, get out and you wonder what’s going to happen, you know. Um, my parents also, but they, not so much, because my parents are more focused with having a good resume so that I can get
a job and stuff. But talking to upper classman, they’re like you need to get this experience so that you know what you want to do once you get out, what you’re looking for, what type of position in the company do you want to play.

Participant One discussed the immediacy of the relationships he had with some of his more inspirational, yet informal mentors. He said:

The older brothers in my chapter who are alumni or have graduated now, they you know, like I’ve seen them serve on programming board or serve as (Black organization) President so he had to deal with, like all those organizations. So you just learn, you know, you see him standing up in front of the board of trustees here at (Intuition 1), like represent us. So you realize oh wow, he can do it, and at the same time, this is the same guy who you were just playing basketball with, who you live right next door to, you were probably just cussing him out because he wouldn’t turn down his music. So, that interpersonal bond, so you like, like wow, this guy just stood up for us and now, he’s right next door to me and we talk all the time, so you know. That just makes you feel good. If you were buddy/buddy w/president of U. S. and you see him doing all these great things, and like wow, maybe now I should do better, especially now that you’re about to end your turn.

*Types of Mentors*

Several different types of mentors emerged through data analysis. As leaders became familiar with campus and the African American community, they became exposed to additional mentors. As was evident from the participant stories above,
mentors can be a diverse group, playing diverse roles, but, there were several types of mentors that emerged during data analysis. Specifically family, institution faculty/staff, and formal program mentors all emerged in addition to same race older peers and White peers.

Family members were often cited as very important types of mentors, both in the students understanding of the value of leadership and their eventual development as a leader. Participant Four’s comments about his mother were representative of both the message of mother as a mentor and the influence she had on his desire to lead later in life. He explained:

My mom has always stressed it to me, so from a young age I always knew that, you know, you have to be a leader, it’s not enough just to excel academically, you also have to be involved and you also have to take leadership roles in order to be a well-rounded individual.

These sentiments were echoed by Participant Five who said, “My family always believed in me and always encouraged me, even sometimes when I didn’t believe in myself”.

Participant Nine recalled similar family influences, emphasizing insight and advice, he recalled:

I guess another huge influence that’s always been in my life, but not in the same sorts of ways as maybe the upper classman or whatever, is my family. Like definitely my parents have always given me really good insight and good advice on just ways to lead and be successful and that sort of thing
Institutional staff served as important types of mentors, and were often catalysts for these participants becoming engaged in leadership opportunities beyond Black organizations. Participant Seven mentioned that there were several faculty that were willing to help if he let them know he had interest, he commented:

I think that you have to be proactive. I think people want to help you, as far as faculty members. There’s a good Black faculty staff here at (University One), but unless you make it known that you are about something and that you want to do something, they can’t help you. People can’t read your mind, so you need to speak and let it be known, what you want to do. People are willing to help you.

Participant One provided an example of how a staff mentor pushed him to become more engaged beyond the Black community and the power of faculty as mentors pushing him not to settle. He stated:

…and (advisor name) was like, one day I actually was in her office and I was a (Black organization) mentor and we have to have meetings and we were just talking and she’s like ‘are you happy with your (University) experience?’ and I was like ‘yeah, I’m happy.’ She’s like, ‘do you think you’re settling?’ And I was like, what are you talking about like I’m involved in all this, I do this.

Participant two described the influence of a White peer on his desire to become involved in his first PWO. Specifically commenting on the importance of having a good relationship and trusting on recruitment, he cited:

There’s definitely been White leaders that have helped me out, and it’s just, you know, I’ll even say (student name) was probably one of the biggest ones last year,
just getting to know him during my sophomore (program name) and then finding out he was on (PWO name) and talking to him about it and him recruiting me for (PWO name). But like I said before, it wasn’t hey, we need you on (PWO name). After that relationship was built and he got to know me, because we didn’t know each other, then he was like yeah I think you would be good for (PWO name), and then you’re more willing to trust somebody after they’ve gotten to know you. Because if he would have just said, hey you’d be good on (PWO name) the first day I met him; how do you know?

Participant Seven also had a White peer assist him on his path to leadership in a subtle but affirming way, he recalled:

I remember one girl in my class, I never really spoke to her because I’m one of the only males in my major currently and of course I don’t know everyone’s name because it’s a bunch of girls and there’s like 60 of us. Every day I’m pretty much learning a new name almost. But, she, after I asked her to sign my petition, I needed 25 signatures, and then she said, can I speak to you after class and I was like sure, no problem. Then she told me that she’s really happy with me stepping up and the courage it takes, because she said she knows it’s not easy being the only Black male in the program surrounded by White females, and it’s just good that you are stepping up to represent us. That’s what she said, that really helped me. She said if there’s anything you need, let me know. If you need me to fill out anything for you just ask me and I’ll do it. So I always like being in contact with
her, and I felt like that was really positive. I really appreciated it because she didn’t have to help me.

*Mentor Roles*

Participants discussed with great appreciation the roles their mentors played, with some participants having multiple mentors playing different roles. Roles fell in to two primary categories: (a) providing a visual and intellectual image of a Black leader and (b) mentor as connector. Participant stories revealed key contributions of the relationships. Powerful statements of the emerging Black leaders highlight the significance of their roles to leader emergence.

*Mentor Roles: Providing a Visual and Intellectual Image of a Black Leader*

One of the most frequently cited roles the mentors played was that of providing a visual and intellectual image of a Black leader for aspiring leaders to follow. Participant Five explained with great pride in his voice, “I didn’t realize, like when I came to (institution one) I was going to be surrounded by intellectual Black people, and I am!”

Participant two recalled his perception of early mentors:

Going into it I remember, when I started and the majority of the people in (Black organization name) were seniors and juniors, I was the youngest, and the ones that were holding all the major positions in the organization were like the seniors and juniors, so I was just looking up to them like, oh I could never do that?

Through the observation of Black mentors Participant Four found inspiration, he commented:
I’m a member of (Black fraternity) and a lot of the brothers like a couple of our advisors, work here on campus. One of them is the (prominent administrative position). Like one of our brothers is in an esteemed organization here on campus, several of them, pretty much all of them were past presidents of the fraternity or the chapter of the fraternity, so you know, I see them and they inspire me to be better.

Early mentor actions spoke to Participant Eight more than their words. He remembered:

I knew some people (at University One). I had a lot of mentors back in high school that was part of this fraternity and they were like big role models in my life and I wanted to be part of that too. Um, it was sort of like what they did and not what they told me. They were pretty involved around in the little community back in (hometown). I actually got a scholarship from them, so they attend a lot of programs, they tutored me too. I went to a lot of their programs they sponsored. They were kind of a big deal.

Upon arrival on campus, Participant One did not see a lot of Black men, however he observed that there were several who made it a point to be noticed as leaders on campus, and they were giving back to the community. He stated:

I saw them doing things, mentoring, and they were in leadership positions, one of them was actually the general counsel for student judicial board, so they were very, very active on campus so I saw them and was like, this is obviously where I needed to be.
**Mentor Roles: Connector**

Mentors acted as key connection resources for emergent leaders on campus, an environment that can often times be unsupportive to someone unfamiliar with its navigation. Participant Six explained how he needed someone to connect with on a personal level regarding a leadership position in which he was engaged:

So that next year there was actually a new hall director, an African American woman and so I definitely enjoyed being able to have I guess someone that was similar to you, to be able to kind of go in and talk to you and be able to kind of say this is what’s going on in my life and what’s going on here at (Institution two) and so, definitely that was great to have.

Participant Eight described the academic connection one of his mentors provided by explaining:

I’d have to say my advisor, she was on (committee name) with me and we really got close to a lot of other students in my major and even throughout the whole (participant’s major college). We had like personal conversations and she, I guess I’m one of her prized students, I guess you could call it. She lives off campus and checks on me periodically and makes sure everything’s going alright. She sends me scholarship recommendations. I have another professor, and she taught me my freshman year, and I’m helping her with a research project she’s doing. She helps me along the way. She kinds of tells me what teachers to get, to take in the future for my classes. She also just wrote an excellent letter of recommendation for me for a scholarship.
Participant One observed the need for mentors as connectors and noted the support network White students had in place, and the lack thereof for Black men. He noted the White culture seemed to be built on a much less formal, yet very well established mentor system encouraging leadership involvement. He commented:

I think a lot of times there is support for White students and I think that’s great, but I feel like there is a need in molding young African American men at (Institution 1) to making them into leaders.

Connection via a mentor is reinforced by Participant Six’s introduction to involvement in a new PWO, he explained:

…they were very helpful in learning things that were going on and then kind of acclimating (us) to the (organization) environment. The thing about (organization) is that until you get into a session you can do all the kind of homework that you want to do, you just kind of have to get in there and see what’s going on and kind of feel it.

Mentors and mentoring provide the motivation for initial engagement, assisted participants in developing high standards for themselves, taught them to engage new generations of leaders and, become prominent mentors. Mentoring in the Black community was inextricably tied to leadership at the research sites.

Mentors played a key role in the introduction and support of Black men as they engaged in becoming leaders. They also supported the further development of leadership after participants engaged in leadership opportunities. The level of contact with mentors ranged from frequent contact with family and close peer mentors, to observation of men
they did not know, and simple encouragement from campus faculty, staff, and advisors. The network and messaging provided by mentors was more impactful than the frequency of contact. In addition, the visibility of the mentor was critical in the development of mentor relationships as well as messaging the importance of Black men becoming engaged in leadership on campus. These mentors and the support of the African American Community provided the foundation for participants to progress in their development as leaders and enter the second phase of the BMLEPWC model, Emerging Leadership.
Emerging Leadership: From Community Member to Community Leader

Emerging Leadership, the second phase in the BMLEPW C model represents a three phase cycle by which participants emerged from *members* and observers within a community (the African American community) to *leaders* within the predominately White campus community. Emerging Leadership consists of thematic elements Exploring, Engaging, and Making Comparisons (see Figure 4-3). Each of these elements contains multiple sub-themes reflecting key dimensions of the process. These areas and associated thematic elements emerged as quasi-sequential and cyclical. As participants moved into new positions and organizations the cycle was repeated, although participant stories indicated cultural adjustment increased as leadership progressed.

**Exploring**

Exploring represents the initial thoughts, observations, actions, and re-actions the men in this study described in the early stages of their engagement as leaders or members of organizations on campus. They were forming their personal motivations and aspirations, and developing their insight on the nature of leadership and the purpose of their role within the various communities they were part of. If the context of leadership development for Black men is the engagement and emergence from the African American community into the broader campus community, then Exploring is the process by which participants conceptualized and developed their views on leadership and engagement. Exploring was how they began to intentionally consider the when, where, how and why of leadership and insert themselves as leaders on campus. It was a process that involved considerable time,
thought and energy and brought with it unique challenges and rewards which participants discovered as they developed as leaders.

Figure 4.3- Emerging Leadership

Through Exploring, students considered becoming involved in organizations because of the messages they received from peers and mentors and the engagement they had with the African American community. While participant interests and passions were important to their exploration of opportunities, they were too diverse to develop as thematic elements themselves. However, all participants had a desire to make a difference and were first inspired, and later invited, to become leaders. Exploring reveals several distinct dimensional elements: Inspiration and Purpose, Observation, Receiving Messages of Leadership, Invitation, Recognizing Need, Branching Out, and Seeking Opportunities.

*Inspiration and Purpose*

Participants found inspiration from a variety of sources including mentors, political and civil rights figures, parents and family members, social and political realities, faculty, staff, and other Black and White leaders they either knew or simply
observed. Participant Three was inspired to lead by a book he was reading at the time, he recalled:

I read Malcolm Gladwell’s The Tipping Point and I’m a marketing major so I really like studying that sort of, I guess, I guess you can kind of call it neuro-marketing where you kind of understand the behavior of certain consumers and stuff like that. So any of his books just really spoke to me, but particularly The Tipping Point. He talks about the connector, and I really view myself as that…

The participants were frequently inspired by concepts such as service and the improvement of the campus and African American community. The ability for the student organization to effect change was an inspirational factor that proved to be critical in the decision to lead. Participant Five explained:

I also liked the aspect of helping people out in student government. I’m not a politician by any means, but I felt like I can definitely help. That looked like the easiest way I could help.

Participant Seven described why he selected a particular organization for engagement. He stated:

They said well why did you apply, and I was like, I really just wanted the opportunity to grow and help someone else they way I’ve been helped.

Participant Two described how the White version of history was the inspiration for him to become a leader:

I just knew they were telling the story wrong, because my great, great, grandfather was in the 54th Mass. Regiment, and they were like ‘yeah?’ and so the story was
passed down through my family. And I was like I know you’re telling this story wrong, and I remember getting in trouble for it, and they’re like, what do you know. That’s when I really got interested in being that Black leader.

Participant Five was inspired to engage in a leadership opportunity because of a racial comment made by his White. It was obvious from the tone of his description that he was very aware and sensitive to the racial nature of the comment, as he went out of his way to make sure the researcher understood that the friend was not being racist:

It’s a funny story, I wasn’t even planning on running, one of my friends who goes to (Institution One), he actually said, and he said this in the most joking manner, he said we’re not going to have a Black (organization name) President, and he’s a White kid, but he’s my friend, and he was just joking with me. But because he said that, I thought ‘I’m going to run’. We were in calculus together and my VP, she is Black as well, I was like you know, she’s going to be my VP, and we just kind of did it on a whim, but we won! When he said that I was like, I’m going to prove him wrong.

While the specific details of the inspiration to lead were all different and very personal to the individual, an inspirational moment was common to all participant stories. Even subtle inspiration served as a catalyst to get prospective Black leaders to engage.

As participants contemplated leadership positions, they observed other leaders, listened to peers, faculty, and staff messages on leadership and recognized the need for leadership to emerge from the Black community. A critical piece to the participants at the research site was developing a sense of purpose for leadership. This sense of purpose was
not so much a conscious effort to make meaning as it was the result of observing needs and messages from both the African American and the larger campus community.

This sense of purpose served as motivation to persist in the face of challenges and as a consideration for what leadership positions to pursue. The purpose they derived from their leadership also provided motivation to continue to represent the community. Additionally it perpetuated the standard of excellence they feel they must uphold in order to be successful at a predominately White university. Understanding the motivation and sense of purpose for participants to pursue leadership in any capacity, and more specifically in a PWO, is critical to understanding how to recruit and retain Black men in predominately White organizations.

Purpose, as it evolved beyond basic need was a balanced mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. At the core of all motivators was the desire to improve self, the community, and the school. Participant Four talked about the desire to explore and better himself. He explained:

We get emails constantly reminding you to get involved, ‘here’s what you can do this week’. I just got one actually, but being involved is very important. Not just to be- to meet new people, but also just to be a well-rounded person. You know, you come to college thinking you might want to be a doctor, lawyer, be whatever, but until you explore other options and get involved you might realize, hmm, maybe my calling is, maybe I’m not so much of a doctor, maybe I’m a leader, maybe I should be a world health epidemiologist.
Participant Three viewed leadership opportunities as a vehicle for self-improvement as well. He stated, “So I’ve always wanted to be a good student and a good peer and good friend, and I did so through various organizations that I’ve been involved in.”

While others such as Participant Two, reached back to family and mentors for developing that sense of purpose:

My mom has always stressed it to me, so from a young age I always knew that, you know, you have to be a leader, it’s not enough just to excel academically, you also have to be involved and you also have to take leadership roles.

Participant One felt that the purpose for his leadership had been instilled in him from a young age. He felt he should be the example for others to follow, a theme that all participants eventually articulated as critical to their success as a Black leader on a White campus:

I enjoy being the leader, and um, I guess it was just something that I always felt that was instilled in me to be, not be better, but be the person that people look up to and be the examples for others.

Participant Four discussed a process of finding inspiration that he suggested is different for each leader. His statement of ‘finding one’s passion’ indicated both a process of self-discovery and discovery within the community:

Eventually you find what you’re passionate about. You find that maybe political science is for you, maybe bio-geography. You meet so many people, maybe someone in your, chem class or bio-chem or engineering.
Additionally, Participant Four spoke about the motivational aspects of passion and subtlety hinted at differences between engagement in Black vs. White organizations. He explained, “In Black organizations a lot of times the only reason you’re in the organization is because you’re passionate about it for some reason.”

This subtle differentiation became more pronounced in participants’ stories as leadership emerged. Racial issues were also important considerations for engagement and leadership for these participants, and emerged as important themes throughout their leadership experiences. The sense of both purpose and obligation to increase diversity in PWO's served as a focal point for engagement for many. As Participant Two explained, “I wanted to see more minorities stepping out of their boundaries and I want to see more diverse, and I know our campus is diverse, but a more inclusively diverse campus.”

This sentiment was also echoed by Participant Nine:

I have mostly Black friends up here. Since I went to (minority) program I’ve lived with those people for like a month, we were up here at the dorms for like 5 weeks, so I became good friends with all those minority students, so we kind of hung out all through the year and stuff. I made more friends and stuff, but I wanted to like to have a more diverse friend group.

Participant Six articulated how his desire to make an impact on campus fueled his first leadership opportunity. He stated:

So that was definitely my first kind of opportunity on campus to really get involved and so, yeah, I really enjoyed that and being able to work with $10,000 and spend that money and help program for the freshman class. And definitely I
really treasured the opportunity to feel like I was important and feel like I was working towards the good of campus.

Participant Five had some of the strongest feelings toward leading for a purpose and represented a view of leadership that many of the other participants developed over longer periods of time. He explained:

I lead because it’s good to do this, it’s a definite way that you can help out, you can be the change that you want to see. If you want to start doing this, then run for elections and start doing it. I feel like I learned that you can do what you want to do, you can implement the ideas that you have, like if you feel like there needs to be change, it’s not enough to just sit back and complain about it, now you have to do it.

Finally, most participants found early in their leadership development that they wanted to make the minority voice heard. Participant Seven spoke about how he wanted to represent Black men to the PWO he was interested in and to educate his fellow African American students simultaneously. He recalled, “I wanted to be on the Executive Board of (organization) because I just feel like the Black population at (university one) is just kind of behind, in a sense.”

Participant Three also addressed the need for the Black student voice to be heard and the inspiration and sense of purpose that need had given him. He also implied in his statement that there was opposition to Black leadership, although he did not mention specifically what that opposition was:
I really think when it comes to the college environment, we need to be that, I guess, breeding ground for students for leadership, for anything, because I mean leadership isn’t really positional, you know what I mean? If we had 12-20 Black young men who said I want to get together and we’re going to focus on this and we’re going to get it done, not because we have this position, but because we collectively our voices and our knowledge base and our might is just stronger than anything that could stop us.

Participant Five had a similar, but more societal view of the need for, and impact of Black leadership. He suggested, “I think Black leaders should really get involved because that’s a good way to get our voices heard in society, if people get involved. It’s a real big deal.”

While leader stories illustrated considerable variance in the sources of inspiration and purpose, the existence of that purpose and inspiration were critical to the emergence of leadership in a predominately White organization.

*Observation*

Participants identified observing others as an important part of their leadership development path. Observation of peers, leaders, and administrators communicated information about leadership and the campus for the emerging Black leaders. Less formal than mentor relationships, participants simply observed their Black peers in the leadership environments and the interactions within those environments. This process began early in the college career through informal mentor relationships, and continued as the men became more interested in leadership opportunities. Participant Two recalled:
So I was just looking up to them, I mean they’re older and it seems like they know everything, but as time went on and I matured and kind of witnessed them and the things that they did and the contributions they made I just kind of fell into their footsteps and then eventually took my own way.

Participants became involved because they saw their peers getting involved and enjoying the experience. This served as a catalyst for initial engagement and then further engagement. Participant Six remembered observing peers and reflecting on leadership in this way:

I was able to kind of see these people that have been at college for a little while and kind of made some in roads and got involved in different organizations and I guess my concept of leadership at that point was being able to motivate people to ‘do’, to be better.

Participant Two observed his peers, and in doing so made some decisions about his leadership direction. He noted:

I wasn’t really involved my first semester freshman year and I kind of saw some of my friends getting involved, but they really got involved in the minority organizations, like (Black student organization), those kind of things, so I kind of witnessed that and I saw that I wanted to go the other direction.

Of particular interest was how Participant Two referred to his desire to become involved in a PWO as the “other direction”. This indicated a dichotomous choice, Black or White organizations rather than a continuum of choices for this student. The categorization of an organization by race was more frequently found in participants who had little experience
with White organizations or culture prior to college. This is explored in greater detail later in this chapter under Engaging.

Participant Four observed his Black peers enjoying their experience and decided to become engaged for a very simple reason. He explained: “A lot of times it’s personal. I know I joined some organizations just because I saw other (Black) people who looked like they were having fun.”

For some students observing an individual they were close to helped them discover leadership positions, as Participant Nine put it:

I got involved in it because one of my friends that was a year older than me, she was involved in it, and I had just gotten to know her over the summer before I came to (university two). So just seeing her involved and all the things she was doing in it made me want to be involved in this organization.

Many Black men became involved because they saw Black peers getting involved and enjoying the experience. These visual cues served as catalysts for their initial engagement as well as subsequent engagement.

*Receiving Messages of Leadership*

Beyond visual cues, participants were exposed to a variety of messages that influenced and encouraged them to become leaders from the Black community, mentors, peers, and staff. Content of these messages were overwhelmingly positive, supporting, and encouraging.

Participant Seven was encouraged by a Black faculty members’ appeal for him to represent his community. He recalled:
As far as me joining student government, a Black male faculty member just encouraged me to do it. I’m not interested in politics at all, by any means, but he was just like, there’s no minority representation at all and you know if you’re willing maybe you should try to run.

Participant Two received a similar message, although from a White student:

I remember having a conversation with (student name), he’s a 4th year now, I remember talking to him and (another student name), and they were telling me how there’s just a need for Blacks in general to be represented in these White organizations.

Others were encouraged to branch out such as Participant One, whose adviser questioned him on his choice of engagement opportunities being limited to only Black organizations. He stated:

She was like so you don’t think you’re settling? I was like no and she’s like how many White friends do you have? I was like, uh, man, there’s some White girls in my class that I talk to you, you know, and she was like (Institution 1) is much bigger than the 1200 Blacks that go to the school and I think you need to challenge yourself to reach out, get out of your comfort zone and go out and meet some people.

Participant Five was encouraged by a faculty member repeatedly, and was pushed to explore his limits and comfort. As he described:

I’m a political science major and the professors that I know are real good. I’m real close with them and I have this bond with them and it’s cool. They’ve even
helped me get like some internships and stuff like that, so they would bring stuff
to me and say I think you should do that. Even if I don’t believe that (I can do it),
because I’m like no, you know, but they really do believe in me.

Similar to Participant Five, Participant Six was exposed to a new opportunity by a staff
member. This participant also doubted their own ability:

A staff member had suggested that I apply for (orientation leader) and I didn’t
know that it even existed, and I didn’t think that I would be able to get on because
I had no experience with it. But I was like you know what; I’ll apply for it,

The influence of a community wide message is evident from Participant Nine’s
recollection of the encouragement he received from his inner circle of advisors and peers.

He stated:

With the people who give me advice and stuff, everyone is really like minded.
They know that if you show up to the organization it’s because you want to
contribute something and you want to learn. So, they’re like if you got into
(University Two) you gotta be good enough to be a part of what we’re trying to
do here.

Participant Nine also remarked that he received several messages to be the best and that
early on he was encouraged to go above and beyond because of his race. The message of
be the best is explored in greater detail as part of Setting a Standard of Excellence, which
recurred throughout the leadership stories of participants. For example, Participant Nine
shared:
(High) School said, ‘be the best because you’re Black and that’s how you’ll survive in the business world.’ My dad said, ‘be your best so that you can be satisfied with yourself at the end of the day. Be your best so you can sleep at night without thinking I left something that could have been done’.

This messaging provided the inspiration for participants to engage and persist and developed a narrative or standard of excellence and perfection that became an essential strategy (explored in greater detail under Strategies) for the survival of these participants as leaders. While the messages varied to some extent, the positive, supporting, and encouraging nature of the message was consistent, as was the idea of representing the African American community. Some of the messages were verbal and some were visual as previously discussed in Observation. Ultimately these messages created a sense of purpose for leadership beyond pride and resume building evident in their high standards and pursuit of excellence.

**Invitation**

Another more direct catalyst for engagement in leadership was the invitation. All participants experienced some type of invitation to lead. More direct than messages on the importance of leadership, the invitation took on various forms. It was as direct as a request, or as indirect as a welcoming gesture. Regardless of how it occurred, the invitation was recognized by the participant and served to move the student from exploring a leadership opportunity and perceiving the need for action, to taking that action and engaging further. Participant two discussed the importance of how a Black student is approached:
And then I guess another important step would be being approached by somebody else, whether it be an administrator or another student or whatever. You know, that first comment they talk to you about it, so that can be a positive or a negative…depending on how your approach is, it’s definitely going to shape how you, if you’re going to pursue it or not.

Participant Six was invited directly into a predominately White organization. He described:

…well I saw that the positions were available and actually my roommate, the first semester of my second year was an RA, and so he was like yeah, there’s positions available and you should apply for one.

Participant Four’s invitation was much more generic, yet enough to get him to take a chance and get involved. He shared:

Student government is open door policy, they actively encourage people. Just like those emails I told you about, always bombarding you, well not bombarding, but imploring you to get involved, so I just took a chance and went. I was in student government in high school and why not give it a try at (Institution one) and you know, got right in, got my feet wet. Got a taste of it and was welcomed with open arms.

Participant Two clarified his feelings on who should present the invitation which was contradictory to what others had stated about who should extend the invitation. He shared:
I think a lot of it is just having those conversations with the minorities. I don’t think there’s a concrete objective or rule or law you can put into effect to help it out because a lot of it is in order to increase Black leadership. It has to come from the Black students. It can’t come from an older White person telling them, you know, you need to want to do this, because that’s not going to do anything.

Participant Five, similar to Participant Four, commented on the generic invitation sparking an interest because of the timing of the message. He explained:

Okay, so I think early 1st semester, freshman year, I found out about student government and kind of like the different areas and I was like that’s something that I want to be a part of. I don’t know, I guess I just, probably through emails, you know. I applied for I think student freshman council.

No one type of invitation was more or less prominent, however the common theme among personalized invitations was the recognition by the person offering the invitation that the participant leader had potential to ‘do more’ or enact change. With the exception of Participant Two, race did not seem to be an inspirational factor in whether or not the leader would accept the invitation. However, participants seemed to be more inspired by African American leaders who invited them over other forms of invitations. Additionally, invitations from White peers were something Black leaders responded to with pride. The researcher noted participants always indicated the race of a peer invitation if the person extending the invite was White.
Recognizing Need

The recurring messages about the importance of leadership combined with the observation of Black peer leadership provided a foundation for exploration of opportunity, and ultimately the recognition of the need for Black leadership. Participants talked extensively about recognizing need as a consideration for what organizations they became involved as well as why they became involved. Many looked for organizations that just needed assistance and then progressed on to predominately White organizations in need of African American leadership. For some the latter was a factor in becoming a leader initially, and the rationale for moving out of predominately Black organizations and into predominately White organizations.

Participant Six recalled the search for his next leadership opportunity as he progressed into his sophomore year. He clearly used need as the primary consideration and fortunately was not later discouraged by the results of his efforts:

I realized I need to stay involved and get involved in other things and actually, I went to the advisors and said there’s really not a programming board for sophomores, which is funny because sophomore leadership is now picking up steam. So we were like, ‘how can we get this off the ground?’ and ‘we really want to try to make this work and get another organization’. So we tried. It didn’t really get off the ground.

For Participant Two the need was more obvious from a racial perspective. The confluence of messages from others and observation of need resulted in the decision to
engage in a new organization, “I saw there was a lack of Black people involved, and others were telling me how there’s a need for Blacks to be represented.”

Participant Seven also noticed that there was a lack of diversity on student government and chose to lead in the organization, knowing he was also going to represent minorities:

I think on student government at (university one) there’s a total, I think it was in the beginning, a total of I think maybe 5 minorities, 2 were Asian America and the other 3 were Black. Now, I’m the only African American on there.

