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IDENTITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY FOR BIG CITY MAYORS:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF BLACK WOMEN

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy in Public Affairs

**School of Environmental and Public Affairs
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**University of Nevada Las Vegas
December 2012**

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THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

Constance Jeanine Brooks

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Identity and Intersectionality for Big City Mayors: A Phenomenological Analysis of Black Women

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ABSTRACT

Identity and Intersectionality for Big City Mayors: A Phenomenological Analysis of Black Women

The role of a mayor is integral within local governance. Their leadership and influence directly effectuates outcomes for the cities over which they preside. For big city mayors, their impact extends beyond local government and into the national policy arena. The way an individual demonstrates the role of mayor can be influenced by his\her perception of their own identity. However, within the realm of academic research dedicated to mayoral leadership and African Americans in politics, Black female mayors have largely been ignored. In particular, there are no known attempts at investigating the intersection of race and gender in understanding Black women as mayors. Perceptions of their lived experiences as mayors, relative to their racial and gendered identities is the focus of this research.

Through the use of Phenomenological research methods, this qualitative study answers the question, how do Black women big city mayors perceive their racial and gendered identities impacting their experiences as mayor? The participants selected in this study are the only six individuals in our nation's history to have been the first Black women to serve as mayor in the category of the 100 largest U.S. cities. Face to face, in depth interviews provide data from which to analyze their perceptions.

Phenomenological analyses, assists in arriving at thematic conclusions to aide in understanding experiences of identity unique to Black women mayors. The research uncovered nine themes that were then synthesized into three dimensions: Experience, Intersectionality, and Legacy. How each of the six mayors dealt with the issues surrounding the intersection of race and gender was shaped by contextual factors.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL PAGE	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTION	1
Background	2
Group Consciousness and Breakthrough Elections: Identity and the Role of Race and Gender in Politics.....	2
Statement of Problem.....	5
Purpose of Study	6
Conceptual Framework	7
Research Question	9
Overarching Research Question	9
Research Design.....	9
Research Population.....	10
Organization of Study	11
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	12
Identity in Politics	12
Women.....	12
Women as Mayors	19
Black Mayors	24
Black Women.....	32
Conceptual Framework: Descriptive Representation and Black Identity Development	36
Intersectionality.....	38
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	44
Restatement of Problem and Research Questions	44
Overarching Research Question	45
Research Design.....	45
Phenomenological Approach as the Qualitative Methodology	46
Research Population.....	47
Data Collection	48
Data Analysis	51
Steps in Phenomenological Analysis	52
Step One: Epoch/Bracketing.....	52

Step Two: Phenomenological Reduction/Delineating Units of Meaning (Horizontalization)	54
Step Three: Phenomenologica Reduction/Delineating Units of Meaning Relevant to the Research Question	54
Step Four: Eliminating Redundancies	57
Step Five: Imaginative Variation/Clustering Units of Relevant Meaning	58
Step Six: Imaginative Variation/Determining Themes from Clusters of Meaning	59
Step Seven: Imaginative Variation/Identifying General and Unique Themes for All Interviews	60
Step Eight: Synthesis and Contextualization of Themes	60
Testing Validity and Credibility	60
CHAPTER4: PARTICIPANT PROFILES.....	63
The Honorable Lottie Shackelford.....	63
The Honorable Sharon Pratt.....	66
The Honorable Sheila Dixon	69
The Honorable Yvonne Johnson.....	72
The Honorable Shirley Franklin	75
The Honorable Sharon Sayles Belton	78
CHAPTER 5: THEMATIC ANALYSIS.....	83
The Honorable Lottie Shackelford: City Pride	84
The Honorable Sharon Pratt: Champion for Statehood; Antagonist of the Status Quo.....	92
The Honorable Sheila Dixon: Understood Government but was Misunderstood.....	102
The Honorable Yvonne Johnson: Patchwork Quilt of Skills and Experiences ..	114
The Honorable Shirley Franklin: Introspective	126
The Honorable Sharon Sayles Belton: Reflections of Success.....	143
Synthesis and Contextualization of Themes	163
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	177
Summary	177
Conclusion	178
Limitations of Research Methods	180
Implications for Further Research	181
APPENDICES	183
Appendix A: Interview Questions	184
Appendix B: Informed Consent	187
REFERENCES	189
VITA.....	201