Participant Three began making decisions between predominately White organizations and predominately Black organizations early on in his leadership development. A choice that became increasingly more difficult as leadership positions became more prominent.

I started my first year. I just saw the need for minorities to be in some of these (predominately White) organizations. So I focused my time on that because I saw the minority organizations, they’re doing well and I respect the people that are running them.

The recognition of the need for Black male engagement in both White and Black organizations was instrumental in the development of a sense of purpose for their leadership and a catalyst for engagement. This recognition of need, messages of leadership and extended invitations emerged as important exploratory pathways that lead to Black men becoming leaders.
Branching Out

Branching Out involved participants exploring their personal comfort level with people and activities that were unfamiliar. The theme encompasses the desire to have a more diverse experience and social network. Branching Out was as much an attitude toward others as it was an act. This exploratory behavior/attitude served several purposes for the students. First, Branching Out socially integrated them into the university. Many of the participants did not have large groups of friends that attended their respective universities. Participant One was invited by an advisor to branch out:

(Mentor name) from the beginning he was like ‘You cannot be, have yourself in this big square the whole time you are at (Institution One), you need to get out, expand your horizons, get out your comfort zone, talk to people, that are not Black people.’

Secondly, Branching Out garnered support for their leadership activities as they increased by building constituent groups and networks. The constant looking outward continued to reveal new leadership opportunities that had purpose and led to new experiences. Participant Four exemplified this via the advice he gives to his mentees. He explained:

A lot of kids do come from Whiter (than his) schools from the area or maybe went to a private school, maybe they just have more White friends. I’ll be like go right ahead, like join student government, join the Rifle Club if you want to. The more people you branch out with the more people you know, the better it is for you not just as a college person, but it’s a life skill. And then, even if after you join the
Black organization. yeah that’s nice and good, hold a leadership position, maybe you’re a secretary, maybe you’re head of a committee, but after that I encourage you to branch out even more. It’s not okay just to join one race or one type organization the rest of your life. You have to branch out.

Additionally, Branching Out allowed leaders to be exposed and eventually immersed in the leadership culture on campus, particularly in the predominately White leadership culture and the norms. Participant Three reached out to understand the current leadership structure on campus and used what he learned for later engagement:

So I reached out to people who really just did not view the world in the same way that I did. I kind of understood how they viewed campus, how they viewed their peers, and I adjusted my thinking to align with that enough so that I could know how to reach students.

Participant Six observed that organization advisors were interested in getting to know students and he recognized that there was an opportunity to get to know diverse people on campus:

It was an opportunity for me to kind of get to know different people and interact with them. The advisors were definitely kind of getting to know the current undergraduates and advising us through that (experience), it was definitely a big bonus.

Participant Nine discussed his thinking as he reached a decision point in his leadership development. Faced with multiple opportunities, he explained his thinking on
moving out of the Black organizations and why. A decision all leaders faced usually later in their experiences. He contemplated:

I’m not sure, I’m not sure if I want to go on in those (Black) organizations too much. I might want to spread out and do something else. I think that it’s just like dealing with different types of people would give me better exposure and better prepare me to go out into the work world, you know. Like I said, in the Black organizations, we’re all likeminded, same cultures and everything, vs. going into SGA and everyone’s different and that’s how it’s going to be in the business world. People from all sorts of backgrounds, so it would give me better exposure to all that.

Branching Out provided knowledge about a variety of perspectives. Many participants stressed the need for and value of diversity on campus. Participant two described his vision for diversity and his willingness to take action and lead to see that realized:

I wanted to see more minorities stepping out of their boundaries and I wanted to see more diversity, and I know our campus is diverse, but a more inclusively diverse campus.

Participant Five echoed what participant two described. He exemplified attitudes toward diversity that were evident across student stories:

On campus, I just want to see a presence of more diverse groups and organizations. I hope that people, I don’t know, just kind of take on the interest
on their own, like generally once they get involved and not limit themselves to the normal I guess, or what they’re used to, their comfort zone.

The stories of emerging Black leaders not only articulated they valued diversity but also that through branching out they were going to learn from that diversity. Embedded in their statements was acceptance of the responsibility for making positive social change on campus by representing Black men and their interests through their presence.

Seeking Opportunities

Participants actively explored engagement and leadership opportunities throughout their student experience. They placed less importance on the leadership role they would play in the organization and more emphasis on just seeing what opportunities for engagement were available. Participant Five reflected on his search for leadership opportunities, indicating that passion and commitment lead to success:

I tried to apply for stuff even if you don’t think you’re going to get it, things like that. I just get involved, you don’t have to do everything, you don’t have to try to be like president like 2 weeks into an organization, but get involved. I think just being in something that you enjoy being in, you’ll show commitment to it and you’ll work your way in the organization.

Participant Three was not concerned with the position held, but soon realized he could contribute more, “I didn’t mind being just like a member or anything, but I guess I kind of wanted more at one point in time, so I said, I can do this, I can take on more responsibilities.”
Participant Six had informal personal goals for his leadership involvement. The new college setting offered several opportunities. He explained:

I applied for (PWO name) just because I wanted to get more leadership experience than I did in high school and so I knew that it was definitely something that I regretted not really being involved as much as I could in high school and I wanted to take advantage of some of the opportunities that were here and available for students.

Participant Seven stressed the need to actively search for opportunities, and noted that there were resources for assisting students. The people he referred to were university staff that he had come to know. He said, “You have to be proactive, people want to help you, you just need to step up and get out there.”

Participant Nine’s curiosity led to his initial engagement in an organization that was attractive to him because of the legacy of successful leaders that started there. This was inspirational for him in that his statement that they ‘go on to do great things’ implied the importance participants placed on the impact an organization could have. This statement illustrated the connection and transition from Exploration to Engagement, reinforcing the importance of the information processing that occurs during Exploration:

So I didn’t know a lot about (organization name) before I interviewed for the position, but I wanted to find out more about it. I found out that a lot of those people in (organization name), they go on to do great things.

Participant Four exemplified the sort of ‘jump in and see’ attitude that was prevalent in the early phases of exploring leadership and engagement opportunities:
You want to get involved with student govt. then go out and just apply, interview for everything, you know that interests you. Let’s say you want to get on freshman council, but they only have certain numbers, just apply for other aspects of student government.

Summary of Exploring

Exploring encompassed the initial thoughts, observations, actions, and re-actions emergent leaders experienced in the early stages of their exploration of leadership opportunities on campus. They formed their personal motivations and aspirations, and developed their insight on the nature of leadership and the purpose of their role within the various communities they were part of. Through Inspiration and Purpose, Observation, Receiving Messages of Leadership, Invitation, Recognizing Need, Branching Out, and Seeking Opportunities participants began the process of becoming leaders on a predominately White campus by developing an understanding of the context and culture of college leadership on a predominately White campus.

Engaging

The second theme in Emerging Leadership, Engaging, contains several processes. Considerations at this point were the options and the benefits of leadership, deciding on whether to get involved in a Black or White organization, gaining and managing increasing exposure to new cultural norms, exploring how they can diversify their experiences, and developing a network of resources within and beyond the campus African American community (Figure4-4). As opportunities increased for these participants they carefully weighed options and advantages of each. Eventually faced
with the decision to engage in either a predominately Black or White organization, the decision was characterized in terms of opportunities available, the options and advantages of these opportunities, the amount of previous experience the leader had with White culture and their comfort with that culture. Participants with fewer White cultural experiences were generally slower to move into predominately White organizations and spent more time in the supportive environment of predominately Black organizations. As leadership opportunities increased, these participants actively developed a diverse network of peers and campus officials that served as an extended network of support for their leadership endeavors.

**Considering Options and Benefits**

Participants spent much time and energy exploring various opportunities. While initially their attitude could be best described as ‘get out there and get involved’, they soon became more thoughtful and careful in their selection. As opportunities availed
themselves participants began evaluating their ability to have personal and community impact. They also looked at how they could contribute to the organization and what they could learn. For most involvement initially began as an interest in doing ‘something’ and evolved as they took on more responsibility.

Throughout their emergence as leaders, all participants engaged in careful analysis of the benefits of participation within a particular organization. Participant two commented on the importance of marketing to recruit for leadership positions, noting that the benefit of participation is key to getting men involved. He commented:

You can’t just solicit to somebody because of their race. So I think that’s one of the biggest keys is, somebody’s going to be more apt to doing something that’s going to benefit them as well. So they’ll feel comfortable in it as well.

Participant Six was discouraged by an organization he was considering joining because the direction and benefits of participation were not clear. He explained:

But with the other ones like (organization name), it was really kind of undefined as to what they were going towards, it’s like this is what you do. I started the application for it, but I never submitted it. And they asked you to do crazy things on the application and so I just, I liked (his current organization). It was much more official and they have like the enrollment application that you submit online and it seemed like it was really a great organization to be a part of and so that’s kind of why I went in that direction.

Benefits students mentioned as important ranged from personal gain such as skill development, to assistance in finding new positions or building a broader network, to
more broad benefits to the African American and campus community. Participant Five placed benefits into a racial context:

Yeah, I guess with Black people, incentives or motives kind of help out too, so if you’re trying to get someone to get into a program let them know what they’re going to get out of it. You know, because, like at SI, my SI leader when I was in 102 said I should be an SI leader and I was like no, I’m good. I don’t think I want to, and then my teacher said, (name) she’s like you know it’s a paid job, and I’m like really, so I applied for it. I wouldn’t have done it if it wasn’t a paid job. I mean I like it, but I wouldn’t have, I was a TA for a class for which I’m paid and I did it because I like my major and the professor who asked me I really respect him, so I did it more for him, so and then he told me that it’s a 3 hr. grade, so you can get a 3 hr. A, now I’m more excited about it. Incentives, I would have done that anyway, just because he asked me to and I really respect him, but when he said it’s a 3 hr. A, attached to a resume, I definitely want to do it now. So I think incentives are definitely big. If you let them know what you can get out of an organization whether it’s connections or getting to know people, possible internship opportunities or things like that, what the organization is, what can they benefit out of it, but at the same time you don’t want that person to only be in it for what they get out of it. You want that person to understand that if you join this organization you have to put as much into it as what you want to get out of it.

The benefits of participation in a PWO were weighed carefully and thoughtfully by these participants. Some leaders took financial benefits into consideration, opting for
positions that had stipends or other financial incentives. Such was the case with Participant Six who had multiple options within housing. He considered:

I applied to be a peer leader in housing and so that started in the spring semester and so it was actually a decision that I wrestled with for a little while, and I don’t even know why looking back on it. But I was like, well, you know, I started this Hall council and people think that I’m president and I should really kind of stick with it and then there’s the PL thing and I really kind of want to do that and get involved in that, of course it’s got free housing and you know it’s going to be a big economic benefit and so I actually like struggled with the decision whether or not to be a PL.

Leaders considered potential demands on time and energy, perceived effectiveness in accomplishing goals, and the meaning participation in a particular organization held. They also looked at the role that their minority status might play. Participant Six stated:

(the first thing I looked was) the people that I was working with. I didn’t know anyone on the (organization), I didn’t really, I hadn’t really heard of any of them and so it was just a brand new experience to me, but I liked being around them and it was a very different group of people than I’ve interacted with previously. They were all in Greek organizations and I mean I had kind of done the rush thing a little bit my first year, and I actually got a bid somewhere, but I decided not to take it. It was a predominantly White fraternity and I didn’t want to be in there.
Leadership opportunities were not taken lightly after the initial engagement opportunity. As leaders emerged and responsibilities increased so did the level or scrutiny with which opportunities were examined such as Participant Seven, who described:

Before joining an organization I look at the purpose of it. I usually try to read the constitution to a certain extent as far as you know, what it requires of the membership, what its preamble is, and also what its executive board responsibilities are. I try to look at that and then I look at if I can make the time commitment to it. I also look at who is part of it that I currently know. I try to figure out who is part of this already, hmm, what do I think about them? Where have I seen them? How do they conduct themselves? Then I decide if I want to continue and possibly join the organization.

Participant Seven also spoke about a recent decision to join a PWO, providing a clear indication that the process of weighing options and benefits is constant and cyclical. Noteworthy was his focus on the impact him leaving the mentor program for the predominately White organization would have on the African American community. He continued:

But I’ve been thinking like, I like the (mentoring) program, but I mean, can I make the time commitment to this freshman that they deserve? Having to make sure that I’m actually providing what I need and also providing to the other mentors. Being that I’ve done it for 2 years and being in the program for 3 years, I pretty much understand the program and how it works and what’s beneficial. So I think that my opinions are valued and matter, so I want to make sure I’m not
leaving people behind and also making sure that if they do ask me I have the time
to actually talk to them and keep the thing sustained.

Participant Six commented on his reasons for choosing his first organization. He explained:

They seemed like really outgoing people and really kind of cool people and so I
knew that. Also, I wanted to become more outgoing and so it was definitely, I
guess maybe I thought it would be like a cure all to become like the self that I
wanted to be. I was kind of going through this program organization, but also kind
of a social organization, so, you know, being able to interact with more people
and hopefully having them rub off on me a little bit and also learn leadership
skills and so I think I saw that as a way to accomplish those things.

Self-serving leadership was very much looked down upon by participants
particularly when it occurred in White men, but also was noted that it occurs in Black
men. As Participant One stated in reference to leadership in any organization:

I still feel like some people just like to hear their voice heard and aren’t really
concerned about the betterment of the campus. They just want their voice to be
heard. And when we dress up I can see people put on a different hat if you will,
and they feel like they really need to speak today, or you know, what I say is more
important than what you have to say. Just, little snide remarks that people make
about each other. I do not like that.

After discussing his experience Participant Five summarized the positive benefits
his leadership experiences have had on him. He reflected:
My whole (college) experience, most of my experience has been positive, because of the organizations that I’ve got in. I think I’ve learned time management; I’ve had opportunities to get some great internships and jobs, because of my diverse resume and things like that. It’s only benefited me I guess.

While participants did not directly state that benefits of an organization had to be strictly relevant to African American students, the researcher observed that there was a racial aspect to many of the benefits mentioned. In particular, the participants in this study repeatedly mentioned making an impact or enacting change in the African American and broader campus community.

**Decision to Engage: Predominately Black vs. predominately White organizations**

The Decision to Engage in leadership, either in a predominately White organization or a Black organization, although a very complex and personal one, consisted of a few distinct components defined within participant stories. Most obviously and importantly, stories first diverged based on the amount of pre-college experience the men had with White organizations, culture, and leadership.

Participants who chose to engage in predominately Black organizations exclusively before White organizations had several consistent themes in their stories. They all recognized that they were being exposed to new cultural norms on the predominately White Campus and all recognized that they would have to, and wanted to, push their cultural comfort and overcome the fear of being the only one in a PWO. At some point in their development as leaders, all expressed their desire to diversify their experience beyond the PBO. It was at this point where African American men who first
joined predominately Black organization decided to then join White organizations. As discussed earlier, Mentors often played a role in helping the participants move beyond the PBO and into the PWO through the messages and role modeling they provided.

*Decision to Engage: Comfort and support of the PBO*

Common among participants was participation in a predominately Black organization prior to or concurrently with the predominately White organization, with the majority choosing a PBO first. Engagement in a predominately Black organization served as a stepping stone to broader campus involvement. Participant stories revealed Black organizations provided foundational support for Black men to develop leadership skills and confidence. These organizations also provided opportunities to meet mentors and administrators that then served to push these Black men into general campus wide leadership opportunities in PWO’s. This is consistent with the emphasis and importance of community these emerging leaders discussed previously.

Participant Eight describes how a predominately Black organization helped his transition to the predominately White university. He explained:

Um, it was a different experience. I usually, at first I thought I never would be attending at (Institution One) because it’s a predominantly White institute. I came from an all-Black high school, so it was a big switch for me. So, being in an all-Black fraternity is kind of something, like it kind of put me back where something outside the box (Institution One), was easy to get used to.

Participant One was apprehensive about attending a predominately White institution and fitting in, but explains how he made connections quickly with his peers at
a fraternity meeting. This resulted in the discovery of his first leadership position. He said, “I met people there (at a Black fraternity meeting) and they were talking about the Gospel Choir, and that was my first big, like, organization at (Institution One).”

The bridging effect of the predominately Black organization was significant for Participant Five as it facilitated the introduction to his later experiences in Greek Life and beyond. He enthusiastically explained:

Okay, so since joining my fraternity, which is sort of an African American fraternity I’ve been entered into the Greek life here on campus and I’ve got to know a lot of the IFC guys and a lot of CPC women and I really liked that environment, the whole thing, and just outside of NPAC and I love them, they love me, it’s a great environment.

Participant Eight appreciated the connections that his fraternity and the Black student association afforded him. He commented:

The first thing I wanted to be involved in was a fraternity. My first role I was director of educational activities and pretty much I was like academic advisor for the chapter and I set up educational programs for the campus sponsored by our fraternity. That was my big initiative and academics was my part. After that I was elected as vice president of my fraternity.

I have to say joining the Black student association on campus (was an important step) too, that was a good way to start. It’s not too big; it’s a good way to see, like if you’re a Black student on campus to get out and know people, be friendly,
they don’t know who you really are. Show them that you really care becoming involved in other organizations around campus.

Participant Five discussed a process common to those Black men unfamiliar with White culture. He also referenced a common strategy that the participants used in their quest for leadership; working harder to prove themselves. He explained:

You’ve got to work harder because you’re Black. You know, it seems like most, like I said, stay close in to the (specific Black organizations), it seems like they think I’m Black so I’ve got to definitely prove myself. So they gained their positions in the Black organizations where they are more comfortable then they’ll reach out and spread out that way.

Men commented that predominately Black organizations were great starting places offering cultural familiarity and comfort while exploring leadership. This proved to be a good way for them to get to know campus and get assistance and support from other Black men. Participant Nine discussed the social and racial interpretations of his engagement. He said, “I think my Black friends kind of expected me to join (a Black organization), they expected that everyone Black would go into those organizations, whereas White friends just saw it as another activity that I had on my list and on my schedule.”

Several men commented on the appealing aspects of service that were associated with many of the predominately Black organizations they were involved in, particularly the fraternities. Participant Nine discussed the service aspect:
I came to (Institution Two) and really I mostly wanted to focus on my studies 1st semester and 1st year, but I did get involved in a couple of predominately Black organizations, and I got involved with a Black freshman leadership organization and in there we kind of lead projects to raise funds and to set up different, sort of events and things for the community.

Participant Eight had a similar desire to be involved in service. He commented:

I feel like, there’s more to do, like volunteer I guess you could say was the start of it. I like giving back to the community. I think that’s the main reason why I volunteer. I just wanted to, you know, it’s a good networking tool to get out and know people, definitely.

Using the predominately Black organization as a source of support and deeper engagement into their own community and introduction to the broader campus community, men explored leadership and were able to test their leadership skills. They became more familiar with the White institutional culture and were able to make informed decisions about future opportunities.

Participants cautiously alluded to the decision some Black men made to stay in the Black organizations and the tension between those who want to lead in a PWO and those who do not. Participant Four discussed different levels of respect from the Black community for White vs. Black organizations. He commented:

I feel like enough of the 7% of the Black people here, I’d say at least most of them are involved in at least 1-2 organizations, probably most of them will be Black organizations whether it be the gospel choir, Connections, Pyramid
program. I feel like them knowing that I do participate in student government or biological sciences club or another whiter organization, they’re like oh I see you doing big things but if I realize you’re president of Black student union, but I’m just a member of this student government, oh I see, kudos to you whereas black student union, is like, yeah, you’re the leader, but you’re just leading us.

Many offered arguments supporting participation in a PWO, the most compelling of which was that a leader will need to know and understand leadership from a White perspective in order to be successful in the future. Participant Four offered this perspective:

So going to a predominantly White school already pretty much excludes you from that (being successful without being engaged in White culture), so you have to make friends outside of your race, outside your normal posse or whatever you may have. If you want to get a job anywhere in this nation, you know, maybe you go to CA, TX, or Wyoming, you have to learn to branch out and meet other people. That’s a life skill, not just me telling you to do this so you can get a resume to get a job. Leadership will take you places.

The argument against initial participation in a PWO, according to participant stories, was more a matter of the interest or motive for being involved in a PWO. Participant Nine’s reflection on the decision and how it is viewed differently by the two communities speaks to the underlying complexity of the decision, and why some may choose Black organizations first. He explained:
Everyone respects the decision (to join a White organization), because they see it’s another opportunity, just as valid as the opportunities within the Black organizations, you know. Sometimes people kind of view it as a bit of a betrayal of your race or whatever. There are a lot of people thinking like me, a lot of my friends are doing it, like some of my friends ran for sophomore rep and stuff, so it’s a respected decision. I guess that it’s a sense that if you don’t want to stick only with your race or if you don’t want to stick as closely with your race as other people, that you are kind of going back on what you learned. You’re trying to become something that you’re not, is the view of it, but I mean, I don’t see it like that. If you’re trying to better yourself then do it whichever way you can. Do it with whatever tools and means you have available to you.

For all students, particularly those less familiar with White culture and organizations the decision to participate in leadership outside of predominately Black organizations carried with it racial and cultural overtones as reflected above.

*Decision to Engage: Pushing Cultural Comfort in a PWO*

Participants needed to be willing to push their cultural comfort levels and work in environments that had some unfamiliar aspects to them. They had to do this under the scrutiny of students who may doubt their abilities as leaders due to racial bias. A critical step in transitioning from a community member to a leader, and from the leader of a predominately Black organization to a predominately White organization is the willingness and ability to move beyond the cultural surroundings and norms they were familiar with.
All the participants in this study articulated the need to stretch beyond their comfort with White culture and reach out. This was a daunting task given the new academic, social, and racial environments that they are learning to navigate as they enter their first year of college. The men with the least White experience articulated the greatest need push their comfort to be successful, indicating a level of cultural awareness that was not immediately obvious in interviews. Through engagement in leadership opportunities, preconceived ideas about White culture and segregation were often replaced with more moderate views on White culture. Students who had less previous experience with White organizations also expressed more reservations about initial engagement in PWOs. Participant Eight commented on his perceptions coming into college and what engagement might look like given his previous experiences. He explained:

At first, when I came here my trust with them (Whites) has changed quite a bit. I came here thinking this would be sort of like racist kind of school, but I was completely wrong about that. I guess I heard some thoughts and things from someone that was kind of biased about a White school. And for a college, this place can be pretty White, I can admit that. I thought it would have been like the White people would do their own thing, and then the Black people do their own thing. Like White people and Black people wouldn’t intermingle with each other and talk to each other, or it would be just like a ‘hi’ and ‘bye’ situation. But I have some really good White friends now that I really trust in. They hold good conversations.
Participant Nine had similar experiences, noting that it took effort on his part to
reach out to White students before being welcomed. Reinforcing the belief that Black
men must work harder to be successful. He observed:

It seems like they (White people) might actually kind of segregate themselves a
little bit until, maybe I’ll make the effort to go over and join in with everyone
else, or I’ll make the effort to say a joke or something, or do something to relax
the tension, and then they’ll realize, okay maybe he’s somebody I should get to
know. I just tend to be like that.

Participant Nine also explained that the mentor organization that introduced him
to campus was great, but that he found himself a bit isolated from the rest of campus. He
added:

I went to that (mentor) program, I lived with those people for like a month; we
were up here at the dorms for like 5 weeks, so I became good friends with all
those minority students, so we kind of hung out all through the year and stuff. I
made more friends and stuff, but I wanted like to have a more diverse friend
group.

Others, like Participant Seven, doubted their capacity for leadership and had many
misperceptions about both leadership and the role they could play in mentoring his peers
on a White campus. He alludes to an attitude similar to some expressed earlier, in that
leadership was something that someone else does. However Participant Seven’s desire to
help others was more powerful than his doubts in the end. He concluded:
You know, people think that college is this big, this bigger world than it really is. I remember my interview for (Black organization name), I didn’t think I was going to become a mentor because they asked me ‘do you consider yourself a leader?’ I remember saying, ‘no’. They asked, ‘do you consider yourself being a role model?’ I was like, ‘well, not really’. They were like ‘why?’ I was like, ‘well because I’m only a freshman and you know, I try to help people out when I can, but I just, I just don’t think that I’m at that point yet’. They said, ‘well why did you apply?’ And I was like, ‘I really just wanted the opportunity to grow and help someone else they way I’ve been helped’.

Participant Seven was ultimately accepted into the mentor position, even with his lack of confidence in his own leadership abilities at that point.

The initial observations of Participant Four did not dissuade him from joining student government. However his description of his ‘acceptance’ was not convincing given his choice of words (“they don’t treat you bad”). The researcher noted that he has set the bar for acceptance in a PWO pretty low as Participant Four explained:

Student government is pretty Caucasian, but everyone there is nice, they don’t treat you bad, a lot of times I feel like people don’t branch out to Whiter organizations or predominantly White organizations because they feel like they’re going to be the token Black guy, or he’s going to be the heathen that really doesn’t belong here. He’s the affirmative action case, ‘why is he even at (college name)?’ So, I feel like student government, I know from personal experience that
I don’t feel any type of way. I feel just as a part of that organization as I do my fraternity.

Participant Five was more forthcoming with his feelings on the racial environment and his views toward White students. Regardless, he too was willing to take the initial steps and push his comfort level to learn that he could learn from other races. He reflected:

I guess the high school I came from, a predominantly Black high school and that kind of played a role in me. I guess you could say I have some level of racism in me or I thought I lived in this, or I really did live in this confined type area where I only intermingled and had to deal with Black people. Now I’m at (university name) and I see like, you know other races of people are very different and you learn a lot from them.

**Exposure to New Cultural Norms**

As participants engaged in positions of leadership and continued to push their comfort level, they were consistently bombarded with new cultural norms and practices that they needed to learn and adapt to (note: the researcher does not intend to imply that the leaders must accept or adopt these norms, just that they must learn what they are and how to work within them). Even those who chose to lead within the Black community eventually became exposed to and had to work within new norms and expectations that were the result of leading any group within the context of a predominately White university. Participants described being exposed to a variety of new cultural norms and
reflecting on their own views of the African American culture as part to their leadership engagement process.

Participant Two was excited by the diverse showing at an event one of his Black organizations sponsored. His genuine surprise and excitement revealed his expectation that there were greater cultural boundaries than actually existed. His surprise also demonstrated a new view of his campus peers reflecting excitement at the prospect of engaging diverse groups. He commented:

I know in another organization that I’m in, it’s not a really a university organization, they deal with all the colleges and universities in this area, but we’re putting on more programming for students and we had an event here on campus, maybe a month ago and I know we had a big majority turnout, Whites and Asians that showed up, and this is a completely Black organization, everybody in it is African American, so to put on that kind of event and have Whites and Asians come was really a step forward.

For others, the expanded view of culture came as less of a surprise and more of a reflection on differences between races. This theme of reflection on race and culture continues and is examined in greater detail later in Cross Cultural Reflection. Participant Seven noticed the cultural differences between Black and White organizations immediately. He observed:

I do feel like there’s a difference between the two organizations. The predominantly White organization is more structured, I feel. There’s not a lot of jokes going around, most of the time people are focused on whatever they have to
do and they get in there and get out. With Black organizations people show up late, sometimes people go there just you know, my friends are there so they think it’s another time to socialize and don’t really take advantage of the time that we have to discuss the issues that are at hand.

For some participants this exposure was challenging and involved adjusting racial attitudes, for others it was an exciting expansion of their world. Still others felt it was confrontational and negative. Participant Five noticed many of his Black peers did not have the same positive experiences either academically or socially. The researcher noted the participant’s guilty tone when he addressed the issue of his peer’s lack of initial success. He reflected:

I guess, I think what the thing is, because I’m starting to notice a lot of it, because I didn’t really see. I feel like, I’m so against the grain in a lot of things. I do hear, in like a lot of organizations I’m in there’s not a lot of minorities, even my first semester here I had a great first semester, had high GPA, I’ve had all years. But when I talk to a lot of my Black friends, it was the opposite, like their first semester was horrible adjusting to college and what not, and then, I guess it got better.