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Research Population	56
Table 2: Interview Measurements.....	58
Table 3: Steps in Phenomenological Analysis.....	60
Table 4: Presuppositions for the Researcher (Constance Brooks)	62
Table 5: Example: Phenomenological Reduction/Delineation of Units of Meaning	63
Table 6: Example: Delineating Units of Meaning Relevant to the Research Question	65
Table 7: Redundant Units of Meaning.....	66
Table 8: Clustering Units of Relevant Meaning	67
Table 9: Themes Developed from Clusters	68
Table 10: Participant Profile	90
Table 11: Themes Unique to Individual Mayors	168
Table 12: Common Themes.....	170
Table 13: Dimensions and Corresponding Themes	171

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Diagram of Intersectionality for Big City Mayors	16
Figure 2: Thematic Analysis of Lottie Shackleford.....	93
Figure 3: Thematic Analysis of Sharon Pratt.....	100
Figure 4: Thematic Analysis of Sheila Dixon.....	109
Figure 5: Thematic Analysis of Yvonne Johnson.....	121
Figure 6: Thematic Analysis of Shirley Franklin	133
Figure 7: Thematic Analysis of Sharon Sayles Belton	150
Figure 8: Synthesis of Themes.....	172

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Cities are a significant component of American identity and in many ways define America (Davis, 2007). The cultures, social norms, mores and often the dialect or speech of an individual find their origin in cities. Most Americans possess a profound allegiance to what cities they hail from and recognize how the cultural and social contexts within that city may have had some role in shaping who they are.

In cities, the municipal level of governance is one area where voters can see and experience first-hand the tangible impact of public policy. At the city level, the Mayor demonstrates the pinnacle of that leadership. While the exact responsibilities vary from city to city, in accordance to state constitutional and statutory requirements for municipal government structure, as a city's chief elected executive, the authorities and responsibilities of a mayor are broad. The mayor has both formal and informal roles while serving as the leader of a city (Svara, 1990; Sparrow, 1984). As elected officials, they have amassed a certain level of political prowess allowing them to effectively advocate for or against specific policies. Serving as an unofficial lobbyist or federal liaison, they have the opportunity to represent their city to the executive and legislative branches of government.

Mayors also stand as the official spokespersons for their cities. In particular, big city mayors are often the most visible politician and it is commonplace for them to be showcased in both local and national media outlets (Kuo, 1973). Big city mayors acquire a national presence and become household names across the United States and in some cases, worldwide.

Due to their significance, mayors have been closely studied. Scholarly research has been dedicated to the study of mayors. While scholarship has focused on mayors in general and to some extent on female and minority mayors, little research has been performed on an important segment of mayors, Black women mayors. In particular, the purpose of this research is to understand Black women mayors' perceptions of how race and gender has played a role throughout their experiences as mayor.

Background

Group Consciousness and Breakthrough Elections: Identity and the Role of Race and Gender in Politics

The Civil Rights Movement spawned both the Voting Rights Act and the Women's Liberation movement, which helped to trigger more minority representation opportunities (Kaufmann, 2003). It was during these eras where countless "breakthrough elections" occurred. Breakthrough elections are those where the first of a particular underrepresented group are elected, such as the first Black, first, Latina, or first gay representatives. Breakthrough elections are significant to examine because in some cases, the fact that they are breakthroughs can have a significant impact on behaviors while in office. From a gendered perspective, most research dedicated to the political behaviors of women tends to focus on them as "newcomers" or "trailblazers" as they are compared to men (Cammisa & Reingold 2004).

In the case of Black mayors, for those who were breakthrough politicians at the pinnacle of the civil rights movement, insurgency was the predominant campaign strategy that also proved to be the primary leadership style demonstrated while in office (Persons, 2007). In 1967, the historic breakthrough elections of Carl Stokes of Cleveland, Ohio and Richard Hatcher of Gary, Indiana as the first big city Black mayors, were extremely

symbolic. In fact, their elections and terms in office still serve as a bedrock for scholarly research dedicated on Black mayors (Wilson, 2007).

Breakthrough politicians not only have an impact on behaviors while in office, additionally, and most notably, the campaigns for breakthrough politicians cause for greater group consciousness and political participation of the groups that they descriptively represent. They tend to significantly impact voter patterns and behaviors, as was the case for the 2008 presidential election when there was the possibility of the first time a woman or a Black person would become president (Ifill, 2009). In the case of Black women Democrat voters, during the Democratic primary, as Hilary Clinton and Barack Obama both ran for President, there was much debate over how this particular segment of voters would demonstrate their allegiance (Ifill, 2009).