Participant Eight, like several others, was pleasantly surprised and felt welcomed due to the greater campus community focus on what he considered a Black holiday. He stated:

I have a greater appreciation for Dr. King now because I can see, like these (White) people volunteer their time to help out or plan something to do for (the
college) to do for this Black man that did something years ago and to see him honored at (the university) which once was a segregated university, that really stands out.

For others, the introduction of new cultural norms challenged their ability to navigate some relationships comfortably within an organization. On the difference cultural understanding made in relationships within organizations he was part of, Participant Seven commented:

I also feel that, and once again, this is just getting to know people on a personal level, I can kind of detect when there’s some tension in the room in a Black organization as opposed to white organizations. I’m not saying there isn’t tension in the room, but I just, I can feel it and I can detect it.

In addition to noticing that his peers were not as successful in their new college environment, Participant Five’s awareness of the African American cultural norms of his peers was increased:

I noticed that in my friends, people from Charleston have a real, as Black people from Charleston have a real thick accent, I don’t know if you’ve heard it? It sounds, to me it just sounds horrible and I’ve only been in Charleston for a couple of years and I haven’t really picked up the accent. I think, I know even when I hear it I just, like talking proper I guess. It kind of irks me, but I didn’t grow up in that kind of environment.

His distaste for the accent of some of his peers reveals a tension within culture as well as between cultures. Intercultural and Intercultural norms were examined by all
participants and retaining elements of each culture proved to be challenging as they emerged as leaders. Participant Eight explains:

Becoming a leader it really, is not as easy as it seems. I’ll put it like that. Especially when you’re leading a more diverse group of students, it’s much more different. My experience from high school to college is very different. Because back in high school I guess, kind of everyone agreed with my opinions and now I have people who disagree my opinions and sometimes I find it because of the fact that, because I’m Black, because I’m a male or stuff like that.

Participant Two, who lived outside of the southeast for much of his life, had several cultural adjustments to make. He reflected on how leadership changed views on the culture of the south. He explained:

In Colorado there’s a more accommodating feeling between the two (races). A lot of Colorado’s interracial, you see a lot of interracial couples, marriages, things like that, so it’s less tension between the two. But when you come out here, depending on where you are, but just being in the south in general, you can see butting of heads between the two. So that was kind of a shock when I first got out here. But now that I’m being more involved in these organizations you can see it’s definitely not always like that at all.

Participant Five, when questioned by the researcher on what would make leadership better for Black men on White campuses, said:

On campus, I just want to see a presence of more diverse groups and organizations. I hope that people, I don’t know, just kind of take on the interest
on their own, like generally once they get involved and not limit themselves to the normal I guess, or what they’re used to, their comfort zone.

Regardless of how they perceived it, all participants were in some way consciously aware of the exposure to a new set of cultural norms and expectations. This new awareness occurred at the time of first introduction to the leadership position as if the new leadership position afforded them the opportunity to view their cultural identity from a different perspective. This new perspective is a more complex and holistic one as compared to the views they previously held, a concept explored in detail under Broadening the Scope of Community. All of the participants progressed in their leadership development and were not discouraged or deterred by the exposure to these new norms and the necessary adjustment it required to become successful. The acceptance of the difference in the cultural norms appears to be the common theme across participants that assist them in becoming successful leaders.

Wanting to Diversify

Diversification of leadership experience was an important theme throughout the stories of the participants. Wanting to Diversify manifested itself in a variety of ways. For those who chose predominately White organizations it was the challenge of moving to a PWO, not necessarily because it was White and brought with it the challenges of cultural adjustment outlined above, but because of the increased impact their leadership could have on campus and therefore increased pressure to perform. For all it represented the desire to gain and develop more leadership skills, the desire to work with an organization that had a different focus, or to be part of an organization that was culturally different.
Wanting to diversify and Need were often expressed as factors that influenced the decision to lead in a PWO.

For Participant One the transition from a Black student organization to his first position in a predominately White organization was representing his fraternity to campus as part of the Greek life leadership structure. He explained:

There are 5 council presidents, so these people were the leaders of our whole community. So I saw it and was like, well, you know, alright, I’ll do it. I didn’t know whether or not I was graduating last year, so once I realized I’m not graduating I thought I’ll go ahead and apply. Didn’t even think I was going to get the position, got the position, and I was like, oh boy, I didn’t know what I had gotten myself into. Like the first couple of days it was meetings, meetings, meetings; meeting w/people . . . I was used to meeting with NPHC’s, so it’s a whole different way of talking to people, dealing with them because they didn’t know me, I can tell them (the NPHC’s) to do something and it’s like, ‘oh (Participant One) told me to do this. But I’m in this (new) meeting and I’m the only Black person in here and everyone’s looking like, ‘who is he?’

Participant Two was encouraged by peers to engage in PWO’s and based his decision on his observation of need and the advice of his peers, both Black and White. He observed:

I saw there was a lack of Black people. I remember having a conversation with (name of peer leader), he’s a 4th year now. I remember talking to him about, him and (another peer leader) and they were telling me how there’s just a need for
Blacks in general to be represented in these other White organizations. I could have easily been involved in more than one if my time would have permitted, and I think it would have been fine. But I just see the need for minorities to be in some of these other organizations. So I focused my time on that (the White organizations), because I saw that you know these minority organizations, I mean they’re doing well and I respect the people that are running them.

Participant Three decided on running for SGA president due to a lack of cultural understanding of the role the organization can have. On the cultural differences that needed to be carefully navigated in order to enact change, a focal point for his leadership, Participant Three commented:

We (the African American and minority communities) still are in a severe deficit when it comes to knowledge about what SGA does, who we are, and what we stand for, and having someone who is abrasive to students and administrators is just not going to work out. And then having someone who is idealistic is only going to get peoples hopes up to further disappoint them in the future when you find out you can’t do those things, so that’s, I just felt like I had, just a level enough head to be able to go in and still, you know, be assertive when I needed to, but also be approachable enough and warm enough that everyone on all sides would want to kind of work together to bring about a solution. So that was why I really thought I was a better candidate.

For Participant Nine, diversifying his leadership portfolio was important, and at the time of the interview was considering moving into SGA. He explained:
Really, I just kind of, I didn’t have one of the main leadership positions in those Black organizations, I just kind of handled whatever job needed to be done. Like if we needed to go out and solicit organizations for coupons or something, I would go do that. If we needed to call someone I would do that, just stuff like that. I’m not sure, I’m not sure if I want to go on in those Black organizations too much more. I might want to spread out more and do something else. I might want to become a part of the larger student government.

Participant Six wanted more after his first year, even after his first rejection. He reflected:

At the end of my freshman year and I knew (organization name) was going to be over and I actually applied to be an advisor for it and did not get that position. Um, and that’s one of the first times that I was like denied from something and really one of the only times I was denied in college from getting a position. So, that hurt a good bit to not get that, but I moved on from it and I realized I need to stay involved and get involved in other things.

The following year he (Participant Six) was faced with a similar situation, illustrating his desire to consistently expand and diversify his experiences as well as his persistence in the role leader. He explained:

I knew I didn’t want to come back just to have the same role. That’s something that I mean I could do and I wouldn’t be able to get anything more from that experience that I did my first year. So I knew that if I was coming back I wanted to do different things and really kind of getting that experience working with people off campus, on campus, and building those relationships and so that’s why
I decided. It was definitely a hard decision because but I knew I had to make a decision for me and for my personal growth as a leader.

Participant Seven chose an organization that was diverse experientially and culturally for his first PWO. He alludes to the challenge he was presented with in working with diversity issues on a White campus. He offered:

I did (diversity) project for (college name) which is kind of about embracing culture diversity. I did that my sophomore year for 1 year, because my scheduled allowed me to and I did that and I enjoyed it. And of course, as I mentioned before, being a co-facilitator, that was another thing that I did, where you never know who is walking into your classroom.

For his second PWO leadership experience, he again chose to make an impact and stepped up to lead. Consistent with the desire to represent his community he commented on how in this new role he represented multiple communities including his major, the college, and the healthcare community. He said:

I decided to do it. As I told people that I was running, people were like well why, I didn’t think you was in to that, and I was like ‘I’m not, but I feel as though if not me, then who?’ If nobody else has stepped up, I mean I was willing to step up. My fellow classmates in my (major) program, once they found out I wanted to run they were really excited because I’m not only representing myself, I’m also representing my major. A lot of things that do affect the healthcare community are decided by the government. A majority of, everyone who gets paid in the hospital is based on government aid. Just things like that and how our hospital is run here,
that really does affect the (college) community. So I felt like I was also representing my major as well and they were 100% behind me in everything as well.

Participant Eight described how he moved into his first PWO leadership role, which like others was related to diversity:

I would have to say on the MLK Enhancement committee, which I got involved with after I joined the fraternity. I like, uh, because Dr. King, he was a member of our fraternity back when he was alive and our fraternity plays a big role in this. So I think, ‘I’ll take a leap and get our fraternity more involved in that.’ I became part of the committee.

Participant Nine described the way he views and prioritizes his selection of leadership opportunities. He summarized:

Well I feel like everyone tries to get into something. You know, everybody likes to be a part of something; everybody likes to know that they are contributing to their environment in some way, so they’re not just kind of floating through. So that way, me getting involved in these organizations is the same as a lot of other people. It’s the same as like everyone else I hang out with. But I think it’s different because I try to diversify my options more than most people. Like I said a lot of my friends are staying w/predominantly Black organizations, but I make it a point to kind of look at everything that goes on around (the university). I like to see everything that is happening around here.
Wanting to diversify leadership experience and selecting leadership for diversity was a transitional experience, bringing the personal and cultural challenge of moving to a PWO and the increased impact their leadership could have on campus. The diversification of leadership experience represented the desire to gain and develop more leadership skills, work with an organization that had a different focus, and be part of an organization that was culturally different. It also exemplified the desire for participants to follow up on their search for areas where leadership was most needed.

*Developing a Network*

Networks were a significant part of the leadership development process for the African American men in this study. Often introduced to the idea of the network by a mentor, the process of developing a diverse network of peers was complementary to the mentor process. The interrelationship between the mentoring and network development provided support (from the mentor) and sustainability (from the network) for emergent leadership.

Networks functioned to support leadership through learning, creating new opportunities for the leaders or their community, and to facilitate through collaboration the change participants wanted to make. The network served as a way to get information, find involvement opportunities and establish themselves as leaders within the campus community. The networks developed by these participants eventually became very diverse and far reaching. Ultimately these networks came to facilitate culturally diverse relationships.
Leaders described actively building networks of people that strengthen their potential to be successful leaders. Many eventually came to view the networks as lifelong assets. Participant One gave the following advice to the students he mentored:

Build relationships, build meaningful relationships with important people that you need to know. Always be yourself and stay true to yourself....I think student leaders, because student leaders are involved in other things that can help on campus, that can put you in positions to be (successful), that should be your goal. As a freshman, by your senior year, you should be at a point where when you graduate and come back to (University one), people outside of your friend group know you.

On his own experience Participant One reflected on his success with pride:

I already made key relationships in (name of a prestigious PWO) anyway; I’m on a first name basis with one of our advisors who everyone loves. I’ve gotten to know the president, he and I are very close, also some people with last names that mean a lot at (University one).

Similar to others, Participant Four discussed the advice he provides his mentees and explains the power of the network he has developed. He explained:

Like I said, I’m actually in two mentoring programs for first year freshman, so this has come up in the past and the best thing I can do is tell them, get your feet wet, I promise you it’s a good thing, leadership feels great. Like you can see, I’m always smiling, I know people from the bio-engineering dept. and if I need something there, I know people from the (student organization) if I need
something from there, so whatever, like network or getting involved is the key to networking and meeting people. It’s a good feeling, definitely looks good on your resume. I feel like, get your feet wet and you’ll learn so much about yourself being a leader.

Participant Four also spoke about building trust and openness as part of the network development process and alludes to the importance of all relationships in an organization. He commented:

Team building, I know it’s kind of cliché, because I hate icebreakers, I hate team building activities, but you know. You do have to open up sometime and maybe science proves that those are the most effective ways, so. Just being open, you have to trust yourself, you have to trust the people around you to know that they are going to listen to you with an open mind and not judge you. I continue to build relationships, be nice to people, make connections -network.

As leadership progressed and relationships developed, Participant Three described the expansion of his network and the opportunities it created for growth. His leadership began with a mentor program and eventually led to his position as SGA President. Significant was his desire to make SGA more approachable and relevant. This was consistent with the themes of diversity, community, and need previously discussed. He explained:

So the more people I would meet the more people would introduce me to their friends and you just kind of get to know people, especially through the first year
experience program, because it’s based on building that community. I just began to meet people.

By Junior year I was asked to be the campaign manager for (student name), because he felt like a lot of people knew me and I was kind of a recognizable face, but also was organized and could run a campaign. He did not win, but his opponent took notice of me, and she asked me to be her VP of communications. It was the first time that position ever existed. It was essentially, the goal was to build a network, do outreach, and to make SGA more approachable and relevant.

Referring to the network of over 3100 contacts he has built over the past 5 years, Participant Three, who had the largest network by far, went on to say:

But I think there is a smaller group of about, I’ll say 50-75 people who, I have their phone numbers, and those are, that’s who I run with and they are spread throughout the country. Um, I’m happy to, I have some vacations planned to visit some folks in Birmingham, folks in DC, folks in NY and those are my closer friends, but I could probably tell you how I met or how I know or something interesting about all 3100 of those people, you know.

In contrast Participant Five was more reserved and introverted, yet still worked to get to know people. He said:

I think a lot of people like me, I hope so. I hope they would say I’m friendly, or say I’m willing to get the job done, I’m willing to talk to people, I’m a people person, or I like to connect w/people I guess, even if it’s not a lot of people, I like to get to know people.
Participant Eight described his strategy to help the community and develop as a leader when he came to campus. Again, the idea of service to community comes to the forefront as the focal point of leadership. He recalled:

I like giving back to the community. I think that’s the main reason why I volunteer. I did it a lot in high school and I don’t want to stop once I get to college, so. I just wanted, you know, it’s a good networking tool to get out and know people, definitely.

Participant Nine talked about the importance of mentor messages and the impact it can have on a student. This message to get him more involved from an advisor got him engaged in his sophomore year and began his thinking about the importance of networking. He remembered:

Talking to my advisor also, she was like, she’s just been saying that make sure you get experience. Make sure that you aren’t just a recluse sitting up in a room on the computer all day. Make sure that you are out talking to people and networking.

As a graduating senior Participant One felt, even with his success in both Black and White organizations, there was still more to do to be successful beyond the university. He stated:

I think there are a couple of people at (university) I (still) need to meet. I have 3 months., and if I can just get in their office and meet them, I think I’d be good, you know. Always strategizing, but… Just knowing people, I think knowing people at (University) is a big deal. I think once I get, if I could just meet these
people. But I think I’m there, I’m about 95% there, I think if I had an extra semester at (university) I’d be all set.

As leaders built networks they began to strategize what relationships to develop. Essentially leaders focused on building relationships that focused on finding ways to help others, developing African American leadership, and connecting people. In addition to talking about importance of building networks, participants also discussed the function of the network: taking advantage of the benefits of having built a diverse network. The functions of leader networks varied considerably but overall they served to build diverse collisions and accomplish tasks via consensus building within and across organizations. Participant One described networking as a way to offset the history of bias and oppression that has limited access to college for many minorities, he explained:

(White) families are well engrained at (University One), they have like 4th-5th generation students, so they’re like the stuff when they come here and I feel like a lot of times, since we haven’t had that access to (University One).

He continued:

My momma mentioned it and I have to commend White people, y’all are good at networking. Y’all look out for your own, and you all network and get people to meet who they need to meet, so they can get to where you want them to be.

Participant Five was selected for an elite invitation only organization his final year of college and he recalls the first meeting of that organization. His ambivalence toward the reason he was selected is obvious in his statement. He is clearly proud of the fact that he has been successful in meeting the right people and pushing his comfort level,
yet he almost seemed dissatisfied with not clearly knowing if they feel his is qualified or just a symbol of diversity. He offered this:

I remember, I guess without saying too much, when I got tapped, I was like, the only Black guy there, so it was interesting. There are very few in those organizations and I thought: (1) it was honor, but (2) I was like I wish we would have a stronger presence of representation in these organizations. I don’t want to say that it’s not qualification, but I think one of them is that boundary; connections. You’ve got to be willing to go outside your comfort zone and hang out with other people every once in a while and I think I’ve always been good with that, you can’t just stick to what you know I guess.

Proud of the connections he had made through his leadership in SGA, Participant Three was confident that he has support to impact change on campus. He said, “If I want to be on a strategic planning committee, I want to build this committee, let’s make this happen and I know who I can call and it can happen.”

While discussing his ability to impact meaningful change, Participant Seven talked about how leadership has changed him and his ability to help others. He offered:

Another positive change is I’m able to meet people and establish connections, you never know when somebody has a question and you may not have the answer, but you know someone who has the answer. And believe it or not, the more connections we make the better I think people will be. Because that’s just stretching out, you know, our networking range and our ability to ask for help because nobody can make it on their own. So I think that’s important, which is
another reason why I think that more minorities should get involved in leadership positions, because no man is an island and we’re not the majority. So we need as much help and as many connections as we can get.

Participants identified several key functions of the networks that helped them become better leaders, helped others become leaders, and provided support for leadership engagement and positive change. Consistent with value participants placed on diversity, the function of the network was often referred to as a way for leaders to expand their knowledge and gain ideas.

Summary of Engaging

Engaging represents specific student actions and decisions that represent participant movement from exploring leadership to active and intentional engagement and participation in student leadership. The initial context can either be White or Black organizations, depending on the student’s comfort level and support. Thematic dimensions or elements included considering options and benefits, choosing between a Black or White organization, exposure to new cultural norms, wanting to diversify, and developing a support network. These elements formed the second part of the emerging leadership process whereby participants moved from members of the African American community toward leadership within the predominately White campus.

Making Comparisons

The third part of the Emerging Leadership process is Making Comparisons. It was during this part of their leadership development that participants learned to navigate Black and White social and organizational culture. African American leaders serving in
PWO’s had to interpret and understand different patterns of interaction and learn to navigate the culture of the new organization while maintaining the support and relationships within the Black community. Participants expressed many differences between the organizational dynamics of a PWO versus the Black organizations they had been involved with. They noted having to process, reflect, and adjust as they developed as leaders. Stories included noticing the differences in how organizations were structured, in use of time, in focus, on increased awareness of one’s own culture, and varying expectations for involvement.

Figure 4.5- Emerging Leadership: Making Comparisons

Primarily participants indicated a lower level of comfort with the PWO initially which they attributed to not knowing the students in the PWO at the same level of intimacy they were used to in their Black organizations. Differences participants had to become aware of and adjust to included: (a) different communication patterns, (b) social customs- particularly attention to time structures and formality, (c) expectations, (d)
motivation among members of the organization (why they are involved and purpose of the organization), and (e) adjusting to their role as the minority in the organization.

Participant Five discussed the challenge of bringing cultures together. In describing an early experience with a PWO he lamented:

I don’t know, it just seemed like it was a bunch of well-off kids, and I guess, kind of the conversations I heard in there, it was not bad conversations, but just like, I don’t know how else to describe it, but preppy just really like, I don’t know. I guess it’s kind of hard to explain. It just wasn’t an environment that I really liked and I guess probably because I didn’t know anybody in there. I feel like everybody in there had some kind of connection before I came in there.

Later, after becoming a little more comfortable with the organization his role transformed somewhat to reflect a more inclusive perspective. Participant Five saw himself more of a connector, although he still noted the differences:

I think because of my personality and how I go about interacting with other people, I think that’s just kind of like who I am, but I mean it is different. I try to, like last night I went downtown and so I invited people from our (Black) fraternity and then from like another organization so I try to do that, but it is a little different sometimes. My interactions with my brothers are different than people in other organizations that are predominantly White.

Other leaders noted the challenges with understanding the new structures within the predominately White organization. Participant Seven recalled:
I do feel like there’s a difference between the 2 organizations. The predominantly White organization is more structured, I feel. There’s not a lot of jokes going around, most of the time people are focused on whatever they have to do and they get in there and get out. With Black organizations people show up late, sometimes people go there just you know, my friends are there so they think it’s another time to socialize and don’t really take advantage of the time that we have to discuss the issues that are at hand.

Participant One commented on unspoken rules he observed regarding participation in fraternities. His sarcasm indicated his perception of the lack of purpose with White fraternities. Purpose, as discussed earlier, was an important consideration for leadership of participants. Participant One expressed:

There are unspoken rules, like Black people would never try to be in a White fraternity or sorority and the ones that are, like even I do, I have to do a double take, like what are you doing? Well, then I think about well maybe this person grew up with you know, this is what they want, this is, go ahead, I’m glad your happy type of thing. If this is what you want I’d rather you do that then join my group and be slack. Just go ahead, party, clap, sing songs, and I respect you for that.

Many of the men in the study were involved in Black fraternities. This involvement appeared to contribute to a greater awareness of the differences between Black and White organizations as was evident form Participant One’s comments. Black fraternity engagement as an introductory experience created bonds with other Black men
that were not easy to duplicate. As the participants in this study became more involved in White organizations they maintained close knit relationships with the men in their fraternities. A close sense of community and common experience grew within the Black organizations due to this early connection with the fraternity and a strong sense of cultural belonging. Participant One continued:

The way Blacks interact with one another is different, and like I said, I’m going to be me. I was raised by Black people that were just like the most blunt family, we say what we have to say and I think a lot of times I’ve been in (PWO) settings where I’ve said things, or not said things nice enough for some people and I think that has come back to bite me in the butt sometimes.

Participant Seven was rather frustrated with the political nature of student government and chose not to continue in a leadership role there. He did however note the importance of his presence there for his community:

I’m really just not interested in it (SGA), I felt like, it just wasn’t my cup of tea. I liked the people and I made friends, but I’m just not into politics and we were just mostly talking about how to spend money and legislation, and I just wasn’t into it, but I felt that you know, I did it for this 1 year just because you know there are things that we (the African American community) do need to know what’s going on campus.

At another institution, Participant Three was also frustrated with the politics, although he chose to stay engaged and be more guarded in his approach after being betrayed. He commented on playing the game:
There were people who I went to, who were in that group, who I didn’t know were in that group and to my face said that they were supporters and then kind of went back and told the other opponents my game. Unfortunately for them I’m not the type of person that puts all of my cards out for everyone to see. I never let my right hand know what my left hand is doing and have thus far have been pretty good at balancing that. I like juggling a lot of different things, so it’s not that hard for me to kind of work on something and then completely talk about it as though I’m not really. And I know that’s kind of misleading, but until you know where someone is standing, especially in politics, you’ve got to kind of play that game.

Power struggles and corruption were also noted by other participants such as Participant Four who commented on some differences between Black and White organizations. Within the context of the story he was telling the point was that sometimes the good that happens within a White organization is tangential to the political purpose of the leader(s). He explained:

I’ve seen, some organizations that I’m in, I’ve seen Black men, they’ll do like parliamentary procedures, distribute it evenly, this committee does this, like by the book. But I’ve also seen people, like I saw this in most White organizations, I’ve seen power be used to do what they want, or do the good which might happen to be what you want.

Participant Seven was not pleased with similar observations in his first White organization. He explained:
Immediately I didn’t like how much time it took, I felt like people were wasting time, people were just arguing or speaking their mind because they wanted to be heard. I felt like they just, well, we’re on student government and they felt like they ran campus or whatever, and whatever they said let’s do that everybody was going to do. I didn’t like that.

This adjustment which at times was needed to understand what was going on in these PWO’s was an important step. As the stories above reflect, being aware of what was actually happening socially and politically among the student leaders was critical to navigating the organizational environment. Adjusting to their role as the ‘minority’ in the organization was not necessarily described as negative by participants; rather it involved a sense of uncertainty of their standing and a sense of caution when approaching some members of the PWO or some situations. Participants did not back away from the challenges of understanding this new environment, but chose to face them with a sense of purpose and discovery, relying on a strong sense of self and purpose to guide them. Most did not speak of racism directly in this context, but did talk about some PWO members undermining them or not understanding them. Participant Six said that White students were slow to warm up to his leadership. He observed:

I had not come in with any of the same social circles and so I didn’t really have a lot of friends that were in fraternities and or sororities or anything like that. So it’s kind of an entirely different experience to me and so I think that it might have taken them a little bit to warm up, I mean their nature is outgoing people, they were like, ‘Hey, how are you doing? Nice to meet you, we should go out and get
lunch sometime.’ I just didn’t really know how to react to that and so I think I tried the best I could, but I don’t know. I think they warmed up to me eventually. Once I warmed up to them they were able to warm up to me because I was able to open up.

There was a balance participants needed to find between representing their community, being seen as Black men, and just being one of the group. Navigation of the new PWO culture and experiencing the differences informed participants of how to position themselves as they developed as leaders in predominantly White organizations. This was the result of several key comparisons participants made throughout their experiences.

Participant One summarized well the similarities and differences between leadership in the various organizations he had been in and provided an exceptional example of how participants navigated the social and organizational cultures as they emerge as leaders:

I think it’s easier as far as getting people to follow you (in a White organization) once they’re on board, getting people to do what they are supposed to do, and ya know, all that stuff. I think, in Black organizations it’s a family type of thing, it’s just, my experience as being a leader of NPHC has been a family, like we’re all family, we always have each other’s back, I think I’ve grown closer to them because they’ve been a support system when I need to get away from the constant, ‘leave me on watch’ type of thing in the White organization. So I think
it’s more of a family for me when I’m a leader in a Black organization. It’s more business in a White organization. I have to be 24/7 100% about business.

Summary of Making Comparisons

The comparisons participants made between organizations, experiences, and culture represent a process of adjustment to perceived differences between Black and White organizations which occurred as the participants emerged as leaders in predominately White organizations. These comparisons and the understanding they provided for the leaders assisted them in navigating subsequent engagement opportunities. Themes included Black organizations were friendlier and more welcoming, less political, and had a more intentional service focus highlighted obvious differences in how Black and White college students perceived the structure and functions of leadership. These observed differences between organizations were more of an impediment to leadership emergence and development than the more obvious (to the researcher) barriers of racism and oppression. Specifically these differences were challenging because they were so unexpected by the emerging Black leaders. It was often unclear to participants as to how to adjust to or navigate these issues.

Summary of Emerging Leadership

Emerging Leadership consists of three categories: Exploring behaviors, Engaging behaviors and Making Comparisons of Black and White social and organizational cultures. These three elements represent participant emergence from the roots of their African American community onto the path to becoming leaders in the dominant campus culture. The exploration, engagement, and comparison that occurred represented a
cyclical process that rested on the support of the African American community. Dimensionally, the process of Emerging Leadership began with finding inspiration and purpose, moved through the decision to engage in a White or Black organization first and ended with participants making comparisons between the culture they knew and understood and the new broader campus community culture represented by the predominantly White organization.
Threats to Black Leadership Emergence in Predominantly White Organizations

Threats to Black Leadership Emergence in Predominantly White Organizations is not a phase within the BMLEPWC model, but rather an environmental condition that exerts itself on the emerging leaders throughout the process of leadership development. Threats to Black Leadership Emergence in Predominantly White Organizations have two related categories: Racism and Bias, and the Visibility Paradox. Participants experienced a variety of challenges on their path to becoming leaders, many of which are related to the differences between cultural expectations in social interaction patterns, leadership expectations, and understanding of social and cultural norms. The differences, described below through participant stories, were experienced throughout participants’ leadership experience. Many are based on bias, either real or perceived on the part of both Black and White students.

Figure 4.6- Positioning of Threats to Black Leadership Emergence within the BMLEPWC
Participants spoke of challenges in many different ways. Some were subtle and tactful in how they spoke of conflict, others more direct in describing the experiences they had. Many of the participants, without being aware, would provide conflicting statements particularly in reference to issues revolving around bias. They described what appeared to the researcher as an incidence of bias and then say that they had not experienced bias on their path to becoming leaders. The theme of Threats was very well developed, encompassing all nine participants in multiple ways. As explored in this study, bias is limited to the conflict that participants attribute (either knowingly or in abstraction) to the different experiences they had as a result of their race and its impact on their ability to lead or become leaders.

Racism and Bias

Participants indicated that they experienced racism and bias in a variety of ways. The majority of participants expressed that racism manifested itself in lower expectations for leadership performance, perceptions of incompetence because of race, and being undermined by White peers. Several talked about how their White peers either did not like Black students in leadership positions or Whites not being aware of racism.

In describing progress toward cultural acceptance and reducing bias Participant Four took personal responsibility for having to overcome the bias that does exist. He explained:

But at the same time, there is some racism out there. There are going to be racist people. Even though it’s 2011 people are still going to be racist. That’s just a fact of life, but that’s something I have to overcome.
Participant Two felt that he surprised many White students when he was selected for a prominent position in a PWO. While he did not say directly that there was any bias, the reaction of surprise by his White peers indicated otherwise. He also alluded to a larger challenge for these participants, that to increase Black male leadership there must be more Black male leaders visible. It is that cycle of thinking that drove participants to want to represent their communities and eventually to mentor. He offered:

I think it’s just the fear of not having something in common with the people you’re going to be working with. I know when I got on cabinet, which was a big shocker for everybody, ‘you’re that Black guy, you’re that guy’, or ‘the token Black guy’ or whatever. I just think it’s them being uncomfortable and uneasy and life is easier when you’re with people that look like you and have things in common with you and have the same kind of history as you. But in order to make these organizations more comfortable for minorities there has to be minorities in there for people to have stuff in common with. So it’s just, I guess that boundary is what’s really making it tough for minorities to be in these organizations.

Many perceived that they were not necessarily welcome or that they were not expected to perform at the same level as others in the organization. Participant Nine commented on the transition to a PWO and alluded to stereotypical expectations:

(They feel) that you shouldn’t really be there, that you’re a bit out of place or something. But, I mean you just have to fight it off. You’ll have to prove with your capabilities that you’re competent enough.
You know, I guess, maybe with the stereotypes and everything it’s perceived that maybe you won’t have contributions just coming in, maybe you won’t be thinking along the same lines as the other White kids. Maybe they, like the cultural thing, maybe they are thinking that one thing should happen, but you’re automatically going to be antagonistic and think that it should go another way. Or that you’re ideas are going to be not as good as everyone else’s. But if you come in and you establish yourself early on, you know, you let them know that you were selected, you can contribute and everything. It all changes, you know.

Bias frequently manifested itself in the form of lower expectations as with Participant Eight when he was working on a project with a group of women in his major. Interestingly he mentioned previously that he thought they were biased because he was a male as well. The irony that women, who have historically been the targets of bias in higher education based on gender, perpetrate the behavior on both a gender and racial level. He explained:

There were 3 white girls and it was me, a Black guy, and the way they talked to each other, when I gave my input about something she would question it, and it wasn’t like, extreme questioning, it was like, ‘Are you sure about this?’ Something like that. But when other girls gave their input she was like, oh yeah, that’s true, that does make sense, but when I gave it she had questions.

Becoming a leader it really, is not as easy as it seems. I’ll put it like that. Especially when you’re leading a more diverse group of students, it’s much more different. My experience from high school to college is very different. Because
back in high school I guess, kind of everyone agreed with my opinions and now I have people who disagree with my opinions and sometimes I find is it because of the fact that, because I’m Black, because I’m a male or stuff like that.

Participant Nine commented on the changed nature of racism and bias. The modern subtle face of racism is harder to detect from both the Black and White perspective and increased sensitivity brings with it increased consequences when addressing it. His ability to articulate the change in the face of racism was unique among participants. Participant Nine offered a valuable perspective on the theme:

I think people get kind of mixed up because a lot of times people think of racism as you know, back in the 50s, when it said ‘no coloreds allowed’, you know. But racism could just be, just a kind of mindset that okay, they’re going to be different, so I have to adjust the way that I’m acting or the way I’m thinking for them, you know. So I just make sure that I’m being me to the best of my abilities, at all times.

I think probably because people always kind of have their masks that they have on before they get comfortable with you. And I can definitely see a difference, you know, when they first meet you or whatever, and then once they get comfortable around me and get to know me a little better.

Participant Four recalls having his perspective ignored during a very important discussion because of race. He recounted:

Yeah, I feel like, um, I feel like they were talking around us, like they were, because there are only 8 organizations here and none of them have more than 30
people, whereas the average sorority has like 100 or 80-90 people. So, you feel like, okay you all keeping talking like we don’t exist, so, you know, hello, I’m right here.

Participant One noticed that there were certain Black organizations that were respected by White peers and some that were not. He said:

They know like Alpha and our older members, that came before us, they really did a good job of making sure that our chapter was very much engraved in the (University) culture, so they see my fraternity as you know, that’s cool, but when I say my other involvements in things, they’re like hmmm, Black Student Union. So I literally had like 3 people turn their head and look like did he really just say Black Student Union?

He also encountered some bias in decision making that he attributed to race. He said:

I think decisions that are made behind closed doors, after a formal like setting, after we’ve been in a setting, and then it’s time for people to go make decisions, and they’re just like oh well. Honestly I feel resentment right now by (University), I’m going to be very honest.

A different perspective was offered by Participant Five, who appeared uncomfortable talking about his experiences of bias. He claimed he had not experienced bias in college, although he had in High School. He reported:

I’ve always been picked on when I was in high school, they said like, they called me like the White-Black (Participant Five) or something like that. I really don’t
see a difference or, I guess what I’m trying to say is; I have a very diverse group of friends… and is anybody from (university) going to hear this?

Later, when talking about challenges he had in his first PWO he downplayed racial issues and attributed them to himself. Participant Five recalled:

   Everybody was still like really accepting of me and everything, so that (being Black) wasn’t a problem, it was probably just me, and then being the only minority in it I guess, which I’m used to it. My high school was mixed and I was the only minority in a lot of classes and even in some of the organizations I’m in now, but I don’t know. I figured that there wouldn’t be a lot of us in there, but I didn’t expect that (racial issues).

Participant Five also had a unique perspective on a policy change that made several Black men ineligible for participation. His frustration with his same race peers caught the researcher off guard, as it was assumed that his frustration would be with the policy, not his underperforming peers. His willingness to make excuses to cover why participation was low completely avoided any racial inferences. He explained:

   Okay, so when we were talking about grades, when I’m talking to one of my brothers, and things like that, we’ll kind of make fun of our race, and this is going to sound worse than it should, but we’ll be like, you know Black guys are so lazy, unmotivated, and just look at their grades on campus. We were referring to, (University) Greek Life raised the GPA requirements to get into organizations, so because of that we’ve had a lot of qualified people become unqualified and we were kind of, I guess saying our frustration for that. Because like why can’t we
just, you know, work and do what we need to do, but like if I were to talk to a 
White person I guess I would say yeah, we just decided not to do intake or 
whatever, we didn’t have enough guys come out or something like that.

Participant Eight’s reflection on why Black men don’t participate in greater 
numbers is insightful in that it brought fear into the racial bias conversation as well as an 
attitude of self-segregation due to stereotypes. He offered:

There might be kind of like a fear with, you know, Black guys being leaders at a 
predominantly White institute because they’re scared of the fact that you know 
they might get shut down, they’re outnumbered by the White people. So there 
might be some kind of fear associated with it. And also the fact that, you know, 
some (Black) people might believe that they just feel like they (Whites) don’t 
need to have leadership roles from us, they should leave it up to the White people 
to do it.

Participant Six experienced direct attack in the form of vandalism. Interestingly 
the perpetrators used terms like ‘fag’ rather than more obvious racial terms they could 
have used. Also noteworthy is that the victim, Participant Six, did not consider it an 
attack because he is not gay, and dismissed it as an alcohol incident. He remembered:

There were some residents that were just bad. Like somebody vandalized my 
door, and like vandalized all the property on my door and I don’t know why and it 
was one of those things that I never really been attacked before and I don’t 
consider it as an attack, I assume that they did it when they were drunk, but 
people writing things like ‘fag’ on your door when I’m not gay and you know, I
didn’t understand what I had done to I guess get that. I mean I held them accountable to the rules, but I didn’t ever like call the cops on them or anything like that, but I had conversations with them and so I guess maybe they thought I was overstepping my bounds, I don’t know. But yeah, so having to deal with those things and that this just really kind of contributed to my diminished interest in the PL position.

The implications of this incident were that a group White students succeeded in committing a discriminatory act against a racial minority. This caused him to question his interest in his leadership position. However, the term they used was not racial, and they therefore succeeded in carrying out the act without repercussions. This example was a representation of how bias was redirected by participants in such a manner that on the surface was tolerated by both the dominant and minority communities.

A far more subtle example was Participant Four’s experience with the cool climate of the predominately White campus. It was his willingness to assume the risk that assisted him in being successful as a leader; although he did not mention the times taking the risk did not have a positive response. He said:

And I feel like a lot, another barrier, like you said, people sometimes it’s not warming, but a lot of times, especially with like, it comes from like equal opportunity, if you want to go, go; if you don’t I’m not going to make you go, but if it looks all White that’s because you didn’t go. A lot of times, it may not feel warming, or you may have the perception that it’s not warming, like as a Black
man, and you’re like those people don’t want to hang around me, but you know, once you get in they really do embrace you. I do feel that.

Participant Five was hyper-aware of stereotypes when he was with his White peers; as he did not want to feed into stereotypes. The researcher noted his acceptance of racial assumptions as normal, yet his discomfort with the topic. He explained:

(I am always thinking about) if I bring something up how’s that going to look or, the stereotypes if you request chicken for lunch in a White organization or things like that. The music comes on and they’re like, ‘Can you dance? You should know how to dance?’ Stuff like that. You’re going to get that regardless, but it’s just, you don’t know what you can say and what you can’t say, you kind of feel uncomfortable sometimes. So I think that’s the biggest difference is comfort.

Participant One summarized the nature of bias, its impact, and its tolerance by both Black and White students and administrators. He noted:

It’s just like a lot of good Black men come to (University) and they just get lost because no one is there to, you know, say this guy is a leader and I want to put him in charge and work with him. I just think that, and it goes back to one of my favorite quotes ‘you can’t ask a man who’s been bound by chains for 400 years to come take the chains off and come to the starting line of a race and ask him to run fairly because it’s not going to happen’. He doesn’t know what he’s doing.

Bias as Lack of Understanding

Some of the most consistent, yet subtle patterns of bias that emerged from participant experiences were related to a lack of understanding on the part of the
predominately White campus community. Frequently participants told stories of how White students did not understand that there could be different or unintended consequences of their decisions on minorities in the campus population. Participant One described many conversations where there was a lack of understanding by his White peers on issues that impact the Black community differently than the White community. He explained:

So a lot of times we’d be in (Greek Life) meetings and they’d be saying things pertaining to their chapters, or they’d be talking to administrators and saying well you know, I see that (White chapters) are doing this, and I’d be like, well um, there are 3 councils here and we don’t all do (things the same way) or there’d be things that we’d vote on that made no sense for us (the Black fraternities) to do.

White students often questioned Participant Five on superficial aspects of his involvement in a Black fraternity, like stepping. Ironically the Black men interviewed spoke repeatedly about service to the community as a hallmark of their engagement, with most of the Black fraternities doing three to five times as many service hours as their White peers. Yet the disconnect across cultures is apparent in Participant Five’s comments:

I don’t think that when people do it it’s on purpose or anything, it’s probably just like to learn more about me or us or whatever, but since I am in a Black fraternity I feel like some people only think that we step and I’ll have people say, dude show us this step, or you know.
And so like um, I don’t know, I think when you come to me and ask about my organization and the first thing I get asked is like step or something like that, but they don’t like really know other aspects. But I don’t think I see it as something that they do on purpose. It is pretty cool to step and everything, so I mean, I guess that’s just something else they want to know.

Participant Seven was frustrated by the lack of connection between SGA and even the majority campus culture. The assumption by White leaders that the entire campus community shared the same interests was a prime example of the White-centric nature of the student body:

I felt like they just thought, ‘we’re on student government’ and they felt like they ran campus or whatever. Whatever they said ‘let’s do’, everybody was going to do. I didn’t like that. And they spoke as though everyone, the whole campus, which is what we’re trying to represent, felt the same way that they did. I know we had a situation with a party bus, they were trying to get a football party bus to go to some game and they were like everybody’s going to do it, and other universities have done it and it’s going to get sold quickly, and pretty much nobody bought a ticket. I mean, no one wanted to. I feel like if they would have really asked people, people would have told them that I’m not about to waste my weekend to ride on a bus a couple of hours and then to leave back that same day, but they just thought everybody was going to do it and so they voted for it, but it didn’t work out in the long run.
In his first PWO Participant Seven also struggled with parliamentary procedure, something the organization assumed everybody knew and understood:

Um a major barrier was the language that they used. Of course there was Robert’s rules and so I had to learn that and the language that was associated with that. So I know the first couple of meetings I was probably looking like I have no idea what’s going on. So that was a major barrier. Just getting the order of things, when you can/can’t speak, how to address people, when you can speak out of turn. A major barrier was the language and just the order of how the meetings were run.

Also most of the members on there, they are part of White fraternities and sororities and so they have their own things, they have rushes, and things like that. So most of their schedules as far as meeting outside with your committee is kind of centered around that. And not knowing anything about those organizations, it was kind of hard to understand well, why can’t you meet this time, but it wasn’t really a (official) designated time, it was kind of sporadic and I didn’t understand that. But just, you know, meeting them where they are as well and being able to say well I can, getting our schedules to mesh was also a bit of a barrier that we overcame.

The above exemplified the lack of awareness of differences between students from diverse backgrounds and the types of institutionalized assumptions that continued to promote bias and misunderstanding.
Isolation

At its core Isolation resulted from the confluence of the desire to connect with an organization’s members, and the immediate bias and cultural understanding challenges a PWO presented to the participants. The desire to connect and find comfort in the organization highlighted the initial challenges participants faced when considering leadership opportunities. Being the only student of color and the presence of subtle bias cues made entering the PWO an intimidating prospect. Participant Four had an interesting perspective on the connection between leadership and socio-economic status. He felt that there was a higher proportion of the Black population engaged in leadership than the White population. He suggested that this should be a point of pride to unite, not isolate Black men:

Well, you know, you have some poor White people, and at the same time you have a lot more middle class and a lot more upper class who are lawyers, CEOs, entrepreneurs, things like that being a leader. I realized at (University), you know, that Black people here are probably some of the top in (the state), especially since (the state) has the worst (K-12) education system. I definitely think these are some of the brightest and the best Black people here. So I definitely think I feel better about being Black just because you don’t, um, Black people aren’t always just the same old thing. You see a lot more (Black) people with 4.0’s, serving on student leadership, getting involved, winning awards.

Participant Two represented another end of the spectrum on isolation:
I guess it is fear, but it’s just, I think it’s just the fear of not having something in common with the people you’re going to be working with.

Participant Nine described how the lack of representation further isolates Black men by creating an unwelcoming environment:

It’s not necessarily because they attempt to do this, I guess they project an image that they have and other people kind of stay away from that image, or kind of create their own image and want to stick in like groups and stuff like that.

Well, specifically I remember going to a couple of the fraternity houses, and I have some friends in some of them, and one of them was saying we really don’t have too many Black members, I think there were only like 2-3 in that house, and it’s bad, because I like everybody, but I guess they see only White guys here and so they think, Oh, I guess I’m not welcome. I guess this isn’t a place for me and so they don’t come in and so we’re just like there’s too much of White guys sitting in there.

The ability for participants to push past this feeling was often referred to as necessary for success. Participant One described the challenges he faced and commented on being the only African American in an elite organization:

I’m a member of (name of) Honor Society which is the top 1% of the leaders on (University) campus and I am the only African American student in the organization of about 20 people, there are five exec board positions, but all of us are leaders, so I think that position is probably the position that is probably the most difficult at times for me.
Participant Three, who had an extensive network of resources and was very familiar with White organizations attributed his success to his comfort level and understanding of being the only one in multiple aspects of his life:

Um, I’ve always been kind of the only, I’ve always been the only Black person in my friends group. I have always been the only liberal. So I’m already pretty self-aware and kind of know where I’m coming from, but I just understand where people who might not view the world the same way I do.

Participant Seven indicated the lack of Black participation in campus wide leadership served to further isolate Black men:

I guess the main reason why a lot of Black men don’t want to get involved is: (1) I don’t know, maybe we feel like we’re not wanted, (2) Maybe we feel like nobody cares or I don’t see anybody else doing it, so I’m not going to do it. If I take a leadership position you’re automatically going to be the one that everybody looks at and asks questions about. I guess we just don’t want to have the responsibility or be accountable for it and it is a struggle.

In his contemplation of running for an SGA position Participant Eight exemplified how the lack of Black representation can be a deterrent to leadership engagement. He also found some inspiration from the President:

Well, as far as running for office, like such as a senator or something, you do have to get majority votes from campus, so that would involve me campaigning. But I guess it would be kind of like, you know, this Black guy who was trying to run for senate, some people might feel that way. But others may feel like, oh, I
actually know him, he’s a good guy, things like that. I think there should be more Black leaders. I guess you can look at Obama for example. Nobody expected a Black man to ever be President of the U.S., but he is now.

In his first organization Participant Six felt somewhat isolated due to the lack of previous connections with his peers:

I had not come in with any of the same social circles and so I didn’t really have a lot of friends that were in fraternities and or sororities or anything like that. So it’s kind of an entirely different experience to me and so I think that it might have taken them a little bit to warm up.

Participant Five had a similar experience, although he attributed it more to himself than the organization:

I feel like everybody in there had some kind of connection before I came in there. But everybody was still like really accepting of me and everything, so that wasn’t a problem, it was probably just me, and then being the only minority in it I, which I’m used to.

Participant Seven commented on another type of isolation related to time and effort which was echoed by many of the leaders interviewed. This type of isolation is the result of multiple commitments, sometimes to multiple communities, that may not be understood by same race peers who are not committed at the same level. He said:

I’ve learned to tell people no because you know, you want to just, people want to hang out, let’s hang out tonight. Well, I can’t because I have a test to study for, like my friends wanted to hang out Wed. night and I couldn’t do that because I
had a test today that I needed to study for and I just took a test that day. So I needed to study for the test, so I was like I really can’t. Just having to tell people no and making people understand that it’s not that I don’t want to hang out with you, but like I have things that I have to do.

Participant Six’s commented on his first PWO and captured the sense of relief that minority representation within an organization can create:

I was excited to see that there was other African Americans in the organization. There are two Black girls and then another Black guy in the organization with me and so I didn’t really know any of them before.

Isolation was the antithesis of the networks many of participants tried so hard to build and use on their path to leadership. Adjusting to the new organizational cultures required patience, acceptance, and persistence in the face of challenges. All these factors contributed to the leaders in this study consistently looking for people like themselves in campus leadership positions to offset the isolation they frequently encountered.

**Visibility: The Paradox**

Visibility emerged as a paradoxical theme from these participants. While visibility among same race peers was a point of pride and inspiration for the emergent leaders. The isolation due to bias and racism they described previously was a constant reality for them. The nature of leadership itself often creates visibility, which for a White leader in a White organization could be used to influence and build consensus among followers. For the participants in this study, visibility created a threat to leadership emergence in a paradoxical way. The initial visibility of participants due to their skin
color brought with it immediate recognition and immediate assumptions and bias based on stereotypes. Leading as a Black man in the predominately White campus culture placed an incredible sense of responsibility to perform exceptionally on these students. They knew they were noticed and they sensed their actions were being judged.

On the other hand, the men often felt invisible in that their opinions were not highly regarded, their culture not recognized (or recognized superficially), and their perspectives and experiences were not seriously considered in critical discussions within predominately White organizations. This paradox of visibility became one of the biggest challenges they had to overcome.

*Invisibility*

Participant One’s commented on access to higher education and how Black men easily become lost and not recognized in the same way as their White peers:

Since we haven’t had that access to (the University), it’s just like a lot of good Black men come (here) and they just get lost because no one is there to, you know, say this guy is a leader and I want to put him in charge and work w/him.

He continued:

We were dealing with alcohol deaths and I was like, thrust into the media, like literally had people calling me and that’s when I saw actual White administrators. I felt like finally took an interest in me which I feel like they don’t do for a lot of African American males here.

This type of invisibility combined with the frequently described isolation, resulted in what leaders described as feeling invisible when it came to important matters.
Participant Four described a climate where even if Black men were active in leadership, they often felt invisible:

We were discussing housing, they’re trying to build new houses and I don’t remember what we were even arguing about, but I just remember having that feeling, everyone was talking like around me, and I was like, I’m part of this discussion and I should be being an advocate for Black Greeks who don’t have as many people who are going to have to be able to fill the new houses.

Participant Seven summarized well what all leaders reported they experienced at various points in their experience in predominately White organizations. Feelings of frustration and invisibility were common as with Participant Seven’s experience:

I think that in the end, I could have talked until I was blue in the face, and their minds would not have changed. So I think they will say that it was in the best interest of the community, but in a, I just think that, there was bias just because they wanted it and I was the only voice not for it.

Participant Eight talked about how his input was consistently questioned by his White peers when they worked on a project:

…Back to the group example. Um, like, there were 3 white girls and it was me, a Black guy, and the way they talked to each other, when I gave my input about something she would question it, and it wasn’t like, extreme questioning, it was like are you sure about this, something like that. But when other girls gave their input she was like, oh yeah, that’s true, that does make sense, but when I gave it she had questions.
The subtly of such bias may or may not have been a conscious effort on the part of the perpetrator. Regardless of intentionality, the net effect was to create an environment where the emergent leader became sensitive to stereotypes and had a hard time determining friends, allies, and motivations of others. At times they called into question even their own abilities, and thus often felt as if they were very much alone in their endeavors. Participant Nine had this to say about stereotypes, intentionality of bias, and considerations in navigating a PWO:

With the stereotypes and everything it’s perceived that maybe you won’t have contributions just coming in, maybe you won’t be thinking along the same lines as the other White kids. Maybe they, like the cultural thing, maybe they are thinking that one thing should happen, but you’re automatically going to be antagonistic and think that it should go another way. Or that you’re ideas are going to be not as good as everyone else’s.

Participant Eight offered his experience with invisibility:

I guess you would have to not let your voice be overrun by them. Because sometimes you kind of get like thrown in the back and you know being with a majority of White people it’s like you got to let them know you have a voice and not let them outcast you or whatever. It’s hard to learn, I guess. I’m still learning now, I have to say.

Low representation and Black male participation led to the visibility of skin color and to a lack of African American cultural understanding from White peers. Participant
Six talked about the invisibility of his race in PWO’s which is a primary contribution to the paradoxical nature of this theme:

I just, I wanted to be able to identify with somebody else in the organization, like besides myself, I wanted to be able to see somebody else in an organization that I could identify with and I didn’t see that there.

Participant Four discussed the challenges he had with invisibility describing a situation he experienced in student government and his response:

I just internalized it, like especially if you like say, in a student government meeting and everyone is talking, and you feel like this is wrong, or you feel like you need to speak up, then a lot of times, initially, I admit I did stand back, sit back, arms folded and just listened and internalized all my thoughts.

The perceived invisibility and the resulting internalization described above was a considerable threat to leadership development of participants. While participants worked hard and learned to overcome this challenge, it was not the only way visibility impacted their ability to lead. The two sided nature of this threat was exceptionally challenging because the two components acted simultaneously on the leaders.

**Hyper-visibility**

Being the only Black student in a leadership position in a predominately White organization meant that these leaders stood out not only through their physical presence, but also due to different social and cultural norms discussed earlier. Participant Seven describes the confluence of factors that contribute to him feeling like he is in the spotlight because of his race:
It’s just; I’m trying to put into words. Um, it’s just a feeling that you get. I’m not saying people are judging me, but we have 2 excused absences, I know that if I’m not there or if I’m not on time, they’re going to know that I’m missing. I may not say something at every meeting, but I know pretty much everybody knows my name. As far as actually being on the committee if I’m not pulling my weight I know that’s going to be noticed. Most of them, I would say that they don’t have too many close friends who are African American so I feel like I should representing us in the most positive light.

Participant Eight echoed the same sentiment:

I guess you can say in a White organization, me being a Black male, and the fact that I am involved with organizations on a White campus, I kind of get like the spotlight shined on me, I guess you could say.

Some leaders noticed that there were both pro’s and con’s to this visibility, such as Participant One. He attributes being noticed as a competent leader to the visibility of his race:

Um, well, as a result of me being a leader I became more visible, which is, I think that’s why I was tapped for (honors society), because there were no Black people in (the honor society). I was the only Black person in (name of class), there’s one other minority, but I think he’s Indian. So I think that made me more visible to (the University). But like I always felt like I had to be 2 or 3 times better when it came to like dealing with White organizations, I couldn’t, like say, for example if we have a function and I don’t go, it’s like, well (Participant One) isn’t there.
Other (White) people they can miss, you know, never come and no one notices, so it’s just like, how, ugh, where’s the balance? So that’s where I was caught up in between those years.

He later reflected on this visibility and having to work harder, expanding his frame of reference beyond college:

I think I always thought the same way I think now, which is White’s rule the world, they are in positions of leadership and in order for us to get in those positions, we have to do 2-3 times more. We also have to just make sure that we’re always on our A game because any time you’re slipping is, they’re watching and they’ll use that and that’s just the way I feel.

Participant Five explained how his visibility in a PWO impacts his relationships with his fraternity leadership position and causes him to have to make some difficult choices:

And I’ve talked to all my brothers and I told them what’s going on and they completely understand, I still feel bad because I want to go to the events, but. There is, sometimes they make fun of me, sometimes they say, (P5), you know, we never see you or sometimes they say they have an absent President, but, they’re not being mean, they understand and they know I do a lot and I do what I can. I get teased about it sometimes though.

Visibility also influenced decisions that participants made on their path to leadership. Although all men interviewed agreed that Black men need to be represented
in White organizations in greater numbers, Participant Six found himself not becoming engaged in fraternity life at all because of the way others might view it:

My dad was in one, he was in a historically Black fraternity and I just didn’t see the benefit or the need to get involved in one. Even though I’d had a really good experience talking to the people in (a predominately White fraternity), I just didn’t think it was for me and I think that kind of was my immaturity a little bit. Being looked at by people that I was kind of like the Black guy in the predominantly White fraternity, I guess token and I didn’t necessarily want that perception and I didn’t want to have to deal with people thinking that.

Visibility also caused leaders to doubt their abilities or question why they were selected for a position:

Sometimes I’d question, ‘Did I get selected just because I’m Black?’ I’ve talked to my parents about it as well. I remember my dad telling me, ‘You know, if you know you’re qualified for the position and you got it, then it doesn’t matter what people think or you know, if you know you’re qualified for it and you got it then you didn’t get it just because you were Black. And if you did, you’re qualified for the position, so does it matter?’

As for our ideas about race (as a country), I would say that they have changed a little bit for the better, just saying that though you know, not all. I guess I’ll start by saying it’s different being that one Black guy in an organization in Colorado than it is in Atlanta, you know, it’s just 2 different cultures.
Summary of Visibility Paradox

The Visibility Paradox consisted of two dimensions threatening leadership emergence via participant race: Hyper visibility and Invisibility. Together these dimensions reflected the way visibility impacted the thoughts, feelings and actions of these emerging leaders, a direct consequence of being a Black man in a position of leadership at a predominately White university. As leadership emerged these Black men became more visible and felt increased pressure to represent their culture. Simultaneously, they realized that their voices were not often heard, they were expected to perform poorly, were judged based on stereotypes, and their concerns and cultural needs were not understood, thereby creating the feeling of invisibility.