Breakthrough elections found their origins in the more urban areas of United States (Wilson, 2007). Urban America is where many of the quality of life indicators and national trends are gathered, thus big city mayors are truly poised to make a difference. Most of the American populous is situated in urban areas and the impact on the national policy agenda is difficult to ignore. Many of the policy decisions made in the executive branch of government and find their origin in urban America (Ruchelman, 1969; Yates, 1977; Peterson, 1981). Thus, the leadership of a mayor is critical; who they are, and what potentially influences them is important to explore. Persons (2007) asserts, “economically, politically, socially, and culturally, cities are the defining pillars of American society” (p. 75). It is significant to note that the origins of research on identity in politics are in local government and urban politics (Deleon and Naff, 2004).

Race is a major factor in big city politics with regard to the assessment of mayoral approval (Howell & McLean, 2001). The election of a Black mayor is said by some to be a highly symbolic achievement (Davis, 2007). For mayoral seats as well as all other elected positions held by a Black person, for the Black community, the occurrence of their election into office equates political empowerment (Dawson, 1995; Tate 1994; Nelson & Meranto, 1977). Remarkably, the 1980's was when Black mayoral leadership was at its apex, eight major cities were being led by Black mayors; New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle, Atlanta, Little Rock and Washington D.C. (Snipe, 2000). The impact these mayors had on society and on the Black community generally was significant, "Black mayors, like black congressmen speak as local and as national representatives of black people in America" (Snipe, 2000 pg. 13). Studies on Black mayors have proven to provide valuable insight into their distinction as leaders and as meaningful contributors to American history. Identity matters.

Scholarly research dedicated to the significance of identity in politics has primarily focused on the acknowledgement of the various impacts of race and gender and their imprints left within the realm of politics and public affairs. Those impacts include how individuals decide to run for office, how they become elected, leadership styles and decision making exhibited while in office, voter behaviors and political organizing (Hardy-Fanta, Lien, Sierra & Pinderhughes, 2007; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Moncrief & Thompson, 1991; Mansbridge, 1980). Identity politics has been defined as "...how differences between people are intrinsically created, externally imposed, and culturally represented through a politically charged process of identity formation" (Deleon & Naff, 2004, pg. 691).

Identity with respect to race and gender provides a paradigm from which to predict and understand both political behavior and participation (Masoka, 2008; Dawson, 1994; Tate, 1994; Verba & Nie, 1972). For example, with regard to Latino political behavior, studies have shown that identity matters (Masoka, 2008; DeFranscesco-Soto, 2004). With such heterogeneity within the Latino population, establishing an allegiance either to the group of Latinos as a whole or the various ethnicities within that population is significant with regard to examining the political behaviors of Latinos. Likewise, with gender, not only have there been studies with respect to politicians; but also with regard to gender and voting behaviors. The 2008 presidential election provided fertile ground from which researchers were able to examine gender and voting behaviors with women running for the presidency and vice presidency of the United States (Ifill, 2009).

In particular, within the study of mayors and specifically, women mayors, there has been a dearth of research dedicated to Black women mayors. Like other groups of politicians and mayors, they may bring a unique perspective toward governance and thus their impact is worthy of exploration. The experiences of Black mayors may be quite different from others. Black women politicians are doubly met with obstacles hindering equity, which are presented concurrently from the intersecting domains of discrimination from both gender and race (Collins, 2000).

Statement of Problem

Given the already well-established notion of the significance of identity in politics with emphasis on race and gender, and of Black mayors, there yet remains a paucity of research on Black women mayors. Few, if any researchers have attempted to identify the

unknowns on this subject, one of which is if the intersection of race and gender has any bearing on their experiences as mayors.

There exist few attempts at investigating a clear distinction as to how the experience of being a mayor may be discernibly different for Black women. Of the few studies dedicated to Black women mayors, they tend to focus on the experience of Black women who are mayors of small, poor towns in Southern states; none on mayors who govern big cities and have the potential to influence national mood, economics and policy making. Studies on Black mayors are for the most part, dated, primarily male centered; and tend to focus on how they manage a troubled environment (Davis, 2007). The current realities of Black mayors have yet to be juxtaposed to the experiences of the past; or to those of Black women mayors. Specifically, the element of intersectionality has not been addressed with respect to the governance of Black women mayors.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the influences of race, gender and intersectionality on the mayoral experiences Black women. This study aims to begin to address the deficiencies left in research on Black women mayors, serving as the impetus for more scholarly inquiry. Black women politicians are a unique cadre of leaders that require more study; specifically, Black women mayors.