Summary of Threats to Black Leadership Emergence in Predominantly White Organizations

Threats to Black leadership emergence in predominately White organizations was characterized by two themes, Racism and Bias, and the Visibility Paradox. Each of these themes had dimensional attributes of specific challenges that emerged from descriptions of participant experiences. Racism and Bias contained Lack of Understanding and Isolation as dimensional elements. Participant examples of bias were understandably subtle and complex, and frequently participants dismissed incidents as minor and the results of ignorant individuals rather than institutional and societal problems. Lack of Understanding was characterized by participant descriptions of situations where White peers were unaware of implications of how their actions, behaviors, and assumptions differentially impacted the African American community. Isolation was the result of low
Black student participation in White student organizations, which often left emerging Black leaders to be the only representative of their race in an organization. The impact of being the only Black man was compounded by a racial climate that was not always welcoming to Black men. White-centric approaches to campus leadership provided significant threats to leader emergence via isolation and marginalization.

The second dimensional element of the Visibility Paradox was the result of the confluence of isolation and bias participants felt as they emerged as leaders. Invisibility and Hyper-visibility created a paradoxical environment where, due to their race, participants were both easily recognized and judged, and frequently ignored or undervalued as leaders. These threats to leadership emergence were considerable and unrelenting, but it was apparent that although participants were certainly aware of these threats, they frequently downplayed their impact. An examination of the strategies Black student leaders used to become successful in predominately White organizations showed the depth and impact of threats to leader emergence.
Strategies for Leadership Success

Strategies for Leadership Success is the third phase of the BMLEPWC model consisting of six dimensional elements: Setting a Standard of Excellence, Vigilance, Positive Focus, Balance, Finding Voice and Cross Cultural Reflection. Leaders used these strategies to achieve the success they had attained, particularly in dealing with bias and racism. Strategies tended to be very individualized and situational, and their surface appearances varied considerably. Many of these strategies were embedded in processes participants used to become leaders. While some were conscious and thought out, others were more reactive and considerably less salient.

Figure 4.7- Position of Strategies for Leadership Success within BMLEPWC

The researcher also found two additional multi-dimensional themes, finding a voice and cross cultural reflection. These strategies served as the backbone of how participants overcame challenges as they emerged as leaders. Because bias was woven into the everyday lives of Black men at predominately White institutions, the mechanisms they employed to become successful were often resulting from their perceptions of and
reactions to bias. Therefore the majority of strategies represented were examples where participants used a particular strategy to overcome bias or racism (either explicit or implied).

### Setting a Standard of Excellence

Setting a standard of excellence was a strategy participants used to gain respect of peers (both Black and White) administrators, mentors, mentees, and followers. It also served as a reaction to the hyper-visibility described in the theme of Challenges. As implied by examples of participant stories previously discussed, this strategy was part of almost every aspect of their quest to be leaders and enact change. From Representing, to Community, to Mentoring, participants strove for excellence in all that they did in order to represent their Black peers positively and exemplify competence.

Participant Two summarized the essence of this theme in discussing leadership and race, he also elevated the goals of Black leadership to a whole new level:

I guess another conversation that’s not being had is how does a minority lead a whole group of people? Not just setting an example for another minority. Because I remember, we had conversations about Barack Obama and his leadership style and what does it mean to be a Black leader in the 21st century. Now that I’m looking back on it, a lot of the conversation was the purpose of being a leader is to set an example so other young Black people can do the same. Whereas I think the conversation should be, how does this Black man or Black woman going to set an example for all people to follow?
Participant Two continued to explain his thoughts about leadership, only to have the realization of a larger problem with the leadership conversation within his community:

… now that I think about it, a lot of times when I’m doing things I’m thinking, ‘Okay, how does this set an example for my brother?’ Or ‘How does this set an example for my cousins or other Black people?’ So I guess now that I just thought about it, that is kind of an issue that probably needs to be addressed in our community as well.

Participant Eight recalled carefully considering how he reacts to bias:

… how I react to it, how I handle it, is, I just pretty much show them, tell them I got it. I can handle it, and actions speak for me. I think that’s the best way to show someone I’m capable of handling it….I really believe actions speak louder than words. Again, I’m a laid back person, I really don’t talk as I should, as a leader should, but my actions speak for my words. I’ve been told that countless times and I really believe it.

Recognizing the stress associated with setting such high standards and the treats of isolation and hyper-visibility, Participant Four placed a lot of pressure on himself:

You (as a Black person) are the first person that they’re going to see that is going to stand out. So, especially in leadership, you know. You are, you have to make sure that your reputation, if you . . . a lot of times you are going to be the first person that they, well not the first Black person, so I won’t say the first person, but you might be the first (Black) person who they know personally who is a leader, besides captain of basketball team or track team or football team. You
have to make sure you stand out, make sure you do the right thing. Of course
they know (names of Black students who have done things wrong on campus),
whoever got caught smoking, you know, there’s both ends of the spectrum. Just
make sure you’re a positive one. It’s scary sometimes, but you just got to do it,
because if you don’t, who will?

Participant Five looked at setting high standards as a challenge, one that he
continued to work on for himself and his peers:

Yeah, it’s definitely a challenge. Especially now-like in my later life. It’s one
thing to get in a position, but it’s another thing to actually do the work, obviously,
and to lead and inspire others and even like with the fraternity, I think that I am
doing a decent job, but I know I have a lot of room for improvement.

Many men felt that this desire to set high standards for themselves was instilled in
them from a young age, such as Participant Six:

I think I’ve always been aware of people’s perception of me and so I think I’ve
always tried to be a role model and be the person that followed the rules and be
the kind of person that was some sort of guidance for other people and I guess
maybe that came back to my first year and seeing advisors and kind of knowing
what they meant to me and being able to be there for other people throughout my
college career.

The messages Participant Nine received were very strong. As he took on leadership they
became a foundation for his development:
It’s funny, they always taught us that being Black in the world you have to work harder than everyone else to set yourself up. So I’ve always kind of held that in mind, you know, even if I may not believe it, working harder than everyone else regardless of your race is a good way to set yourself up. So I always try to work really hard and prove that I’m worthy to be there, no matter where I am. No matter if I’m in (lists several organizations) and regardless of race and color they are, they’re going to respect that you are the guy that gets the job done. So that’s a good way to set it up.

Participant Nine continued:

I guess I blended the two (messages) like from my dad and from the school. Like school said be the best because you’re Black and that’s how you’ll survive in the business world. My dad said be your best so that you can be satisfied with yourself at the end of the day. Be your best so you can sleep at night without thinking I left something that could have been done. So I combined those two, and it’s like be your very best because everybody will recognize that and because if you are your very best you won’t regret anything. You won’t regret and think about, well I guess I could have pushed a little harder and gotten that A if you’ve already done everything you can and got a B. That’s very good advice. That’s great advice.

It was the same for Participant One, who casually commented:

…guess it was just something that I always felt that was instilled in me to be, not be better, but be the person that people look up to and be the example for others.
Some, such as Participant Four, were noticeably frustrated by the assumptions based on stereotypes and low expectations from White peers. Yet he, like all the participants, remained firm in their belief that they needed to set a strong example and prove themselves with actions:

If you haven’t met anybody who stands out, who is African American, then you’re going to behave like, oh I see Diddy on TV, Diddy’s doing this so I expect you to do this, or I see someone smoking blunt, so do you want to hit this bong, you know. I’m like I don’t smoke!

Participant Six was particularly aware of his academic reputation and refused to conform to the negative stereotypes some have of Black men:

I had always been in that (challenging academic) environment and always been aware that I was kind of the only Black guy in those classes. I think that it was fine in an academic setting because I knew I was ‘setting myself apart’ and I knew that I was smart and I felt there was nothing wrong with being smart. There are a lot of (Black) people that will play down their intelligence in order to be in regular classes and I guess the way I was raised or what have it, I just didn’t feel that I needed to do that.

In describing his acceptance and the associated frustration with having to work harder, Participant One ultimately found a positive focus for what many considered a very negative consequence of racial bias:

It’s very difficult. It is, (loud sigh) it’s very frustrating at times because you know in your heart and mind that I’m just as good or even better than this person, but
they’re able to do this and I have to do all of this just to do this and I think if it’s not something that you’re willing to embrace and accept, but know that, know in your heart that you are better than them, but know that in the end, the experiences that you’re putting yourself through just to be at that door are going to make you, in a perfect world, going to make you a superstar.

Perhaps the best example of the philosophy participants lived, was given by Participant Three, who’s Presidential quote embodied both the freedom to be yourself and his focus on excellence:

I mean my kind of mantra for life, Abraham Lincoln said it best, ‘whatever you are, be a good one.’

Vigilance

Vigilance arose as a strategic theme, most commonly as the result of negative racial experiences. While not all participants reported negative experiences directly (some were implied or the negativity minimized), all did report being vigilant or cautious in dealing with some aspects of the predominately White organizations with which they were engaged. Some men described this strategy directly while others just talked about how there were people that wanted them to fail. Participant One was very direct and probably the most cautious due to a couple of experiences he had during his tenure in predominately White organizations:

If you’re a Black leader in a White organization, more is going to be expected of you and more people are going to be trying to do things to undermine, I feel like they’re going to be doing things to undermine you and set you up for failure, so
you have to be very vigilant of who you befriend or who you let get in your circle within that organization because your words can be twisted against you, your actions, anything. So I think you have to be very cautious as a Black leader in a White organization.

He also directly referenced how he grew wiser as a result of his interactions, even though some were not as positive as he would have liked:

I think when I came to (University) I was a boy and through my interactions with people, my experiences here, just being watchful of certain people and how they moved up the leadership ladder and modeling myself after that I’ve become a man. I was a (University) boy; I’m a (University) man now.

Participant Three spoke in terms of being mindful of egos and carefully navigating those dynamics in order to be successful. His tone was considerably less negative; his process fairly complex:

And there are always, at a certain level there are always super huge egos, so you have to understand how those are going to play and you have to be, if you’re like me you’re going to want to be honest and act with integrity, but you still going to have to play to those different egos. It helped me tremendously whenever I was in a massive meeting, and not only did I bring my own ego and have to make my presence known, but I also had to kind of stroke the different egos in the room. So that definitely helped.

Others, like Participant One, were simply less comfortable talking and more cautious about what they said and how others would react. A less complex strategy for an
emergent leader, yet one that is very restrictive in terms of interaction and behavior within an organization:

In a majority White organization you don’t, sometimes you don’t know what you can say and what you can’t say, or if you bring something up how’s that going to look or, the stereotypes if you request for a chicken at a white org. or things like that. The music comes on and they’re like can you dance, can you dance, you should know how to dance. Stuff like that. You’re going to get that regardless, but it’s just, you don’t know what you can say and what you can’t say, you kind of feel uncomfortable sometimes.

Participant Four described he was treated differently in PWO’s and needed to be aware of others perceptions of Black men. In order to counteract the negative impact, he was both forgiving and careful how he acted:

Some of them are going to treat you like a charity case, but at the same time if you prove to them, you know, it’s not just ignorance because they just are mean. Sometimes they might have been raised to feel a certain way, but a lot of times it’s ignorance as in not knowing, you know, they don’t know any better.

Having had a negative experience in SGA with betrayal, Participant Three became very careful in what he let others know about his political agenda:

It’s not that hard for me to kind of work on something and then completely talk about it as though I’m not really (working on it). And I know that’s kind of misleading, but until you know where someone is standing, especially in politics, you’ve got to kind of play that game, because there is as chance that they can all.
I have always done that, always, always, always. And I think part of it is from growing up in an environment where you’re the only one.

Participant Three’s story illustrated the extent to which participants feel they need to guard their actions and thoughts so as to avoid negative consequences. While this may or may not be the case for leaders in a same race organization, the racial component added a more sensitive and complex set of issues to navigate. The researcher observed participants’ ability to use these strategies to address challenges without giving up, becoming bitter, or becoming resentful.

Positive Focus

Even in the face of having to work harder than their peers, bias, or being overlooked, participant stories reflected a positive and enthusiastic attitude. Negative experiences were often framed in a positive way with participants mentioning the opportunity to grow, or improve themselves as individuals and leaders. Within this strategy the researcher observed two things were occurring: (a) participants were framing their experiences in a positive way so as not to damage White peers egos or relationships, and (b) in order to persist and grow as a leader in a predominately White organization, a Black man needed to have a positive take on the even the most negative experiences in order not be discouraged. It was not always clear from the data if this second part of the strategy is the result of early messaging, learning from experience, or a conscious effort. Regardless, the positive focus of these emerging leaders provided the resiliency necessary to become successful, respectful leaders within the campus community.
For Participant Three, it was the result of learning at a young age that being negative would not help him:

So you learn at a fairly young age to kind of block out any of the negative energy that’s being brought your way and kind of learn exactly what your capabilities are, once you’re confident and very self-aware then you can kind of act with confidence.

Participant Eight used a similar strategy, blocking out the lack of confidence that could happen and relying on his abilities. The researcher could see the relationship between the strategies of a positive attitude and setting a standard of excellence in his comments. He said, “I think about it, but it’s not something I really stress over. I’d rather prove to them that I can do it and race not being a factor, that I can do it regardless.”

Others used humor and a being calm to deal with challenges they faced. To keep a positive attitude Participant Five let a lot of things go:

You just kind of have to roll with everything. Just, even like being involved in greek life, and like from (organization name) and things, like I told you about step and whatever, I think if people just realize that there’s so many other aspects of us, not just of fraternity, but just of what we do, and me I don’t get offended easily. I’m a very sarcastic person and I think humor is the best part of conversation in our life.

Participant One had several challenging experiences throughout his time as a leader which could have caused him to disengage from his leadership roles. He maintained his passion and focus, to which he attributes his success:
I think, once people are around me, I think they say that I’m passionate and that I mean what, like I mean business and I know I’m going to get the job done. I think there’s a mutual respect for me and they know there’s not going to be any slacking. I think once they get over the fact that I’m Black and don’t see skin color, then they (hand motions to indicate they don’t have problems with him).

When the researcher questioned him on further on his attitudes toward race, Participant One replied. “But, and at that time I really didn’t resent White people. Like I just didn’t . . . I just could not deal with it (some of the political frustrations).”

Knowing he was going to be challenged by his first college PWO, Participant Six went in with a clear mind and positive attitude, which resulted in a good experience initially and the ability to look beyond challenges when they occur:

I was able to kind of go in there with like no real preconceptions about people and be able to kind of get to know them and I came away from that retreat, that retreat was literally one of the best experiences in my freshman year. So I think from that moment I thought very highly of people and now sometimes you get into the inner workings of planning events and those types of things and people will kind of rattle your nerves a little bit (pause) and people will be frustrating…

Participant Nine held the belief that his peers in predominately White organizations wanted him to be successful as long as he demonstrated his positive attitude, commitment, and excellence. While the researcher viewed this as conditional acceptance, he did not view it that way:
…they know that if you show up to the organization it’s because you want to contribute something and you want to learn. So, they’re like if you got into (University) you gotta be good enough to be a part of what we’re trying to do here, so come on in.

Challenged by learning how to advocate for himself and his community in a predominately White organization, Participant Eight still framed his experience positively:

It’s hard to learn, I guess. I’m still learning now to, I have to say. In my cases I never had a negative response or I kind of always played the fact that we all make mistakes, kind of that rule. They didn’t make me feel like I was a terrible person, but they like kind of helped me correct myself. Stuff like that; I didn’t have any bad experiences.

Participant Seven used a smile to overcome White fear of Black men. He was both trying to represent his race positively and keep a good attitude when faced by irrational fear:

Um, it sounds kind of funny, but I think I had to smile. Um, that’s really, what I think it is. A lot of people have a stigma with Black men that we’re mean or really aggressive, or whatever they might think, just walking down the street. I look at people, okay, we’re not close enough to speak yet or look at each other and see what they are going to do before we get that close, but most people will look or start playing with their phone or turn to the side, or do whatever, but if
you have a smile on your face people will feel less threatened and more likely to embrace you.

In talking about his adjustment to a PWO, Participant Seven downplayed the role of race and attributed whether he was accepted or not more to individual characteristics and social influences: a strategy that appeared to be effective in keeping his attitude positive:

A lot of them (White peers) are really cool, I mean some people, you know, you might just get a vibe that they really just don’t care about me or care to get to know me, which is fine. You know, I mean, everybody is entitled to their own opinion, and it’s not because of the color of your skin, maybe they just don’t like who you are, or they don’t like who you are talking to because that’s there enemy, you seem to be friends with them so I’m not going to talk to you. Usually people are going to like who they like and there’s really nothing you can do about that. If they like you, they like you, if they don’t, they don’t. But I’ve seen that, coming from a predominantly Black high school, that you know, I guess White people are friendlier than we think they are.

Looking for the positive in everything was a very common strategy as Participant Three commented:

I think it’s just a general philosophy of mine to not really focus on the challenges and try to take advantage of those opportunities, because otherwise if you just kind of mope around in that state of, this is so hard and I’m the only one, and no one understands me, then you’re wasting valuable time because the system is set
up such that you can succeed, despite those challenges, so you’ve just got to work that system to kind of move yourself ahead.

Participant Three took this strategy a step further, exploiting the negative to his advantage in political situations:

You know you can sit and complain and say I’m the only Black person and people don’t understand me, or you can really use that to your advantage. Use peoples lack of knowledge about your culture to your advantage and it seems very selfish and manipulative, but you can. Um, and sometimes it gets you ahead. Sometimes people are hypersensitive in not wanting to say certain things can be a real advantage. That’s just me being honest.

Participant Four had a similar positive spin on using his race as a strategy to get noticed:

Like that (race) gives me an upper hand, they’ll be like, oh yeah, Black guy, even if you know, they probably know me by grade now. They’ll know me so that gives me an upper hand, whereas, Johnny who might come in, he’s just another face, he has to work, I’m not saying he has to work that extra harder. I mean go that extra mile. I am saying it’s going to take more for him to stand out because when I open my mouth I stand out. When I come in not wearing a navy blazer and khaki pants I stand out. So that’s an advantage that I have over him.

Participants were exceptionally positive in their reactions to the various threats they encountered as they rose in the leadership ranks. This positive attitude, as evidenced from participant stories allowed them to overcome the threats to their emergence a
leaders and maintain positive attitudes toward the White peers they would ultimately have to work with to be successful on a White campus. This however, was not without a cost. Participants needed to be respected in both the White and Black communities if they were to progress and achieve the change they desired. In order to achieve this they needed to balance their need to progress as leaders with their desire to advocate and represent the African American community to the White community. The result was a need to achieve a state of balance between the two communities.

**Balance**

Balance was both a skill that participants needed to develop and a process that they needed to engage in. The demands placed on participants as the result of being underrepresented often caused them to carefully consider opportunities for leadership and the way their behaviors were perceived in both the White and Black communities. The self-imposed pressure setting a standard of excellence and working harder’ to achieve success and the need to represent an entire community caused participants to actively monitor the balance they have in their lives and adjust their actions and behavior constantly.

Participants indicated that balancing membership between African American and predominately White organizations was a challenge. Balance, as a strategy, was a process that occurred when a Black student engaged in the predominately White community and therefore needed to manage the often conflicting interests of each. Participants consciously navigated balance issues and indicated the importance of proving themselves to the African American community. At the same time they expressed they did not want
to be seen solely as a representative of the Black community. Maintaining membership in both the campus community and the African American community was no simple task for participants and required significant time and commitment. All participants commented on the need to maintain balance within their academic commitments, their leadership, and the added challenge of balance within their community. Participant One provided an example of the consequences associated with having to balance both membership and cultures:

> It’s so hectic because I will run myself to where I’m just extremely exhausted trying to make sure that I’m everything for everything for both sides. Wed. night I have (honors organization) at 6pm; I have Black Student Union at 7pm; I had NPHC general body at 8pm; I had two conference calls at 9 & 9:30pm for my fraternity. Trying to balance all that! (hand gestures)

Besides taking a toll on his time and energy it also had social consequences for him:

> … They know, like they can tell, and at times I feel so bad because I wanted to do some of the things that I want to do in my black organizations, but I have a conflict (Honors organization) or something like that and I can’t. They’re like, ‘Well, we know you want to come, but just go ahead and go to your (PWO) thing or do what you have to do’, but I feel so bad because they really want me to be there.

Participant Eight was challenged to balance his schedule as well:
The balance between your social and academic life is a big key. I had a problem with that when I first got here, balancing between the two, but I kind of got it on track. I think that was a big key.

To achieve balance Participant Three opened up many aspects of his life so that people could better understand him and what he was doing:

So I stopped kind of compartmentalizing I guess is a good term, these different groups and allowing everyone to kind of understand the full background of who I am and where I came from. So I was still able to balance, for instance, when you’re President, you have to know how to approach someone and what the background is and what the relationships are in the room.

Participant Six used his mentor to assist him in balancing his commitments:

There were moments when I was just done and so being able to kind of go back to his office and be like, this is what I’m dealing with and I just don’t know how to face these things and kind of trying to deal with my hall director and all these different things and these commitments, it was a lot of work.

Participant Seven considered balancing commitments in deciding which organizations to join. The researcher noticed during his comments the decision about which opportunities to pursue was a source of stress due to the need for balance in all areas of his academic career:

That’s what I’m trying to decide right now. I really, I’m not sure how I’m deciding. I’m kind of just, once again, thinking of where the need at is and what do I think I can do the best as far as meeting the need that I identify with. The
President of (organization) emailed all the executive board asking, well, we need someone to run for President and in the constitution it says it needs to come from the executive board and she’s like nobody, no volunteers to do it and we don’t agree, then we’ll have to go to the constitution and change it and leave that position open to the public to run for it and I didn’t, um, I’m interested in running for president, but I’m not ready to say that that’s what I want to do yet, just because I’m not sure how my class schedule is going to go. Being a nursing major I’m going to have 3 clinical experiences next semester and that means I’m going to the hospital for about 7 hr. straight working on the floor, 3 times a week, and that’s going to be in (hospital name). So I’ll have to get some rest, I’ll have to get up and drive and be productive and take care of people lives, so, I know that’s going to be a big task. Plus my other course load on top of that, so I’m just not sure exactly what I’m going to do.

Participant Five talked about balancing cross cultural situations regarding race, and how there were many perspectives that needed to be considered:

There are people who do get offended very, very easily and I guess just kind of be aware and not to walk around like there’s glass on the floor, but I don’t know. I think there is some kind of like a double standard, like if a Black guy says something to a White guy it could be considered racist, it’s kind of like oh, whatever, but if a White guy did it and then it’s like why would you do something like that. I noticed that, but I don’t believe I partake in it, I might, but I don’t think I do.
Lack of commitment to the African American community was a concern for all emerging leaders, Participant Nine reflected on his decision to commit to a PWO indicating the pressure to be seen as committed to one’s own race:

Everyone respects the decision, because they understand that it’s another opportunity, just as valid as the opportunities within the Black organizations, you know. I mean, sometimes people kind of view it as a bit of a betrayal of your race or whatever, but not really. There are a lot of people thinking like me, a lot of my friends are doing it, like some of my friends ran for sophomore rep and stuff, so it’s a respected decision.

Participant Four had a similar reflection:

It’s more respected, probably more ‘oh wow, his resume probably looks really good, he’s probably definitely going to get a job, he’s got it going on’ whereas participating in a black organization is like, ‘Oh okay, I see you’re one of us, you’re, you might be leading us, but you’re still one of us.’ I still get probably more respect from participating in White organizations, but I probably get more love from being in the Black organizations.

Participants needed to balance academic responsibilities, personal needs and goals, as well as the multiple communities of which they were a part. Moving between Black and White organizations (and cultures), advancing the needs of the African American community, the university community, and social justice on campus was a considerable task for these participants. The descriptions of the various ways the strategically balanced multiple competing roles and responsibilities with their academics
demonstrate that balance as a strategy is a complex and dynamic process necessary for success as leaders within PWO’s. Additionally, they balanced the individual social relationships they developed within the organizations they led and the networks they developed.

**Finding a Voice**

Finding a Voice emerged as a process whereby participants, through awareness of inequality or lack of social justice, look to develop the skills to make themselves heard to a predominately White audience. The concept of Voice emerged from the data through a variety of participant references that contains two distinct dimensions: not feeling heard and finding an assertive voice.

**Not Feeling Heard**

Participant One felt isolation and frustration as the result of being the only one opposed to SGA legislation that would, in his opinion, hurt the African American community in a way White students did not understand. He said, “I think they will say that it was in the best interest of the community, but in a, I just think that, there was bias just because they wanted it and I was the only voice not for it. So they were looking at me like, why are we listening to you?”

Participant Seven had a similar story. He was isolated from his White SGA peers because he was the only one in opposition of a major schedule change and he drew criticism from his Black peers because he could not stop it:

Most of the things that they (the Black community) didn’t like, I voted in opposition of. I can’t really think of a specific example, oh I do, I got it. We
voted on a new summer school schedule. I didn’t know we were changing our summer school schedule, but they said because, I think the purpose behind that bill was so that we can allow students to enjoy their summer and not be forced to take a class for the whole summer. So basically, I think the way it’s set up for this year, people are going to have maybe about a month to learn a whole subject that they had a whole semester to learn, and that’s not really convenient, at all. So for people who are trying to take summer school classes and that’s the only time your class is available, how are you going to learn a class in 4 weeks as opposed to a whole semester, or at least 2 months as it usually would be for summer school. So a lot of (Black) people were really, the money first of all is an issue because it’s still the same amount of money, so you pay almost $2000-3000 for a month, that’s not really (reasonable), it’s kind of hard to sell your parents on that, you know. So that was one thing that my friends didn’t like and I said well, we voted on it and they’re like well you should have, I said it’s only me, all I can say is no and that’s just one no, you know.

In another situation, Participant Four was not heard in his opposition to changes in Greek Life housing that considerably impacted housing for Black fraternities. It was a turning point for him as his frustration with being ignored encouraged him to speak out. Even though the outcome was not what he wanted, he persisted:

Let me see, well this wasn’t, well it kind of was, well this was Greek life, not Black Greek life, it was just Greek life as a whole. We were discussing housing, they’re trying to build new houses and I don’t remember what we were even
arguing about, but I just remember having that feeling, everyone was talking like around me, and I was like, I’m part of this discussion and I should be being an advocate for black Greeks who don’t have as many people who are going to have to be able to fill the houses. I was like, no, here’s how I feel, you know, it’s kind of a rush I guess you could say. You feel that, oh, okay, enough is enough, let me at em!

Frustration from being the voice for an entire community and the lack of informed decision making on the part of White leaders in the PWO’s lead to participants expressing that they did not feel heard when they spoke up, even though they held prominent leadership positions. As the result of situations such as those represented above, participants experienced pressure to advocate for all students who were not well represented by campus leadership. Developing an assertive voice was a skill that participants focused on with great intention.

Finding an Assertive Voice

Significant to their development as leaders in PWO’s was the process of finding an assertive voice. This proved to be an important skill for both the leader as an individual and for the African American community they felt compelled to represent to the broader campus. Participant Seven summarized how he felt in trying to find his voice:

Um, I was really nervous about speaking out, especially in opposition to certain things, which is why I wanted to do it in the beginning, because I felt like we need a voice, I think, I was, I became the voice for the Black community for (the University) and on SGA at that point, and I was really apprehensive of speaking
out and thinking that I’m going to mess up, or I really don’t know what to say, but I mean, that’s why I did it, so I need to start saying something, or I’m just really wasting my time here. So that was something I was fearful of. I guess just because all eyes would be on you, you have to stand up, state your name and everything, afraid to fumble over words, because if you fumble over words a lot of people think that, oh, they’re scared, or you know, they don’t know what they’re talking about. So just thinking about things that people… I’m thinking that people are going to think about me (negatively) as I’m speaking. You know, it was kind of terrifying. I got over it.

The strategy of Participant Nine was not to let himself be passive and to push his opinions. While his easy going nature was helpful in that it gave him a positive attitude toward his leadership, it did not serve him as well in advocating for the needs of his peers:

Um, like I said I have a really easy going personality, so sometimes that can turn into an overly passive sort of thing. You know where I might not speak up about my ideas, or I might not be as assertive as I should be, so I end up just costing along with things I don’t think would be the best way to go, or the best route and stuff. I’m just working on it. Just deciding on something that I want to be done and voicing my opinion on it. Saying I think this would be the best course of action and if it goes, then that’s cool, if it doesn’t go that’s cool, but at least I got my voice out there; at least I got my opinion.

Participant Three was a bit more idealistic about forming a voice and referred to it
in more collective terms commenting on the power of a united voice:

    I mean leadership isn’t really positional, you know what I mean? If we had 12-20 black young men who said I want to get together and we’re going to focus on this and we’re going to get it done, not because we have this position, but because we collectively our voices and our knowledge base and our might is just stronger than anything that could stop us. I think that would be really, really powerful.

In his reflection, Participant Eight talked about his journey to be heard and how he found his voice:

    I don’t try to overrule the group, I just, I’m kind of a laid back person, but when I feel a certain way about something I’ll put my input in or when I know something is wrong I’ll tell them, this is not right. That happened several times with the group. I found several errors and I put my input in, I guess they found it as a surprise.

    Participant One used the advice of his grandmother, staying confident and speaking out:

    In (PWO name) for example, if I have something to say I’m not hush mouth like my grandmother would say, I say what I have to say, you’re going to hear my voice, I’m not afraid of you, we got here on the same merit, I might even be smarter than you, so, we are the same person.

    Participant Four took a similar approach, adding that he carefully reflected on his purpose and used passion to help him overcome the uneasiness of speaking out in a PWO:
But eventually you come to a point where this, I joined this so I could change it, so I’m standing up, I’m raising my hand, this is what I have to say. I think free printing is necessary, whatever you feel like the topic at hand may be. If you just feel strongly about it, and sometimes it’s not even just, you have to feel that passion to lead, when sometimes you have to grab the walls and just do it. Like I’m the man, or I’m the woman, or whatever it is. These are my feelings, I’m not holding back, I’m not biting my tongue anymore. Just stand up and do it.

Participant Three talked about his transformation to becoming a voice for the community which resulted from his engagement in leadership:

I do recognize that with my position last year, there were certain responsibilities, and some of those were to speak out and to lead and to be that voice for students and I think that I did that effectively. But, you know, I think there is a real difference between a leader in the sense of their life’s goal and mission is to be that face, that voice, be that kind of catalyst and to be that kind of public entity that everyone looks to. That was not really me before I became SGA president.

Participant One stated a clear and simple goal that effectively represented both why the leaders searched for a voice, and the function of that voice; fairness and democracy. He simply stated, “…so when a decision is made, everyone can feel like their voices were heard.”

All participants expressed that they were challenged by not feeling heard and that this was a catalyst for developing their voice within predominately White organizations. In order to develop as leaders participants needed to find an assertive voice in order to
advocate for themselves and the communities they represented. While the need to find that voice came from diverse motivations, the process of finding a voice certainly emerged as a necessity. The function of this new found voice was ultimately represent the various communities participants considered themselves to be members of; beginning with the African American community and moving toward representation of the larger campus community. Ultimately, this voice of representation became a hallmark of their identity as leaders.

Cross Cultural Reflection

Cross cultural reflection was another strategic process that emergent Black leaders engaged in on their path to leadership. Unlike other strategies that were a direct reaction to compensate for others behavior, cross cultural reflection was a more reflective process. This process required participants to examine the African American community with which they have strong ties and allegiance to as well as the broader campus community they were now beginning to engage with via their leadership. The process of cross cultural reflection consisted of two dimensions: (a) examining minority norms, and (b) questioning majority motives. Each of these dimensions was necessary to understand and successfully navigate the predominately White campus culture and the organizations they were leading.

Minority Norms

Perhaps as a result of having to set a standard of excellence and work hard for the change they wanted to see in their community, or perhaps because of the exposure to the vast need for Black representation in predominately White organizations; participants
began to question some of their own cultural norms once they began their involvement in a PWO. The researcher initially questioned whether the attributes described by participants should be labeled as norms or stereotypes. Many of the cultural issues discussed by participants were stereotypes they were battling to overcome as they emerged as leaders. The term norms was retained because the researcher believed that although stereotypical in nature, the participants believed that they were based in some part on reality.

Participants’ examination of these norms appeared to develop as a strategy to offset the observed differences between the way PWO’s function as compared to the Black organizations in which they were engaged. The questioning of norms often focused on use of time, efficiency, and commitment level of some Black students. The questioning process looked like an exploration of stereotypes that are based on same race peer behaviors that they are now observing first hand and needing to deal with the consequences as leaders. Often fueled by frustration, this questioning was not directly described as negative.

One observed point of frustration occurred when African American community members questioned why the Black leaders were working in the PWO. Another point of frustration was apathy on the part of Black men to issues that impacted the community. Participant One describes his feelings on the engagement of Black men:

I know this sounds very simple, but I want to get to the point where when you look at me you don’t see my skin, you see someone that is on his game, knows what’s he’s doing, going somewhere, focused, educated, oh yeah, and he’s Black
too. So that shouldn’t even be. I think that should be an afterthought, I mean it’s much easier said than done. I think Black men need to start demanding more of ourselves too, and stop settling and I can say that because I am a Black man and I know, I’ve seen them. I have cousins who have, are much smarter than me and have just wasted opportunity after opportunity and it’s time for us to take accountability and be the men who we’re supposed to be.

Participant Seven became more aware of the lack of representation in White organizations as he became increasingly involved, questioning the lack of direct support for his leadership in a PWO and how apathy and the behavior of some of his peers exacerbates the Black leadership gap:

I feel like people cast a lot of blame, they are more likely to say something negative than to praise you for what you do, there’s not a lot of, You did a good job or You know, I see you doing good and that’s good, I’m proud of you. Friends will express that to me but you know, I would say it’s less verbal gratification than most people would like. You mostly get complaints, well you all need to do this better or you all need to do that better, so I say, ‘Well why don’t you get on the executive board?’ ‘Oh, well I don’t have time for that.’ Or, ‘Are you a member?’ ‘No. Well you should be a member and then maybe you can change some things. ‘Oh no, I can’t deal with y’all’ or something. I feel with Black men we’re so concerned with not being considered gay or being considered soft, or not being strong, that we don’t smile. We try to look hard and mean when that’s not really strength in my opinion. Strength is being able to stand up and
talk in front of people, being able to walk down the street with their head held high, have a book bag on your back. I think that’s strength. So that’s how I feel about it.

Participants frequently mentioned racial stereotypes and jokes they began to see as holding some sense of truth to them. Often the men joked about talking with their Black peers about these stereotypes. Participant Five spoke about differences between cultures regarding time expectations, simultaneously questioning his assumptions:

I’ll say this, we’ll joke about CP time, colored people time, and if I want them to be somewhere at 3, I’ll say it starts at 2:30, you know. But I guess in my organization. I don’t really do that, because one I know my brothers, and then like I know I do it, so I’m accused of it too, but punctuality I guess is more relevant in White organizations, but that could be racist I guess. I guess my fraternity reminders are (an example), I do a lot of reminders and I have to contact people individually. Like if I sent out a mass text or mass email, everybody doesn’t respond. In other organizations it’s a lot easier to get people to respond. But with that being said with everything that I’m saying I think some of it is because you know I know these guys.

Similar comments were made by Participant Seven regarding time, structure, and engagement:

I do feel like there’s a difference between the two organizations. The predominantly White organization is more structured, I feel. There are not a lot of jokes going around, most of the time people are focused on whatever they have to
do and they get in there and get out. With Black organizations people show up late, sometimes people go there just you know, my friends are there so they think it’s another time to socialize and don’t really take advantage of the time that we have to discuss the issues that are at hand.

I’m trying to develop programs around that, getting people to understand that you can make a difference and that you need to become more active instead of just sitting back and watching things happen. Um, I really don’t know exactly why people just like to sit and be complacent. It might be they are comfortable, maybe they are afraid of what they don’t know about. If you’re a junior and you’ve never been a part of an organization, maybe you’re afraid to lead an organization or there’s a problem because you’ve never done it, but there’s a time to start things, and why not start, you know. I feel like with Black organizations sometimes there’s only about 20% of the people who are in the membership actually doing the work and everybody else benefits from it. I would say that in White organizations I do see that a little bit, but not as much.

Punctuality, efficiency, and engagement emerged as particularly important to leaders. It was also apparent that at this stage in their leadership development the men became very concerned with how they represented themselves and their race in predominately White organizations. Participant Three reflected on how he gained increasing responsibility in a Black organization by being articulate and comfortable in front of large groups:
I think I was the emcee for one of the concerts, well the emcee that we had scheduled cancelled on us and someone from the group sort of had to emcee and kind of facilitate the concert, I stepped up and did it because everyone else was a little, well they weren’t shy, but they just weren’t very well spoken. And then kind of from there people were like, ‘Oh wow, he can kind of put sentences together that make sense, he’s kind of funny, this could be a good thing. Then from there I was asked to represent the group before SGA when we were trying to get some funding for something.

Participant One was unique in that later in his involvement with White organizations he felt that he was criticized by same race peers due to his success. He alluded to this being a cultural norm. Although other participant stories, as indicated above, reflected indifference or support toward leadership in PWO’s no other stories indicated malice:

Black people are like crabs in a barrel. If you get up to somewhere they will pull you down, they don’t want you, I’m telling you, it’s the truth. So I’ve seen it first hand at (University). I used to be like mom, you’re talking all this like, yeah, yeah, yeah, okay, all this stuff. Got to (university) and it was real. Like I’ve seen it from the time I got here and I’ve seen it up until this point.

Although from the beginning participants appeared to be culturally aware to the researcher, the engagement in leadership positions in PWO’s brings on cultural reflection that both question their own cultures actions and assumptions as well as those of the dominant White culture they are becoming more engaged with. Participants did not really
identify with White culture any more than they had in the past, rather just wanting more leaders from within their own community to engage with the campus community. During this period of cultural reflection the emerging leaders also questioned the motives and structures of the greater campus community.

Cross Cultural Reflection: Majority Motives

While participants clearly questioned their same race cultural norms with regard to leadership and their college experience, they also called into question some conventions within the dominant White culture, particularly the racial bias that occurs and the façade of equality that is often proudly touted on many predominately White campuses. Within this theme occasional conflicting statements occurred regarding race and bias. Participant Four provided a reflection on how there is a White bias that occurs ‘behind closed doors’. In his statement he seems somewhat conflicted on the impact of racism:

I think everybody treats me equal. You know, I do get, I get preferential treatment, but at the same time I probably get a little bit, discriminated against as well because, you know that, oh yeah I love (Participant Four), he’s so cool, he’s so awesome. But at the same time I get passed over. (Participant Four’s) a cool guy, but you already know him as executive secretary leading this thing. So, I mean, that’s always behind closed doors, I’d probably never hear that, I just know, you know, for all I know that might not be going on because it’s never even come to my face, but I have had racist experiences here, but you know...
Participant One explained how he was passed over for an invitation-only leadership position because of racial bias and fear. Participant One was the most outspoken of all participants when it came to issues of racism and bias:

I think it’s a combination of the type of Black man I am, because there are two, there’s him that got in, and there’s me. And I don’t think they could have taken two Black people (in the organization). I don’t think they are ready for that at (university). As much as they say we’ve progressed, (university) is not ready for a lot of things and I think that the person they took was the kind they wanted, that was just going to be there. And I’m not going to be there because they probably were afraid I would’ve tried to take over and be president or something, and I think (allowing Participant One into another slightly less prestigious PWO) was there thing, well, we can let them into this and they (Participant One as a Black man) can do a lot in there. If a Black man was president of (the prestigious PWO) , (the college founder) would have raised from the dead!

He went on to comment on the appearance of fairness White culture puts out for public display, while simultaneously supporting rules/policy to promote White privilege:

So we (Black people) have the tools that you have, but they put us in jail. We do stupid things, but the rules have been made so that, it was made by White people so they know how to navigate it and they know how to get all around to it and through it.

Participant Nine had a much more subtle description. Notice that careful language he uses introducing the topic of racial bias, possibly because the interviewer is White, but
the researcher also noted that participants across the board did not want to unfairly accuse someone of bias when they were not absolutely certain that was the case. More frequently they dismissed it as ignorance, although either way the net result is the same for the leaders:

I kind of experienced it; I guess a more recent example with a group project I had in one of my classes. Me being a nursing major, being Black and a guy, is kind of like a, well, I don’t know what to call it, but it’s interesting. We had a group project and the girls, they kind of, I guess you can say, underestimated me because I was black and a guy, so…

Um, I would have to say probably be more me being Black, because in my class it’s only three of us total (Black students). We started out with five and two of them dropped out already. So, it’s like, I guess it’s just me being Black that plays more over than me being a male. But, I guess they kind of underestimate me, they kind of gave me the smaller roles in the group project, so I noticed that. And once I got the smaller roles they saw how quickly I got it done and how well I did it, so I guess they were shocked at the end.

The first leadership position in a PWO for Participant Eight was somewhat of a surprise. He assumed that the committee for the MLK celebration on campus would be a Black organization, not a White one. His assumptions reveal one of the more obvious ways racial assumptions impact perceptions of organizations and their leaders:

It was a big shock. I thought this was kind of like a small project, but when I saw how many people were involved in it, and, I thought it would be predominantly
Black professors or administrators, but the majority of the council or whatever you want to call it was White. So that was a big shock.

As he became involved in and led other White organizations he noted:

But in my cases I never had a negative response. I kind of always played the fact that we all make mistakes, kind of that rule. They didn’t make me feel like I was a terrible person, but they like kind of helped me correct myself. Stuff like that, I didn’t have any bad experiences.

The fact that Participant Eight acknowledges that he felt others noticed his mistakes and that he tried not to attribute them to his race illustrates an organizational dynamic that is somewhat tenuous because of racial undertones and assumptions. These kinds of subtle situations (and some not so subtle ones) resulted in participants commonly questioning their culture and the majority campus culture in order find some sort of equilibrium. This questioning was consistent and well integrated into their leadership in PWO’s, particularly early on in their leadership when the need to understand racial issues within a particular organization was considerably more salient.

In questioning the actions and motives of his White peers in SGA creating policy and procedures that were biased against Black students the researcher questioned Participant Three on whether it was intentional or not. His response was clear and confident:

I think they are oblivious. I really think they are oblivious. But I feel like they are, some of them are maybe a little, may pay attention to it and notice it, but I think a lot of times they are just oblivious to the whole situation, to the whole, not
power struggle, but the whole (impact of their actions) in the situation. I don’t think they pay attention to that.

While participants certainly were aware of the bias in White society prior to their engagement in leadership positions, becoming embedded in the system prompted them to contemplate exactly what was occurring and how it was occurring. Despite the negative nature of such encounters, participants were unwavering in their commitment to leadership in these organizations, a key characteristic of their leadership and success. As part of their development as leaders all had to learn to represent their culture and interests in organizations that were not hostile to, but certainly not focused on, social justice for all members of the campus community. Critical to this was the development of a skill set that allowed them to represent their community while simultaneously not being viewed as having an agenda and alienating constituencies. The strategy of cross cultural reflection and questioning the role of bias and their treatment by White peers allowed them to perceive the many threats to their leadership development.

**Summary of Strategies for Leadership Success**

Participants engaged in a variety of strategies to assist them in developing as successful leaders including: setting a standard of excellence, vigilance, a positive focus, and balance. There were two additional multi-dimensional themes, finding a voice and cross cultural reflection that were particularly important in Black leaders navigating PWO culture and their ability to represent the African American community to the broader campus. These strategies served as the backbone of how participants overcame challenges as they emerged as leaders. The strategies employed to become successful
were the reactions to perceptions of bias and helped participants counteract the many subtle threats to their leadership development. Development and mastery of strategies set the foundation for the finals phase of the BMLEPWC; Establishing Leader Identity in Predominantly White Organizations.
Establishing Leader Identity in Predominantly White Organizations

As Black leaders emerged in PWO’s, they drew on their sense of community and felt a strong need to give back via service and helping other emerging Black leaders. This was a significant part of their identity as leaders and although it was consistent throughout their leadership development, it became increasingly prominent as they progressed in Predominately White organizations. This service and influence expanded as the result of participant’s unique ability to navigate the two cultures that exerted the most influence on them as Black individuals. The influence of these cultures was dynamic and varied with the environments within which leaders were operating at any given time. As such the ability for leaders to sense and adjust to the particular cultural environment within which they were working was an important part of their leadership identity development.

Figure 4.8- Establishing Leader Identity in Predominantly White Organizations

Establishing Leader Identity in a Predominately White Organization is the final phase of the BMLEPWC model and consisted of several dimensional elements best
explained as defining characteristics: Cultivating Respect, Social Justice, Representing, and Broadening the Scope of Community from African American to campus wide. These defining characteristics were the outcome of threats to leadership emergence unique to Black men on White campuses and the resulting strategies they employ to be successful.

**Cultivating Respect**

Respect was a significant theme for participants on their path to leadership. As the theme developed it showed a two pronged process: respect within the community and respect within the predominately White organization. Each was seen as essential by participants and the process by which they developed this respect varied by participant. Respect was also significant as it related to the way participants viewed their mentors and thus the way they wanted their mentees to view them.

In establishing himself as a leader in the residence halls, Participant Six knew from a bad experience the previous year exactly what he had to do to gain the respect of the students on his floor and become a respected leader:

> I had to set the ground rules and set things in place and let residents know this is how it’s going to go and be able to establish that relationship with my co-PL so we didn’t have a quite a bit of frustrating relationship that I had my first time as PL. Anyway, so that leadership experience, I kind of still carry that same model of being a role model and if they have any questions my door was open to help them out.

As an example of how he went about gaining respect, Participant Three had to confront the University President immediately upon being elected to office something he
remembered vividly. This action proved to provide him with respect in two ways: from the president whom he reported appreciated his candor, and from SGA and the student population who did not necessarily want this initiative to proceed:

I’ve never been combative, but I’ve also never, I’ve always come into a meeting wanting to accomplish something and I’ve always done that. So, I remember meeting with (University President) for the first time and we were talking about this poor little initiative and, you know, it was a frustration for me because my predecessor went, and announced it, but it was a failure as an initiative. I clearly am not in it, but, when I came in, he was expecting me to be supportive of it because the prior SGA was and you know, I had to be very clear with him that this was just something that was a waste of money, and it wasn’t easy for me to tell him that and it wasn’t necessarily easy for him to swallow. But I think right now he understands that this was not something that SGA supported.

In talking about setting a good example for his same race peers, Participant Seven talked about commanding respect, contrary to common stereotypes of Black men who think strength is respect. He believes his actions bring respect through setting a good example:

Strength is being able to stand up and talk in front of people, being able to walk down the street with their head held high, have a book bag on your back. I think that’s strength. So that’s how I feel about it.

Participant One’s definition of leadership involved respect, something that he values from his community and the student body as whole. He spoke with pride as he
described how he had earned the respect of his peers:

So a leader is someone that the people respected, that was hard working, held themselves to a higher standard, and always pushed themselves to be better.

He continued to describe the levels of respect he has received from his Black organization leadership vs. PWO leadership, concluding that there is more respect for PWO leadership:

It’s a different kind of success (in a White organization), so I think it’s sort of I have arrived in the whole world type of thing, rather than if I’m in a Black organization it’s like I’m president of my peers, like they thought enough of me and respect me enough to be their leader. It’s a sense of accomplishment just because it’s a leadership position, but it’s the top leadership position and you know you are the face of this organization so you speak for, you might represent 9 different groups, but you’re the face of all the Black Greeks on campus, so I think, it’s a very big deal, but I think more so accomplishments in White organizations, seem to gain even more respect.

Participant Two felt that he was equally respected for his work in both types of organizations with his same race peers placing additional value on his mentor/role model status:

I think they both show respect in similar ways, but in addition, the Black community sees me more as a role model than the White community does. Well I guess I don’t really know, but, because I haven’t talked to people about it, but I
know the Black community has said I see you as a role model, or I want to be involved like you.

Participant Two also spoke about how the type of organization you are engaged in makes a difference in the level of respect you get:

I think the sense of respect has definitely changed. I know being involved last year versus being involved now, whether it be the caliber of organizations that I’m involved in or I don’t know what it is, but I feel that there’s more of a respect among people older than me and people younger than me. You know last year when I was involved I was just involved, but now when people see my name with (orientation) under it and all the other organizations under it there’s more of a sense of respect.

Ultimately respect was a trademark of achieving identity as a leader in both predominately White and Black organizations. Leaders were conscious of their status among all of their peers and worked hard to achieve an identity that afforded them the respect needed to represent their communities and work toward enacting positive change.

Seeking Social Justice

Participants consistently referenced the idea of social change. With such an emphasis on serving the community, it was not surprising that there was significant thematic emphasis on acting as an agent of change within the community. Participants discussed looking for opportunities to make changes, keeping bad incidents from being repeated, and using their leadership to advocate for equality between Black and White.
One participant defined leadership in terms of taking charge of campus and the college experience; others alluded to using their positions to advance the status of the African American community. All participants indicated that leadership was intended to make change and therefore it was the responsibility of Black leaders not only to advocate for changes to improve the African American position on campus but also to bring new leaders into predominately White organizations. The connection social change and motivation emerged as a very strong one, as was the connection to acting as a voice for the African American community (and other communities as well).

Participant Seven talked about why he chose student government as a place to focus his time and energy. The tentative language describing his feelings about it, reveal some challenges adjusting to the organization and making the impact he wanted to make:

I felt kind of positive in the beginning. Initially like when I thought about the idea, I felt positive about doing it. I felt like it was good and I’m willing to make the time commitment and be there, you know, whatever I feel is pertinent or valuable to us, I would let us know about it. I felt good about it, I wish more people would have done it because that’s the only way we can really make a change or something. If I’m voting against a bill because it’s just, I don’t think that it’d be best for like my community, I mean I’m pretty much the only one who can give that opinion. But other than that, I feel good with going there and putting the time in.

I was really nervous about speaking out, especially in opposition to certain things, which is why I wanted to do it in the beginning, because I felt like we need
a voice, I think, I was, I become the voice for the black community for (University 1) and on SGA at this point, and I was really apprehensive of speaking out and thinking that I’m going to mess up, or I really don’t know what to say, but I mean, that’s why I did it, so I need to start saying something, or I’m just really wasting my time here.

For Participant 2, engagement in a PWO had a similar focus, with his desire to help Black students become equal to their White peers:

I think a lot of what the issue is, is the fact that African American students as a whole are kind of still thinking, ‘How can I get caught back up? How can I get ahead? A lot of that is you have to have those leaders to help bring everybody up with them and it’s not, we’re not kind of, I guess we’re still not at the same level as the majority, and I think a lot of our conversations are how can we get ahead, how can we get caught back up, how can we be ‘equal’. So now that you’re in that position you can make that change so it doesn’t keep happening like that.

Participant Four had a very strong commitment to social justice and advocacy that influenced his decision to become involved and shaped his actions as a leader, culminating with the realization:

I just think, like serving as senior class treasurer you realize there are opportunities to help. Cuz, like I feel like a lot of people, there main mission on this earth is to help people, give back, to leave the world in a better place than they found it. I definitely feel like that’s for me. And I feel like, being a leader, like a lot of people lead for the wrong reasons, like just to be the face of the
organization, but like I feel like now I lead because it’s good to do this, it’s a
definite way that you can help out, you can be the change that you want to see. If
you want to start doing this, then run for elections and start doing it. I feel like I
learned more that you can do what you want to do, you can implement the ideas
that you have, like if you feel like there needs to be change, it’s not enough to just
sit back and complain about it, now you have to do it.

Participant Four also articulated a definition of leadership that was beyond status within
the organization to include one’s ability to make a difference; describing the position
more as the vehicle for change as opposed to leadership as the end goal:

   It is more than just being in that position. It is, and seeing the value of people
   being able to take charge of their campus and college experience, people being
   able to be engaged in their community and take on issues that, take on and
   understand issues that have not been taken on or understood before. It’s more
   than just that, you know. I would have done that with this position or without it I
   think, if I would have been that same way.

   A commitment to social justice formed a key part of participants’s identity as
leaders, yet just wanting to make the change was not enough. They had to actually work
their way into predominately White organizations. A task that proved challenging given
the underrepresentation on campus and the racial and cultural bias that can be found at
predominately White institutions.
Representing

Representing emerged as one of the most fully developed themes as Black men established their leadership identity. Students discussed the variety of groups they represented as they emerged as leaders. Participant statements such as “recruiting Black leaders”, “using relationships to advance the community”, “going out of the way to help other African American men”, and “bringing friends into the PWO” all indicated actions to advance social justice through their representation as leaders. The above participant statements further illustrated the interrelation of social justice and representation in the leadership of participants in this study. Finding a voice and subsequently representing are processes brought about by exposure to, and awareness of, bias made apparent in participant engagement in leadership activities. Representing was a theme from which three dimensional categories emerged; the African American community, multiple groups, and acting as a cultural liaison.

Representing: The African American Community

Analysis of participant stories revealed a sense of obligation to lead for the purpose of assisting others in the community. This purpose was either by creating opportunities for other Black men to emerge as leaders, or through advocating for African American community needs to the general population. Participants looked for ways they could best represent their communities, people, and interests.

Participant Four took on a leadership position that required he directly advocate for and represent his community:
I started out in council of diversity affairs; I don’t even know what you call it. I was a representative, or member, member at large or something like that. I started there to help get ideas out there about being a voice for the students who maybe aren’t necessarily coming to the student government open houses or anything, so I just tried to be a voice and advocate for the community.

He continued to explain the philosophy many Black leaders have on representing their community:

We (Black leaders) just try to make sure that students do know our face and do know that there are Black students at (University), know that we do have just as much fun as anyone else. We get our education, we are involved, we are good people. We just try to make sure that everyone out there knows, because a lot of people, in the background of their minds, especially in the Black community will be like, (University), you know everybody up there is one race, everybody is Go (University mascot)! We want to show them that there is another side and that they can be a part of the (University) community.

Commenting further on his role (and his passion for acting as) as a representative of his community Participant Four added:

Also I see just other people on campus. I see other people doing the same thing I’m doing, being a leader in a predominantly White organization and being a member of predominantly Black organization and leading at both. You know that just inspires me, oh if she can do it, I can do it, if he can do it, I can do it. So, um, I definitely feel like they are my peers in addition to some of the brothers
here have helped me out. Then like for every person I see, like I said I’m a mentor for incoming freshman, for everyone I see, he’s struggling, or he might not be doing as well academically, that’s an added incentive to me, so that’s added motivation. I’ll be like well you have to go forth and be the best that you can. So maybe I’ll be an inspiration to him.

Whereas others, such as Participant Seven worked to build representation in a slightly less formal manner, using his position and influence to assist others; encouraging and engaging his Black peers:

I try to just to encourage our friends. I know I have a friend who wasn’t a part of anything, and we came from the same high school, wasn’t part of any organizations freshman year, but by sophomore year they joined one, and this year they are part of 3, I’m not saying that I directly influenced him, but I know that I know I had some impact on him joining organizations to some certain extent. So you just never know who you might encourage and inspire as well.

Participant Eight echoed this less formal representation:

I just, being at (University) I just like people to see, especially Black people, coming from my high school, it was a select few that succeeded and then there were some who didn’t, so it was like, I just want to help people out.

Participant 2 believed that like himself, Black leaders are always looking for ways to increase their representation on campus:

Black leaders always, well, maybe not always, but I can almost guarantee that almost always are thinking about other Black people that are following them
when they’re leading. Just because Black leaders, especially in White organizations are hard to come by, so they’re always thinking about what other African Americans are going to be following them. The next Black leader— they’re thinking about them and how they’ll lead. I honestly don’t know, I don’t know if White leaders are thinking about White people.

Participant Two further reflected on his experiences and how he encourages and represents his community, which has grown beyond just the University he attends:

Now that I think about it, a lot of times when I’m doing things I’m thinking, okay, how does this set an example for my brother or how does this set an example for my cousins or other Black people. So I guess now that I just thought about it, that is kind of an issue that probably needs to be addressed in our community.