While there are so few Black women mayors, and in particular, big city Black women mayors, the small numbers present an argument as to why this particular population is worthy of exploratory analysis. Other studies on small subsets of politicians have proven to be extremely valuable, "...the study of women in state legislatures has changed political science; what was once an overlooked, isolated set of studies has

generated a mature subfield with a sound grounding in both theoretical and empirical scholarship” (Cammisa & Reingold, 2004, pg. 205).

Conceptual Framework

“Intersectionality” is a term that is used in research that denotes the interplay of the dimensions of race, gender and social class as they are experienced by women of color. (Crenshaw, 1989; Parker, 2005; Stanley, 2010). Collins and Moyer (2007) assert, “Female minorities endure experiences and face challenges distinctive from Caucasian females or minority males” (p. 219). They are members of two historically subordinate groups in America and their access to gaining political authority and resources of power is not without intense struggle (Malson, Mudimbe-Boyi, O’Barr & Wyer, 1990; Crenshaw, 1992). Harmon-Martin (1994) offers “The black woman in the American political arena has dared to be different, despite a history of legal, social, and economic obstacles to her inclusion in the American polity. The twin legacies of racism and sexism in the United States have had a double impact on black women and have shaped the focus and extent of their involvement in the political processes of our country” (pg. 209).

Given the aforementioned framework, an in depth literature review of substantive research areas is explored. Under the overarching theme of the examination of identity in politics, the literature review will be divided into the research areas of women in politics and mayors. Black women in politics and intersectionality are researched under the umbrella of women in politics. Within the realm of mayors, women as mayors and Black mayors is examined. Within this review, theories of descriptive representation and substantive representation that serve as the underpinnings of research dedicated to race and gender in politics are reviewed. Most significantly, the concept of intersectionality is

introduced and its application toward the investigation of leadership among women of color is examined.

The Venn Diagram shown in Figure 1 provides a visual guide as to how intersectionality is potentially centric to the experiences of big city mayors. The women in this research population were interviewed to provide an understanding as to the significance of identity and intersectionality and its impact throughout their term as big city mayors. Variables that are considered include the structure and form of government, geographic region, leadership styles and abilities, and personal pathways that led to their breakthrough elections.

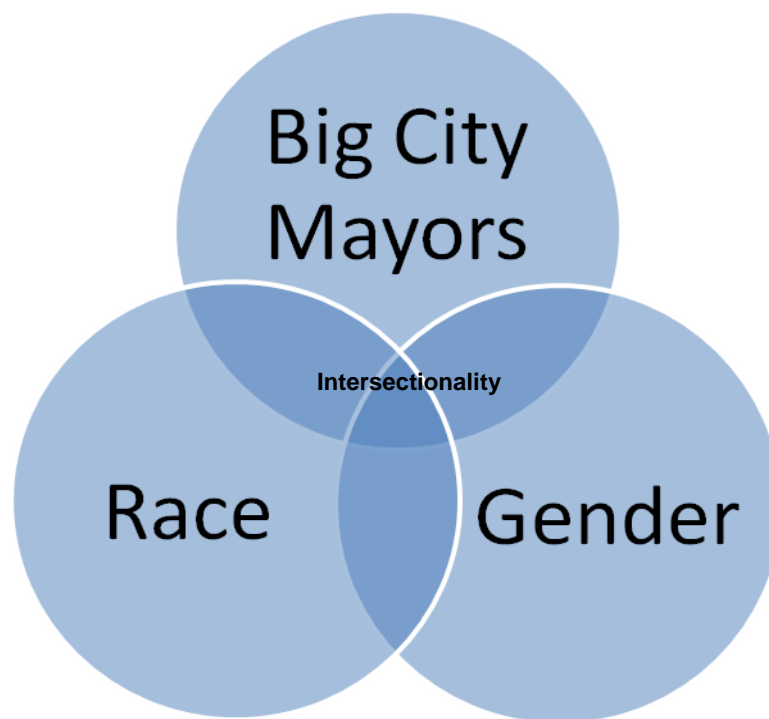


Figure 1. Diagram of Intersectionality for Big City Mayors

Research Question

There are numerous questions regarding Black women mayors that research has failed to answer. This study, through the use of phenomenological methods of inquiry and the conceptual framework of intersectionality will attempt to address questions regarding the lived experiences of Black women mayors.