The researcher asked what it would look like to address this issue. Participant Two replied:

…I guess just them acknowledging some of the things that I’ve done and just having those conversations about goals that they have for the future and goals that I have for the future and how those kind of line up, and for the ones that do line up, conversations about the need for student leaders and the need for people to represent the Black community in different organizations.

After being elected as SGA President, Participant Three noticed the impact his presence as a Black man in the election had on other Black men in the community, normalizing the pursuit of leadership:
I think that there was sense after, and I heard this from a number of people, there was a sense after I won that you know, wow, I guess if he can do it, I guess maybe I can, so there was a lot of interest in SGA and I think there’s a lot more. I mean when I ran there were also, I think 12-16 black men who just, they popped up on the ballot as well. I didn’t really know them, I know them now. They know me to an extent, but they were, I think they were inspired to a certain degree. And then there’s that sense of ‘He’s normal’.

Representing: Multiple Groups

Each leader interviewed discussed how they did not only represent the Black community but also that they represented multiple groups with their leadership. Participants repeatedly spoke of increasing diversity and building extensive networks of different people as mentioned earlier. As such participants were often in situations where they were responsible for representing multiple constituencies, even though all leaders identified with the African American community as their primary community.

Other groups that participants felt they represented ranged from specific majors, to men, to other underrepresented populations, to the larger college community. Each participant felt the obligation to represent multiple communities as they progressed, and to that end advocated for issues from the perspective that there is no singular or unified group that leaders represent, but a multiplicity of groups that have different needs. This is in contrast to the often singular focus participants encountered in first entering the PWO’s they participated in.

Participant Two’s statement on selecting an organization and how he qualified the
scope of community it important as it is limiting it to race, illustrating the leadership of participants is multidimensional:

A Black male is not going to want to be in an organization that’s not going to be of some benefit to him or the Black community or something that he represents. It doesn’t even have to be the Black community, it could be Atlanta, or his hometown, or his home country, you know, when you advertise you have to find common ground, it has to be even exchange.

The connection between the emphasis on community and diversity came together in the following statement by Participant One on the importance of inclusion and equality in leadership:

So I think being in this position has allowed me to see that leaders of organizations are basically leaders of communities, so you have to make sure the whole community is actively engaged and involved. So like I said, when things are done, the ideas are passed around, that everyone feels like they had a hand in it.

Participant Five highlighted the conflict that results from being a representative of elite campus leaders in a PWO, and supporting/representing his Black fraternity at events. Of note was the advice of a mentor to represent the organization that will have the most impact, not the one where he feels the most connected (his fraternity). Exemplifying the focus on impact these leaders have and the respect and trust they show for their mentors. This situation could have easily resulted in the label of a sellout if not handled carefully:
Actually, this past week with (prestigious organization) our advisor is in it- he’s Black, and next week there’s like, it’s our week for the fraternity and we have a lot of events going on that week, and I was talking to my advisor and I was like I’m not going to be able to go to any of these (prestigious organization) events and I was trying to get his opinion since he is in (prestigious organization) and in my fraternity, and he said something, you need to be at the (prestigious organization) events because it’s only for a short period of time and it’s important and we need to show representation there. So, I thought about that, and I thought that is right. And I’ve talked to all my brothers and I told them what’s going on and they completely understand, I still feel bad because I want to go to the events.

Participant Three attributed his success as SGA president to his ability to represent multiple groups, the theme of voice clearly present in his statement:

On the surface, it doesn’t hurt that I speak to several different underrepresented groups on campus who may have not felt like they had a voice before.

Commenting on the challenge of representing multiple groups Participant Seven indicated the bias associated with a leader being one dimensional and representing only race. He also carefully admits that it somewhat dilutes the racial message:

I think the main difference with representing my major (as opposed to race), the only word I can think of is like no judgment. Representing your race is kind of already biasing some kind of opposition and saying that you are only for a side, even though, I’m honestly doing what I feel is what I want to do. Just saying that you’ll represent your race or the population that you most identify with, you know
can kind of be seen as an opposing force or maybe a little bit negative, or I’m only in it for me. But I’m also representing my major and my college, just, it (representing other things) balances the playing field, but it makes it (the race representation) less forceful I guess.

*Representing: Acting as a Cross Cultural Liaison*

Through their leadership in predominately White organizations participants served as ambassadors between White and Black organizations and cultures. Representing was therefore multi-dimensional; to inform the White community on issues related to the Black community and to inform the Black community about greater campus community issues that will impact them. Participant Two had a very positive outlook on representing his community:

I think you’re always going to have those people that are always going to say, ‘Oh it’s cuz you’re Black, is that the only reason their asking me (to participate)?’ But how else are you going to get the Black persons perspective if you don’t ask someone because they’re Black? I mean you’re doing a study, and you won’t know unless you ask someone because they’re Black.

Participant Four recalled his leadership on the diversity committee. His focus was clearly to give a voice to members of the Black community on the predominately White campus:

I was a representative, or member, member at large or something like that. I started there to help get ideas out there about being a voice for the students who
maybe aren’t necessarily coming to the student government open houses or anything, so I just tried to be a voice and advocate for the community.

Participant Nine provided an excellent example of the subtle ways Black leaders inform the White community on cultural differences or misperceptions:

You know, I guess, maybe with the stereotypes and everything it’s perceived that maybe you won’t have contributions just coming in, maybe you won’t be thinking along the same lines as the other White kids. Maybe they, like the cultural thing, maybe they are thinking that one thing should happen, but you’re automatically going to be antagonistic and think that it should go another way. Or that you’re ideas are going to be not as good as everyone else’s. But if you come in and you establish yourself early on, you know, you let them know that you were selected, you can contribute and everything. It all changes, you know.

On a policy issue, Participant Five had to explain to his White peers that a SGA policy was going to have a differential impact on Black and White students:

For example we voted that the new class of 2013, their criteria for like Suma Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude will be 2.2 points higher, which you know, minority students, if you’re striving for that you need to know that you need to step your game up that much more like for the incoming freshman and sophomores. So just being aware and getting the things that maybe the White community isn’t necessarily aware of.

Participant Seven was simultaneously involved in Black and White organizations so that he could help his peers by communicating issues that impacted their community.
In this case there was a need for a student organization that was going unnoticed by the campus and his peers due to lack of information:

I wanted to be on the Executive Board of BSU because I just feel like the Black population at (University) is just kind of behind, in a sense. We found out last year that we were the only college in our conference, that didn’t have a Black Student Union and that was just totally not known to us. I mean, if you don’t know better, you can’t do any better, so now that we know that we decided to form the organization and make it. You know it was actually spearheaded by the Black alumni council at (University). So they talked to the students and said you know, we need you all to establish something.

On another occasion, Participant Seven had to act as a liaison between Black peers and SGA on issues of resources and policy:

Minority students, like do use things on campus more, then their predominantly White counterparts. Like I think we do care about free printing and what the bus route is and what places we can get to without driving to/from with the car. So just things like that are valid and important to us. And also we talk about, giving organizations money, um, many times when that goes on the table people are asking well why are we giving this organization this amount of money as opposed to that amount of money, and you know, I’m able, you know, if it’s organizations that I feel is like a minority organization that didn’t get their fair share, I’d be the one to ask, well you know, why did they not get half of what they asked for.
Looking for explanations instead of people just passing it off. Just making sure everybody is taken account for and looked after.

Participant One recounted his role and frustrations with not being heard as a liaison when there was a policy being proposed that adversely impacted the Black community more than the rest of the campus community. A situation that many participants experienced regularly:

So I think they will say that it (the policy to raise the GPA for Greek students) was in the best interest of the (Greek) community, but, I just think that, there was bias just because they wanted it and I was the only voice not for it. So they were looking at me like, why are we listening to you?

…I even brought up the fact that we have programs here at (University) to, summer programs, free college programs that give access to African American students. Obviously (University) sees that these kids have not even seen a college campus before. Like statistics that say we have to compare our GPAs to non-affiliated African American students, well, the fraternities average a 2.9 GPA, but non-affiliated African American males are getting a 2.3-2.4, how can you raise the GPA?

The variety of ways participants represented communities was a hallmark of their leadership, giving it purpose and focus, and working for the change they set out to make. This additional responsibility was one that had to be actively managed and balanced, making representation a key feature of the leadership identity of Black leaders in predominantly White organizations.
Broadening the Scope of Community: From African American to Campus Wide

Broadening the scope of community from African American to a more inclusive and diverse campus wide view was a developmental process that occurred simultaneously as Black men engaged with their African American peers and community, were introduced to mentors, and eventually to leadership through their individual mentor networks. The representation that developed served to advance participants’ focus on social justice and diversity. This process represented a developmental expansion of perspective. This process also represented a realization that if, as leaders, these Black men wanted to serve the African American community and impact change for African Americans on predominately White campuses, they must do so within the majority campus culture. Engagement in the majority campus culture to serve the community was an active choice participants made. This broader perspective demonstrated growth and development of the participants as individuals and as leaders on campus. Whether connecting African American and majority communities or connecting multiple underrepresented communities; participants expressed the common goal of inclusiveness and information sharing across cultures.

A comparison of participant statements illustrates the shift in thinking about community from African American to the greater campus as the leaders became more involved in their respective positions. Many of these statements have been previously cited. The intention of the researcher is to illustrate the growth in community perspective by presenting participants’ leadership references to community early and later in their development.
Participant Four described his first leadership experience in a Black organization early in his college career as a grounding place:

A lot of times, things like (organization name) that I’m a part of, I felt like, uh well, you know, I felt like this is a good way for me to stay true to my roots, stay grounded. It’s kind of like a home away from home, and I felt that that was always good.

Participant Four’s discussion of a later leadership opportunity on some of his work in a different organization revealed movement away from the grounding he initially described. Although he was still describing a Black organization in this example, his concept of community was much greater:

We have phone-a-thons, we visit high schools, and we just try to make sure that students do know our face and do know that there are Black students at (University One), know that we do have just as much fun as anyone else. We get our education, we are involved, we are good people. We just try to make sure that everyone out there knows, because a lot of people, in the background of their minds, especially in the Black community will be like, (University), you know everybody up there is one race, everybody is Go (mascot). We want to show them that there is another side and that they can be a part of the (University) community.

Participant Two described in detail his definition of community for the researcher:

When I referred to community I was (initially) talking about the African American community obviously, but it’s kind of like a group of people that share
a common history, common experiences, look like you, talk like you, act like you type of thing.

Near the end of the interview he was asked about his goals for leading in a predominately White organization. Again he had not left the Black organizations out of his vision, just incorporated them into the broader campus perspective:

I want to see White people and the majority coming to some of the minority events and things like that. Like I know we have a Black leadership conference and it’s mostly Black people, but there are a lot of things to offer for, Whites, Asians, Indians, things like that. So I just want to see more, less segregated events in organizations on campus.

Participant Three described his initial intentions for his college experience. While he always intended to lead, the scope was focused on the African American community:

I recognized that I had a skill set that probably could be used to benefit my peers and the (African American) community, I never really have viewed myself as a leader and I still don’t really. So I’ve always wanted to be a good student and a good peer and good friend. But every year there are about 40 or so people who just are convinced they’re going to be the next one (SGA President). And I just didn’t come in that way. You know, I came in really wanting to kind of get to know folks and just enjoy college and get decent enough grades to get a good job and then go out and be happy. You know, that was my goal for the 4 years
In describing his later experiences, Participant Three referred to underrepresented groups, marginalization, and making an impact on campus. This represented clear growth in his expectations for himself and the organizations he engaged in:

On the surface, it doesn’t hurt that I speak to several different underrepresented groups on campus who may have not have felt like they had a voice before. I mean when you talk about our, just physically, if someone who had, a parent who had not gone to college, or if they went to college they definitely didn’t have this certain, the experience that I had, when they see that, then they have a little bit of faith that maybe at (University Two) there is something going on that their child can make an impact. So I recognize that and you know, it’s fulfilling and rewarding to a certain degree. Even with our LGBT population, these people who have really not felt like they can be leaders and open, I don’t think I’ve been all that open, would call myself probably living in more of a glass closet than putting it out, but I think that those things are rewarding.

Early engagement for Participant One was centered on his mentor program. He realized he wanted to be a leader and believed his place was to be engaged in his community from the start:

I actually started out in (Black mentoring) program at (University One). So I already felt as though I was, when I got to (University One), I was top of the African American students here… So a lot of the guys that were on campus, I saw them doing things, mentoring, and they were in leadership positions, one of them was actually the President of (African American organization), so they were
very, very active, so I saw them and was like, this is obviously where I needed to be because I’m a leader.

Later, he described his introduction to the broader campus community through NPHD council. Seeing that the broader campus was also a community that would welcome him prompted Participant One to redefine his leadership in a broader context:

I got involved with our NPHD council which is our National PanHellenic council and I was a delegate at first. Then I was VP the next year, and I sort of got to see, from the president, how at (University One) they stress community, so it’s not isolating the historically Black fraternity/sororities, but making sure we’re involved in the whole group community which is predominantly White. I’m a leader within my Black community at (University One), but I’m also a leader at (University One).

Participant Nine described separation earlier on, and staying connected with same race peers:

At first it was almost a way for the Black students to kind of separate from campus life, to kind of say, we’re a community here within the greater community. But as I was in them (Black organizations) I realized that it’s just an effective way for people who were like minded, you know.

Participant Nine also described how he made decisions to engage in predominately White organizations, explaining he likes to be aware of activities in the larger campus context:

Me getting involved in (predominately White organization) is the same as a lot of other people. It’s the same as like everyone else I hang out with. But I think it’s
different because I try to diversify my options more than most people. Like I said a lot of my friends are staying with predominantly Black organizations, but I make it a point to kind of look at everything that goes on around (campus). I like to be part of everything that is happening around here

Participant experiences depicted a growing and more inclusive sense of community as they engaged in the exploration of leadership within their own African American organizations. As the mentor network introduced them to the broader campus culture, the participants began to see that they can have a broader impact if they led from within the White campus majority community. This process of broadening the scope of community ties the themes across the Male African American Leader Emergence model together as it is the culmination of the process of developing a leader identity in a predominately White organization on a predominately White college campus. It shows growth on the personal level as well as in the development of coping skills and strategies, and movement to participation in a broader campus culture.

**Summary of Establishing Leader Identity in a Predominately White Organization**

According to the participant in this study, establishing a leader identity in a predominately White organization was the final step and ultimate goal of Black leadership emergence. This emergence was represented by four themes: cultivating respect, seeking social justice, representing, and broadening the scope of community that are characteristics of Black leaders in predominantly White organizations. This final phase of Black male leadership emergence ties the leaders to the dominant campus
culture and then back to their roots in the support and comfort of the African American community via their service and dedication to social justice.

**Synopsis of the Black Male Leadership Emergence on Predominately White Campuses Model**

The Black Male Leadership Emergence on Predominately White Campuses model (BMLEPWC) represents the leadership emergence experiences of nine African American male students on two predominately White southeastern universities. Specifically the results of this study answered the research question: What is the process by which Black men become leaders of predominately White organizations on predominately White college campuses? Additionally addressed were three secondary questions: (a) What support systems do successful Black leaders develop and utilize? (b) What challenges do Black men face in the leadership development process? and (c) What coping mechanisms do Black men develop when they encounter challenges in the leadership development process?

Using grounded theory methods, the researcher discovered a leadership emergence process that consisted of five elements: the African American community, emerging leadership, threats to leadership emergence, strategies for leadership success, and establishing a leader’s identity. Each of these elements contained multiple themes that explained the process by which Black men became leaders of predominately White organizations on predominately White college campuses.

The African American community explained the emerging leaders ground and support within the African American community on campus. Emerging leaders relied on
the community for social support, comfort, and as a source of mentorship for exploration of college leadership. Through observation of their Black peers the participants were guided and inspired by their mentors to invest in themselves and their community.

Emerging Leadership builds on the African American community and represented the process of exploring, engaging, and navigating the institutional leadership environment. Beginning with exploring potential, leaders progress through a multi-dimensional process that involves finding inspiration, observation of other Black leaders, receiving messages of leadership, invitations to lead, recognizing needs, branching out, and seeking opportunities.

The second phase of Emerging Leadership, engaging explained how the participants began the process of engaging in leadership on campus, either in a predominately White organization first or a Black organization. Which type of organization they began with was in part related to the amount of familiarity and experience they had previously with White culture and leadership. Engaging consisted of five dimensions: considering options and benefits, the decision to engage, exposure to new cultural norms, wanting to diversify, and developing a network. By the end of this phase leaders had engaged in at least one opportunity to lead and were becoming familiar with leadership in the context of a predominantly White campus.

The final phase of Emerging Leadership was the complex process of navigating Black and White social and organizational culture on campus as the move into increasingly more prominent positions of leadership. Leaders observed that there were significant differences between predominantly White and predominantly Black
organizational culture, and used there Black organizations as a frame of reference in searching for successful solutions to emergent challenges. These differences were challenging because they were so unexpected by the emerging Black leaders. It was often unclear to participants how to adjust to or navigate these issues which posed significant threats to Black male leadership development.

Threats to Black Leadership Emergence described the two primary threats participants faced. Racism and bias, and the related paradox of visibility this bias created. Racism and bias contained two dimensions, lack of understanding and isolation. Lack of understanding reflected the institutional and personal lack of information about African American culture and needs on the predominantly White campus. Often dismissed as ignorance, the lack of awareness created significant barriers to leader success. Isolation explained the lack of Black leaders in predominantly White organizations and the frequent feelings of being unable to speak or act in a way that was true to their feelings or beliefs without careful thought given to the consequences. These threats and the resultant visibility paradox, created significant challenges emergent Black leaders needed to overcome to lead White organizations.

The visibility paradox resulted from bias and stereotypes that created lower expectations from White peers who would frequently not take seriously the thoughts and opinions of the Black men. The perception by the Black leaders that they were not being heard created a feeling of invisibility that participants had to overcome to be successful as leaders. Simultaneously the participants were also emerging in prominent positions where they were easily recognized because of their skin color. The hyper visibility facilitated by
the appearance of the leader was exacerbated by stereotypical expectations such as poor performance. This left the emergent leaders in highly visible positions with expectations of failure. The situation was further complicated because the Black leader was working within a White organization that often did not listen carefully to their voice: a unique challenge for these Black men to overcome.

Threats to Black Leadership Emergence were met with a series of strategies developed by the leaders. Strategies for leadership success describe the methods by which students worked to counteract the treats to their leadership development. Strategies included setting a standard of excellence, vigilance, positive focus, and balance. There were two additional multi-dimensional strategies: (a) not feeling heard and finding an assertive voice which described the process by which the participants found a way to overcome the effects of White-centric organizations, and (b) cross cultural reflection which described a process of examining the interrelationship between leader perception of minority norms and majority culture motives and reactions to participants as emergent leaders.

Establishing a Leader Identity in Predominately White Organizations described the outcome of the process by which Black men became leaders of predominately White organizations. It represents the hallmarks of the leader identity of the Black leaders who successfully overcame the challenges of navigating the many challenges they faced. Specifically, the process consists of five elements: (a) cultivating respect, (b) seeking social justice, (c) working harder, (d) representing (the African American community, multiple groups, and acting as a cross cultural liaison) and (e) broadening the scope of
community. These elements represent key components of Black leadership of predominately White organizations on predominately White campuses.

Chapter Summary

Chapter four presented the results of the grounded theory research study using the words of the participants to answer the research question: What is the process by which Black men become leaders of predominately White organizations on predominately White campuses? The resultant model, the Male African American Leader Emergence model describes the process by which nine Black men became leaders on two large public southeastern university campuses. Themes in participant leader’s stories were described using their own words and the BMLEPWC model was outlined in detail and presented in a visual format, and a synopsis of the theme was provided.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to answer the research question: “What is the process by which Black men become leaders of predominately White student organizations on predominately White campuses?” Using grounded theory techniques the BMLEPW model emerged from participant stories to explain the support systems, processes, threats to, and outcomes of, Black male leadership emergence in predominately White organizations on predominantly White campuses. This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the three theoretical frameworks used in this study; Black and White Racial Identity development (Helms, 1990), Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), and Wijeyesinghe’s Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (2001). Implications for practice are discussed, the limitations of the study are explained, and implications for future research are explored.

Discussion in Relation to Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study was drawn from three distinct theoretical areas. The psychological aspects of human action and interaction using the work of Helms (1990) and Cross (1995) Black and White Racial identity development (RID). The political aspects of power, wealth, and oppression using Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001) Critical Race Theory, and the sociocultural Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) of Wijeyesinghe (2001). The findings of this study highlighted the interrelationship
among these three theoretical areas to Black college student leadership emergence in predominately White organizations.

Helms’ (1990) models of Black and White racial identity development are of specific relevance to the discussion of the BMLEPWC model. Several parts of the BMLEPWC model contained developmental tasks associated with elements of RID for Black men. Certain Black RID stages may be required for engagement and progression through the leader emergence process for Black men in PWO’s.

Several of Cross’ (1995) racial identity themes were represented throughout the leadership emergence process. Specifically, (a) Black men choosing to stay with same race groups, (b) the reflection process in BMLEPWC corresponds with reflections occurring in Black Racial Identity Development, (c) the lack of understanding between Black leaders and their White counterparts as Parallel, Regressive or Crossed relationships (Cross, 1995) with Whites equally or less aware of race issues and their own identity, and d) the process of starting with the African American community and moving to a campus-wide conceptualization of community and a social justice focus as outcomes.

Participants frequently described peers who chose not to pursue positions with predominately White organizations, indicating a desire to remain in the early Immersion stage where the person is not aware of race issues but is focused on Black identity and idealization of Blackness (Cross, 1995). This characteristic manifested itself for participants in the Emerging Leadership phase of the BMLEPWC model when they were exploring, comparing, and engaging in leadership opportunities. Participants repeatedly faced the choice of whether to engage in a predominately White organization (PWO) or a
predominantly Black organization (PBO), and the direction they choose reflected the BRID attitudes they were experiencing. Men who were more advanced in their BRID attitudes moved more quickly into PWO’s than those whose attitudes were reflective of Encounter attitudes. Progression in the development of leadership in a predominately White organization is unquestionably tied to the development of advanced racial identity attitudes given the increased need for Black men to interact in, and consider themselves members of, a broader community.

Beginning with the foundational stage of the BMLEPWC model, the African American Community, participants relied on the Social Support and Mentorship of their peers and prominent Black men in their lives. Throughout this phase, participant’s statements reflected components of Encounter and/or Immersion/Emersion stages of Cross’ (1995) Black Racial Identity Development. While participants came to college at various levels in their BRID journey, being confronted by the predominately White campus culture began a process of reflection on the role of race which they worked through with the support of the African American community. Those participants who came to the predominately White universities with Encounter stage characteristics (Cross, 1995) were conscious of race but were in the process of transitioning from a reference group based on White/European standards to a more Afro-centric group. They made comments such as “I came in with a bit of racism in me” or “I was surprised by how nice everybody was”. Others, who were more advanced in their BRID were often thrown back to reflect on racial issues due to threats to their leadership emergence.
For those who had more experience with White culture, relying on the support of same race peers represented a minor but understandable regression in BRID in order to adjust to the new campus environment and the social, academic, and personal challenges college represented. For other participants the reliance on the African American community was the starting point, indicative of their current Immersion attitudes and the beginning of their journey to Internalization/Commitment via their college experience.

Cross Cultural Reflection, a strategy frequently used by the men in this study, was needed to redefine their cultural frame of reference and determine what aspects of African American identity to retain in their leadership identity and what parts of the dominant culture needed to be assimilated into their leadership identity. Although Cross (1995) represented BRID in a series of stages based on attitudes, Helms (1990) noted that major events can cause reconsiderations of previous stages. This reconsideration of previous stages occurred frequently as participants encountered new challenges, adapted to new situations, and expanded their prominence through leadership.

In addition to Black racial identity development, Helms’ (1990) White Racial Identity Development model and Black/White Interaction model are relevant to discussion of the BMLEPWC. Based on patterns of cross cultural interaction and the various combinations of RID attitudes held by the individuals, this model explains the impact of attitudes on relationships where there is a difference in authority. Although it was beyond the scope of this study to examine the RID attitudes held by the White students with whom Black leaders interacted, the participant stories revealed some indication that there were frequently relationships that were described as: Parallel,
Crossed, or Regressive (Helms, 1990). Helms explained that each of these relationship types, whether in same race or mixed race dyads, will produce particular affective issues.

In the context of this study, Finding Voice was a strategy participants used to overcome Not Feeling Heard by their White peers as well as overcoming the threats of Racism and Bias and the Visibility Paradox that emerged as their leadership developed. The very nature of the need to find a voice in order to participate is at least in part related to White students overlooking the contributions of their Black peers, as described in participant stories. The White students overlooking contributions of the Black students, and the subsequent need for the Black students to develop a strategy to counter act it, indicated that relationships were either Parallel, Regressive or Crossed. In the Parallel relationships, both Black and White students had racial attitudes that were similar, but they were not culturally inclusive. With Regressive relationships, the White students’ RID stage was lower than the Black students. Those relationships that were Crossed exhibited White students’ RID status that were more than two stages lower that the Black students. In any of the above mentioned cases, positive outcomes of the relationship were jeopardized or severely challenged (Helms, 1990). As a result, strategies outlined in BMLEPWC, such as Setting a Standard of Excellence, Vigilance, and Positive Focus, are necessary for Black men to offset the threats to leadership and lead predominately White organizations on Predominately White campuses.

Finally, using the African American community as a foundation and moving to a campus-wide conceptualization of community has many connections to Helms’ Racial Identity Development theory. Broadening the Scope of Community and Seeking Social
Justice are characteristics of Black leader identity in a predominately White organization and are outcomes of the final stages of Helms’ (1990) Black Racial Identity Development model. Specifically at the Internalization/Commitment stage the individual develops a more secure understanding of personal racial identity and begins to develop a multicultural perspective. Individuals seek to advocate for all oppressed people and see the value in multiple cultures, not just Black culture. Racial identity becomes stable, positive, and pluralistic. People at this stage will become committed advocates for social justice (as opposed to simply racial justice) (Helms, 1990). All participants in this study were exhibiting Internalization attitudes by the time they had emerged as leaders of PWO’s.

Beyond the psychological aspects of human action and interaction of Helms’ (1990) theory, Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) presented a means to understand the political issues of race, power and class that complicated the emergence of Black student leadership in predominately White organizations on predominately White campuses. Critical Race Theory provided a context within which we can view the results of the study. First and foremost Critical Race Theory (CRT) linked directly to BMLEPWC in its relationship to social justice.

In CRT, Interest Convergence refers to the belief that White majority culture tolerates advances for racial justice only when it is in the best interest of the White majority culture to do so. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Through this lens Black leadership on a predominately White campus should be viewed with suspicion. The strategy of Setting a Standard of Excellence employed by the Black men in this study would therefore be a manifestation of exploitation. In accordance with CRT, in order for
these participants to achieve success as leaders in PWO’s, they must perform beyond the expectations that White peers hold for each other. While it appeared there was equal opportunity, the effort required for success was not equal because of race. CRT explains this as promotion of an ideal to meet a majority culture need, in this case the appearance of equal opportunity on campus.

A related example of Interest Convergence lies in the way participants defined leadership. Participants, Black student leaders, described their leadership style and focus differently than their White counterparts. Black student leaders described leadership in terms of service to others, consideration and appreciation of diverse perspectives, and representing multiple communities. This definition was in contrast to what participants described they observed from their White peers, but the Black leaders conceptualization of leadership was remarkably similar to White *idealistic* definitions of leadership that were disseminated by administration on both campuses studied. From a CRT perspective, this calls into question whether these definitions are the result of true African American beliefs about leadership, or messaging from the majority culture. If the latter was the case, Interest Convergence was likely the culprit, where leadership for Black men was promoted to advance the status or standing of the universities to the benefit of the White majority (higher university rankings, etc.).