Overarching Research Question

How do Black women mayors of big cities perceive their racial and gendered identities impacting their experiences as mayor?

This question serves as the umbrella while there are other probing questions that serve to provide a more comprehensive exploration. For example, questions regarding whether race and gender are descriptive or substantive are investigated. Was intersectionality acknowledged and did it provide obstacles? The fact that these women were elected as a result of “breakthrough elections” and the interplay of their decision to run is explored. How value systems impacted their decision to run and their term in office is discussed. When taking office, what they desired to accomplish and if they were able to achieve it is also considered.

Research Design

To answer those questions, I conducted a phenomenological qualitative case study ensued. Phenomenological research converges on the subjective experience of an individual in an attempt to provide the understanding of a phenomenon. (Merriam, 2002). Potential research theory for Black woman mayors is built on data retrieved during field work interviews (Merriam, 1998 and 2002).

Due to the use of phenomenological methods as the primary avenue for the procurement of data, a degree of bias may be present that could potentially impact the fidelity of this study. Identifying researcher bias in the beginning of the study aids in strengthening the internal validity of the research (Merriam, 1998). Phenomenology suggests that studies are conducted through the lived experiences of the participants of the study. Participants in this study shared their experiences as mayors; their successes and their struggles. As the primary research instrument, I was tasked with factually transmitting their stories without distortion; while providing substantive analysis that sought to contribute to the extant literature (Dukes, 1984).

Research Population

Using phenomenological qualitative methods, I conducted case studies of six mayors who were the first Black women in U.S. history to each lead one of America's 100 largest cities. The category of 100 largest U.S. cities was selected because of its customary use in research. "100 largest cities" is a common designation specific to population (US Census Bureau and city-data.com). Data from the 100 largest U.S. cities are guides by which scholars, analysts, media and the government use to determine the pulse of America (Wallstreet Journal, 2010). From growth, to climate change, health indexes and gas prices; a myriad of factors used to forecast the future of America are measured in these cities (Wallstreet Journal, 2010, (Ruchelman, 1969, Yates, 1977, Peterson, 1981).

The six cities range in population of 637,000 – 191,000 (www.city.com). The population size is six and the study participants were mayors in the following cities; Atlanta, Georgia, Baltimore, Maryland, Greensboro, North Carolina, Little Rock,

Arkansas, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Washington DC. All six mayors were interviewed to better explore their mayoral experiences relative to race and gender.

Organization of Study

Following this introductory chapter, a review of the literature is provided in Chapter Two, with an explanation of research methods utilized for this study discussed in Chapter Three. Following the methodology section, a detailed account of data collection and analysis is presented in Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five highlights conclusions drawn from data analysis so as to provide academia with more knowledge about Black women mayors and their perceptions of race and gender and their implications for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Identity in Politics

Women

Of my two 'handicaps' being female put more obstacles in my path than being black. ~ S. Chisholm (Kisner, 1972)

Cultural identity and the varied distinctions that illustrate its essence have a clear role in the political schematic structure of America. Women have an established presence in the political landscape and it is critical to recognize the cultural distinctions of women in politics within the rubric of identity in politics (Trent, Short-Thompson, Mongeau, Metzler, Erickson & Trent, 2010). Just as scholarly research has dedicated resources toward examining identity in politics through the study of Blacks politicians, Hispanics politicians and the like, the influence of cultural identity and women politicians has been studied also. There are unique cultural differences and influences to be explored when researching such sub groups as women in politics, and women as leaders, especially in America; "Female minorities endure experiences and face challenges distinctive from Caucasian females or minority males" (Collins & Moyer 2008, pg. 219). This is also true in the political arena (Harmon-Martin 1994; Kaufmann, 2003).

Women as a subset of politicians are significant to examine. Women make up more than half of the citizenry of America, but are not proportionally represented in the elected polity. As a result, the political system is proportionally deprived of the perspectives of women. That perspective is significant because it has been demonstrated that women bring a particular and unique perspective toward policymaking and governance that should not be ignored (Welch & Clark, 1987; Baer, 1993). Fredrick

Douglass, abolitionist and civil rights leader, proclaimed at a national Women's Suffrage Convention, "No man, however eloquent, can speak for woman as woman can for herself" (Foner, 1976, pg. 1). For the most part, women are indeed best suited to champion their causes and possess the potential to stand out as strong leaders. (Boles, 2001).