There are several other ways Critical Race Theory contributes to the understanding of the results of this study. For example, CRT was helpful in examining the power and influence of White students in process of leader development. First, with the model the Threats to Black Leadership Emergence represented participants’ need to
carefully navigate the dominant culture to become successful leaders in PWO’s. The navigation at various points required careful deference to White authority, indicating an acceptance that the pathway to leadership must conform to White conceptualization of leadership.

Secondly, Structural Determinism was present at both a micro and macro level. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) described Structural Determinism as the dominant culture’s inability to conceptualize and address the problems of racism and bias because they (individuals trying to address the problem) are immersed in the system that created the problems. At the micro level, universities who are trying to address inequalities between Black and White leadership engagement construct programs that do not address the root of the problems. By using majority culture definitions of leadership, engagement, and organizational structures that are based on White Euro-centric systems, further disadvantage to Black students is actually created.

At the macro level, the United States society is unable to define the complex challenges bias and racism present. Our cultural vocabulary is limited to the palate of “racism” and “bias” to explain the myriad of social and political challenges facing Black men. Structural Determinism as outlined by Delgado and Stefancic (2001), stated that the very limited way we conceptualize the problem as a society, keeps us from addressing it adequately. This macro level concern manifested itself in participant stories when the men who had experienced bias struggled to articulate how and when. Participant comments like, “it’s not like back in the 60’s with no coloreds”, show they experienced a feeling of discrimination but could not determine the exact form it took or the impact it
had. Other comments such as “it’s subtle” or “Whites are clueless” demonstrated the same inability to adequately describe the bias. The Positive Attitude participants adapted as a strategy when they “let things go” and how they demonstrated their competence through their behavior would be considered a reaction to bias that neither the leaders nor the dominant culture had accurately defined.

Finally, Intersectionality as defined by Delgado and Stefancic (2001) is the interconnection of multiple biases (race, sexual orientation, etc.) and the way these biases manifest themselves when combined in a given circumstance. Intersectionality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) manifested itself in several ways in this study. Participants described being Black, Gay, Male, and Nursing majors as some of the roots of bias they experienced. This presented an even more complex challenge as participants who were identified as members of multiple groups were faced with determining the cause of bias as well as navigating a solution or response. The discussion of Intersectionality inevitably leads to the need for consideration of multiple identities and the need to understand the individual as a complex manifestation of a variety of discrete identities, each of which may come with specific burdens of bias from the dominant culture.

The Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) (Wijeyesinghe, 2001) presented a means of understanding the complex social and cultural influences that impact a student’s sense of self and ultimately their perception of experiences. This model also offers the distinction of ascribed racial grouping and chosen racial grouping. The BMLEPWC model which described the process by which Black men become leaders of predominately White organizations on predominately White campuses, ultimately
illustrated the impact of the ascribed racial identity of African Americans or Blacks on the process of leadership emergence. Although physical appearance was the most salient racial identifier and therefore prominent in social interactions, Wijeyesinghe (2001), would argue that there are a multitude of identities that influenced the actions and beliefs of the participants. The Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (Wijeyesinghe, 2001) features eight factors that contribute to the choice of identity. These factors include: Racial Ancestry, Cultural Attachment, Early Experience and Socialization, Political Awareness and Orientation, Spirituality, Other Social Identities, Social and Historical Context, and Physical Experience. Particularly important to the BMLEPWC model was the interrelationship of these factors and how they influenced participants’ paths to leadership.

Beginning with the African American Community, participants relied on their Racial Ancestry, Cultural Attachment, and Spirituality for Social Support and Mentors, but as leadership progressed and the men moved into the Emerging Leadership Phase they were exploring, Making Comparisons and Engaging in opportunities that appealed to them. Through this process, they were influenced not only by the factors listed above but by a variety of other factors. Participants developed Inspiration and Purpose, and Recognized Need not as a result of random observation, but rather as the confluence of multiple factors of their identities. Statements such as, “the organization needs to stand for something I represent” and “I represent more than just the African American community, but the whole (university) community” showed identification with multiple identity factors such as Wijeyesinghe’s (2001) Political Awareness and Other Social
Identities. For participants who were members of multiple historically oppressed groups these identifications were even more apparent in their stories.

Within Establishing Leader Identity in a Predominantly White Organization, the themes of Social Justice and Representing highlighted Wijeyesinghe’s (2001) factors of Political Awareness and Orientation, Social and Historical Context, and Early Experience and Socialization. The leadership identity established by participants was the culmination of chosen identity factors that they ascribed to leadership as a Black man in a predominantly White organization.

The final way Wijeyesinghe’s (2001) FMMI connected with the BMLEPWC model was in participants’ decision to engage. Early Childhood experiences and Socialization were described by Wijeyesinghe (2001) as being the result of exposure to cultural aspects through the family, or frequent interaction with persons outside of the family. For many of these participants, the family not only provided the message of leadership within the African American community, but also engagement in leadership in the broader White community. Participants who were socialized in predominately White elementary and high schools progressed more quickly into their college leadership experiences within PWO’s due to greater familiarity with cultural norms and expectations. While all met similar challenges and developed similar strategies for coping, the early socialization and identification with leadership in general (as opposed to only Black leadership) accelerated the progression.
Implications for Practice and Policy

There have been a variety of programmatic solutions to the challenge of engaging Black men in leadership opportunities, many of which have been successful in increasing the academic and extracurricular activities of Black men (Harper, 2008; Cuyjet, 2004; Flowers, 2004). From the results of this study, it is clear, particularly with regard to mentors, that these programmatic solutions are effective in getting Black men connected with their peers and to a lesser extent the campus. Many participants repeatedly referred to the positive effects of such programs. What has not been widely addressed are threats to Black leader emergence, particularly from an institutional policy perspective.

The BMLEPWC model indicates that the African American community is a critical support system whereby Black men gain mentorship and support; supported by Harper (2008) who identified Black fraternities as a gateway for other involvement on campus. Given the importance of these organizations to Black men and the emergence of leadership, campuses should develop and strengthen systems that support participation in these organizations while better integrating them into the broader campus community.

Several men spoke of how their involvement representing National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) in meetings with Inter-fraternity Council (IFC) served to introduce them to the broader campus leadership culture. To this end, creating structures that maintain the supportive nature of Black organizations, and offer greater opportunity for men engaged in those organizations to interact and learn about the mission and focus of other campus groups would be tremendously valuable. Specifically, student government could include regular, mandatory representation from all student organizations as well as
mentorship programs to develop a community of leadership and interaction among minority groups and PWO’s.

During the Emerging Leadership phase, the participants were Exploring, Engaging in, and Comparing leadership opportunities as they moved from community members to community leaders. To ease this process and facilitate better opportunities, student affairs units on campus could conduct regular audits of engagement and leadership opportunities for Black men as a means to improve the likelihood of developing meaningful and appealing opportunities for Black men. Campus specific standards could be developed based on population size and leadership goals for funding and allocation of resources.

A related initiative designed to address and reduce threats to Black male leadership development (specifically Lack of Understanding and Isolation) would be to conduct regular campus wide audits of policy, procedure and practice to look for differential impact on Black students. A fundamental flaw in most student government systems is that there are few checks and balances within the system. Establishing student and faculty-led balance systems could assist in the practical education of White students in the area of civic engagement and social justice, as well as eliminating the need for Black men to Find a Voice in order to both advocate for their community needs and be successful leaders.

Black men in their quest for leadership on predominately White campuses spent an inordinate amount of time on cultural and intercultural reflection and adjustment. To be successful leaders, they were required to develop standards of behavior and strategies
that far exceeded the requirements of the positions they sought. Additionally, they spent considerable amounts of time reaching out to diversify their experience as well as to include diverse constituencies in their leadership experiences. A simple solution to this would be to include White culture in the definition of “Multicultural”. The assumption has been that all African American men are familiar with the White culture because it is the dominant culture. Participant stories showed this to be largely untrue: Black men are mostly familiar with the bias and racism associated with the majority culture, not the rationale for how and why the culture operates as it does. This unfamiliarity was particularly apparent with regard to leadership. The current structure on the campuses studied was separate offices for Multicultural Affairs and Student Activities. While the researcher does not want to downplay the importance of specialized advisors for populations of underrepresented students, the current split systems are reminiscent of the “separate but equal” approach to education. Integration of leadership serving units could be beneficial to both Black and White students from a learning and engagement perspective.

To complement the above efforts and to reinforce the development of strong communities, an “office of community development” could be established to recognize and foster integration and interaction among identified campus communities. This office would be charged with shaping the campus community identity through leadership training both practical (Parliamentary procedure) and theoretical (leadership theory, organizational management). Such an office could serve as a clearinghouse for leadership opportunities, a centralized education and training authority for all student leaders, and
marketing and messaging platform for campus community definition and development. Under this system, leadership opportunities would be marketed and recognized equally and all leaders would receive the same training. This could greatly reduce cultural and experiential gaps between minority and majority students interested in leadership and create an intentional common language of leadership on campus. Additionally, this office would establish campus-wide standards for engagement and leadership and solidify a sense of campus community.

**Limitations**

The researcher recognizes there were several limitations to this study. The participant sample was small for a grounded theory and was drawn from two southeastern public universities. Therefore, participant experiences may not be representative of experiences at other types of universities or universities in different geographical locations. Additionally, the low response rate to invitations to participate required the researcher to rely heavily on gatekeepers to recruit participants, which may have attracted participants with certain types of experiences, backgrounds, or relationships. The study was qualitative in nature and therefore the findings are not generalizable.

Due to the low number of Black men in leadership positions on the two campuses included in this study, there was little diversity in the experiences across leaders. All participants at each of the institutions were recruited by the same gatekeepers which could account for similarities in leadership experiences and the lack of any negative case in the analysis. Most of the leaders who were interviewed participated in the same mentoring programs, had the same advisors and mentors, and participated in the same
student organizations at their respective institutions. The limited variation in leadership experiences across participants on these campuses may have contributed to homogeneity of responses and early saturation in analysis.

The use of Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) as part of the theoretical framework for the study obligated the researcher to acknowledge that there may be researcher bias in the development of questions and interpretation and analysis of data as the researcher was a White male college administrator studying Black male student leadership. Finally, the researcher was a novice researcher and had limited experience with grounded theory methods.

**Implications for Future Research**

This study presented a model depicting the process by which Black male college students become leaders of predominately White organizations on predominately White campuses, the BMLEPWC. This model has strong theoretical support from Black and White Racial Identity Development theories of Helms(1991), Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), and the Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (Wijeyesinghe, 2001). The model also highlights several topics of interest suitable for future research.

Threats to Black Leadership Emergence in Predominately White Organizations offer two areas in need of further exploration. First, the theme of Racism and Bias needs greater exploration and definition with regard to the subtleties of bias. Additionally, the participants in this study had a hard time articulating and defining some of the bias experiences they had. A more detailed study of the types of bias
could expand the vocabulary used in conversations regarding racism and replace old conceptualizations of bias based on the civil rights movement of the 60’s and 70’s.

Second, the Visibility Paradox that threatens Black male leadership development provides an opportunity to study, in greater detail, the forces of Invisibility (dismissal based on racial stereotypes) and Hyper-visibility (low expectations and the need to represent a minority community exceptionally). The impact of these stresses on the student’s college experience as well as greater exploration of the strategies to offset this paradox could be exceptionally helpful for administrators developing policy and programming for Black college men.

Another area for further study would be the impact of Crossed or Regressive dyads (Helms 1990) within peer or advisor/student relationships on Black male leadership emergence in PWO’s. To date, limited information is available on the study of dyadic relationships outside of the counseling profession. Understanding the effects of leader identity status and its impact on leadership emergence, particularly Crossed and Regressive dyads, at the student and administrative level could have significant impact on training and advising for leadership development. A better understanding could help shape policy and procedure for administrators serving both Black and White student organizations and structure educational interactions between race communities on campus.

Finally, exploration of the impact of multiple identities on leadership development is warranted. While the BMLEPWC model illustrated a process of leader development for Black men in PWO’s it was not clear from this research what
characteristics of the participants’ leadership identity could be contributed to the cultural influence of their race or their gender. Given the growing concerns over male college student engagement it may be important to discern the roles of various identity factors and their relationship to leadership emergence. Wijeyesinghe’s (2001) FMMI provides a framework for understanding identities; greater exploration of how those identities impact leader emergence could greatly assist programmers and advisors in creating experiences of interest for Black men.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter five presented a discussion of the findings of the study within the context of the theoretical frameworks of Black and White Racial Identity development (Helms, 1990), Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), and Wijeyesinghe’s Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (2001). In this chapter, the researcher presented implications for practice, noted the limitations of the study and presented implications for future research. As expected from a qualitative exploratory study, the results indicated the need for future research in the areas of threats to Black male leadership development. Specifically in establishing a new paradigm for understanding the subtleties of bias, examining the relationship between RID status and leadership emergence, and the impact of multiple identity factors on leadership emergence.
APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

The Process by which Black Men Become Leaders of Predominately White Organizations at Predominantly White Institutions: A Grounded Theory

Time of interview:

Date of interview:

Location (college):

Interviewee Code:

Position of interviewee:

Interview Questions (adapted from Charmaz, 2006):

**Initial Open-ended Questions**

1. Tell me about how you became a student leader.
2. When, if at all, did you first experience interest in leadership (or the organization you are leading)?
3. Who, if anyone, influenced you? Tell me about how they influenced you.
4. Please describe the events that led up to your decision to become involved in (organization)?
5. What contributed to your decision to become involved?
6. What was going on in your life then? How would you describe how you viewed leadership before you became involved in (name organization)? How, if at all, have your views changed?
7. Why did you choose this organization?
8. If this was not your first leadership position, tell me more about your prior experiences and organizations?
9. If this was your first leadership position what (if anything) prevented you from becoming a leader before?
10. How would you describe the person you were then (before you became a leader?)
Intermediate Questions

1. What, if anything, did you know about the other students in the organization you became involved in?
2. Tell me about your thoughts and feelings as you learned more about the organization? What struck you the most? What did you like/ dislike immediately? Later on?
3. What was your initial role? What happened next?
4. Who, if anyone, that you knew was involved in this organization? How were they involved? How did they react to you interest?
5. Tell me about the others in your organization. What is your relationship with them like? Has it changed?
6. How do your friends outside the organization view your participation? Why do they feel this way?
7. Tell me about how you learned to handle being a leader? How did you learn this?
8. How, if at all, have your thoughts and feelings about leadership changed since becoming involved?
9. How, if at all, have your thoughts and feelings about race changed since becoming involved?
10. How, if at all, have your thoughts and feelings about power changed since becoming involved?
11. What positive changes have occurred in your life since becoming a leader?
12. What negative changes, if any have occurred in your life since becoming a leader?
13. Tell me about some key / pivotal moments in your experience becoming a leader.
14. Tell me how you go about influencing others. What do you do? How did you learn this?
15. Define leadership.
16. Could you describe a typical day on campus for you? (Probe for different times/situations.) Now tell me about a typical day when you are….
17. Tell me how you would describe the person you are now. What most contributed to this change (or continuity)?
18. As you look back on the process of becoming a leader in this organization, are there any events that stand out in your mind? Could you describe each one? How did this event affect what happened? How did you respond to it (the event; the resulting situations)?
19. Could you describe the most important lessons you learned through experiencing…?
20. Where do you see yourself in two years? Ten years? Describe the person you hope to be then. How would you compare the person you hope to be and the person you see yourself as now?
21. What helps you to manage challenges you face as a leader? What challenges do/have you encountered? Tell me about the sources of these problems.
22. Who has been the most helpful to you during this time? How have they been helpful?
23. Has any organization/person/resource been helpful? What did they help you with? How has it been helpful?

Ending Questions

1. What do you think are the most important ways to navigate the challenges of being a black leader in a white organization? How did you discover (or create) them? How has your experience as a leader in this organization affected how you handled/viewed other challenges in your life?
2. Tell me about how your views on race, racism and power may have changed since you became involved as a leader?
3. How have you grown as a person since you became involved as a leader? Tell me about strengths that you discovered or developed. What do you most value about yourself now? What do others most value in you?
4. What has becoming a leader meant to you? Others in your life? Same different race friends?
5. How do you perceive you leadership experience as being different/same as others?
6. After having this experience as a leader, what advice would you give to someone who has just become interested in a position of leadership?
7. Is there anything that you might not have thought about before that occurred to you during this interview?
8. Is there anything else you think I should know to understand what it is like to be a Black leader in a white organization better?
9. Is there anything you would like to ask me?
Appendix B

Letter to Gatekeepers
Invitation to Act as Gatekeeper for a Research Study
Clemson University

The Process by which Black Men Become Leaders of Predominately White Organizations at Predominantly White Institutions: A Grounded Theory

Dear Campus Administrator,

You are invited to act as a gatekeeper for a research study being conducted by Eric J. Moschella under the supervision of Dr. Pamela Havice at Clemson University. The purpose of this research is to discover how Black men experience the process of becoming student leaders of predominantly White organizations on predominately White college campuses in the southeastern United States. The study will explore the challenges, coping strategies, and support systems Black men at PWI’s use in the leadership development process. Your assistance in forwarding the attached invitation to participate and demographic questionnaire to all student leaders you supervise would be greatly appreciated. An incentive of twenty dollars will be given to all participants who complete the interview process and all follow up communications.

Protection of Confidentiality
We will do everything we can to protect student privacy. Participants’ identities will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this study. Students may choose not to participate and may withdraw consent to participate at any time. Students will not be penalized in any way should they decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

Contact Information
Please forward the attached letter to all student leaders under your supervision and ask them to complete the questionnaire and return it via email to Eric Moschella at emosche@clemson.edu.

If you or any potential participants have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Eric J. Moschella (email: emosche@clemson.edu or phone: 864-506-6435) or Dr. Pamela Havice, PhD at Clemson University (email: havice@clemson.edu or phone: 864-656-5121). If you have any questions or concerns about research participant rights, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-6460 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC’s toll-free number, 866-297-3071.

Thank you,

Eric J. Moschella and Pamela Havice, PhD.
Appendix C

Letter to Potential Participants

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study
Clemson University

The Process by which Black Men Become Leaders of Predominately White Organizations at Predominantly White Institutions: A Grounded Theory

Dear Student,

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Eric J. Moschella under the supervision of Dr. Pamela Havice at Clemson University. The purpose of this research is to discover how Black men experience the process of becoming student leaders of predominantly White organizations on predominantly White college campuses in the southeastern United States. The study will explore the challenges, coping strategies, and support systems Black men at PWI’s use in the leadership development process. Your participation will involve filling out a demographic questionnaire, taking part in an initial one hour interview with the researcher and communicating via telephone or email with the researcher regarding the researcher’s interpretation of your responses to the interview questions. Additional interviews may be requested by the researcher for the purpose of clarification.

The amount of time required for your participation will be approximately 2 total hours including all interviews, follow up questions, phone calls, and email communications, distributed over a period of several weeks. Overall, fifteen to twenty-five Black male student leaders in similar roles in college will be included in the study.

Incentives
An incentive of twenty dollars will be given to all participants who complete the interview process and all follow up communications.

Qualifications to Participate
In order to qualify for participation in this study, you must be a currently enrolled, full time college student in a position of leadership within an organization whose membership is predominately White (over 60% of the organization’s membership is White- if you are receiving this letter your organization meets this criteria and your position qualifies as leadership). You must have held this leadership position for a minimum of one academic year (two semesters). Additionally you must identify yourself as “Black” or “African American” and as Male.

Risks and Discomforts
There are no known risks associated with this research.
Potential Benefits
There are no known benefits to you that would result from your participation in this research. The study will provide increased understanding of how college administrators can facilitate and encourage leadership involvement of Black men. This research may help higher education professionals proactively identify obstacles to the engagement of Black men on Predominately White campuses.

Protection of Confidentiality
We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. The interviews will be audio-taped. All tapes, transcripts and data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher’s office. The audiotape and the interview notes will be destroyed within one year of the completion of the project. You can refuse to answer any question or to stop the interview at any time. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication that might result from this study.

In rare cases, a research study will be evaluated by an oversight agency, such as the Clemson University Institutional Review Board or the federal Office for Human Research Protections that would require that we share the information we collect from you. If this happens, the information would only be used to determine if we conducted this study properly and adequately protected your rights as a participant.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

If you wish to participate please complete the attached Demographic Questionnaire and email it to emosche@clemson.edu. By returning the Demographic Questionnaire you are acknowledging that you have read and understand this letter and that you give consent to participate in this study.

Contact Information
If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Eric J. Moschella (email: emosche@clemson.edu or phone: 864-506-6435) or Dr. Pamela Havice, PhD at Clemson University (email: havice@clemson.edu or phone: 864-656-5121). If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-6460 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC’s toll-free number, 866-297-3071.

Thank you,

Eric J. Moschella and Dr.Pamela Havice, PhD.
Appendix D

Demographic and Experience Questionnaire

Name: __________________________

Current Institution: __________________________

Gender: Male____  Female____

Age: _____

Race:
White/Caucasian  Black/African American  Hispanic  Native American
Pacific Islander  Other: _________________________

Races other than Black that you identify with:
White/Caucasian  Hispanic  Native American  Pacific Islander
Other: _________________________

Year first enrolled in college: _____

Year first participated in college leadership position: _____

Number of years you held any leadership position: _____

Number of leadership positions held (total lifetime): _____

How long have you held your current leadership position: _____
### Broadening scope of community

We just try to make sure that everyone out there knows, because a lot of people, in the background of their minds, especially in the Black community will be like, (University), you know everybody up there is one race, everybody is Go (mascot). We want to show them that there is another side and that they can be a part of the (University) community.

I want to see White people and the majority coming to some of the minority events and things like that. Like I know we have a Black leadership conference and it’s mostly Black people, but there are a lot of things to offer for, Whites, Asians, Indians, things like that. So I just want to see more, less segregated events in organizations on campus.

...I sort of got to see, from the president, how at (University 1) they stress community, so it’s not isolating the historically Black fraternity/sororities, but making sure we’re involved in the whole group community which is predominantly White. I’m a leader within my Black community at (University 1), but I’m also a leader at (University 1).

### Social support

When I referred to community I was (initially) talking about the African American community obviously, but it’s kind of like a group of people that share a common history, common experiences, look like you, talk like you, act like you type of thing. But I would also say that that’s not my only community that I’m involved in, I’m in (name of PWO) community, (campus) community too, things like that, so I guess it’s the commonalities you share.

At first it was almost a way for the Black students to kind of separate from campus life, to kind of say, we’re a community here within the greater community. But as I was in them (Black organizations) I realized that it’s just an effective way for people who were like minded, you know. They come from the same backgrounds and stuff to come together and work together and stuff. It doesn’t really matter too much that it’s all Black because everyone is kind of on the same page.

I think they are more proud and accepting of the fact that, you know, of course I’m a leader within my Black community (organization), but I’m also a leader at (university level). I think they see it as, one of us has gotten in and is doing well and is respected, not only by us, but by White students as well.

### Advocate (Social Justice)

...I guess we’re still not at the same level as the majority, and I think a lot of our conversations are how can we get ahead, how can we get caught back up, how can we be ‘equal’. So now that you’re in that position, you can make that change so it doesn’t keep happening like that.

...you can be the change that you want to see. If you want to start doing this, then run for elections and start doing it. I feel like I learned more that you can do what you want to do, you can implement the ideas that you have, like if you feel like there needs to be change, it’s not enough to just sit back and complain about it, now you have to do it.

It is more than just being in that position. It is, and seeing the value of people being able to take charge of their campus and college experience, people being able to be engaged in their community and take on issues that, take on and understand issues that have not been taken on or understood before.
### Appendix F

Open Coding: Initial codes and categories

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<th>Initial Categories</th>
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<th>Initial Strategies</th>
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<td>Community</td>
<td>1. Influencing behavior</td>
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<td>43. Flexibility</td>
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<td>2. Social support, grounding place</td>
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<td>44. Trust in self</td>
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<td>3. Serving, giving back</td>
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<td>45. Be the example</td>
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<td>4. Changing</td>
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<td>46. Weighting others' advantages</td>
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<td>5. Disengagement</td>
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<td>7. Balancing membership</td>
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<td>8. Mentors and role models</td>
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<td>9. Representing</td>
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<td>Network</td>
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<td>11. Building a network</td>
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<td>12. Function of network</td>
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<td>13. New Black vs. White org Culture</td>
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<td>14. Experiencing bias</td>
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<td>15. Overcoming barriers</td>
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# Appendix G
Axial coding: Recoding and regrouping

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<td>16. Black organization first 17. Pushing Cultural Comfort in PWO 18. Overcoming fear of being different in PWO</td>
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<td>Developing a Network</td>
<td>22. Building a network 23. Function of network</td>
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| Seeking Social Justice       | 27. Giving back  
|                            | 28. Serving  
|                            | 29. Advocate  
| Working harder             | 30. Through example  
| Cross Cultural Reflection  | Minority Norms  
|                            | 31. Making org. comparisons  
|                            | 32. Disengagement  
|                            | 33. Accepting majority norms  
|                            | 34. Questioning minority norms  
| Majority Motives           | 1. Question majority motives  
|                            | 2. Racial Insight  
| Finding Voice              | Not Feeling Heard  
|                            | 3. Defining self  
|                            | 4. Voice  
|                            | 5. Not feeling heard  
| Finding an Assertive Voice | 6. Finding assertive voice  
| Cultivating Respect        | 7. Finding acceptance  
|                            | 8. Gaining respect (cultivating)  
| Representing               | African American community  
|                            | 9. Representing  
|                            | Multiple groups  
|                            | 10. Being a voice  
|                            | 11. Informing African American community  
| Acting as a Cross Cultural Liaison | 12. Make connections  
|                            | 13. Voice for others  
|                            | 14. Reaching out to Whites(cult liaison)  
|                            | 15. Informing White community  
| Racism and Bias            | Lack of understanding  
|                            | 16. Experiencing bias  
|                            | 17. Conflict  
| Isolation                  | 18. Isolation  
|                            | 19. Looking for others like me  
| Visibility Paradox         | Invisibility  
|                            | 20. Invisibility  
|                            | Hyper visibility  
|                            | 21. Visibility  
|                            | 22. Hyper-visibility  
| Working Harder: Setting a Standard of Excellence | 23. Excellence  
|                            | 24. High standards  
|                            | 25. Be the example  
| Vigilance                  | 26. Coping with racism  
|                            | 27. Vigilant  
| Positive Focus             | 28. Excusing Racism  
|                            | 29. Ignoring Race  
|                            | 30. Flexibility  
|                            | 31. Internalized Stereotypes  
|                            | 32. Positive focus  

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| Balance | 33. Balancing membership  
34. True to self  
35. Balance  
36. Coping  
37. Overcoming barriers |
Appendix H
Selective Coding and Theoretical Framework

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Appendix I

IRB Notice of Approval and Continuing Review

October 31, 2013

Dr. Pamela Havice
Clemson University
Department of Educational Leadership
307 Tillman Hall
Clemson, SC 29634


Dear Dr. Havice:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Clemson University reviewed the above-mentioned study using expedited review procedures. On the continuing review form, you indicated the status of this project is enrollment closed - remaining research activities are limited to data analysis only. Continuing approval for this study has been granted as of October 25, 2013.

Your approval period is November 5, 2013 to November 4, 2014. Your next continuing review is scheduled for October 2014. Please refer to the IRB number and title in communication regarding this study.

No change in this approved research protocol may be initiated without the IRB's approval. This includes any proposed revisions or amendments to the protocol. Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects, any complications, and/or any adverse events must be reported to the Office of Research Compliance immediately. Please contact the office if your study has terminated or been completed before the identified review date.

The Clemson University IRB is committed to facilitating ethical research and protecting the rights of human subjects. Please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 636-6460 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Laura A. Moll, M.A., CII
IRB Administrator

www.clemson.edu/researchcompliance
REFERENCES


doi:10.1080/10665684.2010.483639


“A Year After Obama’s Election Blacks Upbeat about Black Progress, Prospects.”