The gap in political science research pertaining to women may be due to the composition of the American political system. This is a system that is comprised of political elites. These elites are white males with upper class socio economic standing (Smortensen, 1980). If you're not an upper middle class white male, then your opportunity to pursue membership in the upper echelon of American politics was met with numerous obstacles. The "staples" needed to be successful in politics such as powerful relationships and access to resources that can be bargained for, were lacking in women as a political group (Schramm, 1981).

Initially, the cause for the lack of political research on women was for the most part due to the small numbers of women who actually participated in politics. Socialization theories associated with the nexus of gender roles and American culture have been used to provide explanations as to why in the past, women were not more involved in the political process (Welch & Secret, 1981). The American political culture has been shaped by male dominance and the patriarchy of the political climate. Thus, American women were not socialized to be leaders, to stand out and speak up. They were traditionally groomed to be more subservient and to take a back seat to men; allowing men to be the leaders and have a more prominent presence in politics (Jaros, 1973; Welch & Clark, 1987).

In the early attempts at academic research in politics, it was thought that women were in essence politically irrelevant and that their thinking patterns and behaviors were no different than men (Clark, 1991). Additionally it was believed that women were not appropriate in the political sphere; that politics was ‘man’s work’ (Hill, 1981). Women were believed to have little to no political efficacy; a belief that they even held about themselves (Jaquette, 1974). Studies have shown that in the past that women were perceived as having no ambition specific to the realm of politics (Jennings & Thomas, 1976). Not only has this notion proven to be false; in fact, many men in American political history encouraged women to be politically active (Foner, 1976).

The “Suffrage Amendment”, as it is commonly referred, is the nineteenth amendment added to the United States constitution in 1920 that gave women the right to vote. Another event that propelled women to be more involved politically was the women’s liberation movement of the 1960’s. The 1960’s were a time in American history where there was insurmountable social upheaval and unrest. Civil rights for both women and minorities were sought through the medium of protests, sit-ins and immense public outcry (Conway, Steuernagel & Ahern, 1997). However, significant involvement of women on the political front was not realized until the 1960’s during the civil rights era. Following this era, there were considerable strides made at the start of a contemporary women’s movement (Welch & Clark, 1987; Baer, 1993). Organizations like NOW, the National Organization for Women, which were formed in the 1960’s to help support women in the political arena, garnered advocacy for women’s issues and shed light on the need for scholarly research (Baer, 1993; National Organization for Women webpage, 2012.).

The aforementioned events and others allowed for women to not only be viewed as a significant special interest group, but also to become more visible in the polity; in other words running and being elected to various official positions throughout the nation (Shapiro, 1981). However, women are still perceived as being associated with minority group status; especially due to the unequal numbers of women in elected office in comparison to men (Admundsen, 1971; Schramm, 1981; McDonald & Pierson, 1984).

Simply put, votes get people elected. It would be a disservice to the study of women in politics to not mention the impact gender stereotyping has on voters. Stereotypes are cognitive constructs that provide subjective knowledge about particular groups or individuals and thusly allows for expectations of behaviors to be formed based on these constructs (Hamilton & Trolie, 1986). There is the high possibility that voters have expectations of candidates based on gender. Those stereotypes can hinder a candidate's chances of winning, and more often than not, it's the female candidate who is detrimentally affected (Kahn, 1996; Sobonmatsu, 2003). Kahn asserts, "women's access to political office may be limited by people's stereotypical views of women's capabilities and liabilities" (Kahn, 1996, pg. 131). Studies have shown that voters tend to view female candidates as liberal and have the expectation for them to be Democrats. In some instances, voters have reported that they expect women to be feminists and therefore only care about issues that advance the agenda of women (Koch, 2000; Sobonmatsu, 2003). This is an example of stereotyping which is an element that has a significant impact on voter behavior.

Closely related to stereotyping is the role media plays in shaping electoral politics. The way a candidate is portrayed in the media can literally make or break a

campaign (Atkeson & Krebs, 2008). Women are more likely to receive more focused coverage and media commentary on personal issues such as appearance, wardrobe, age, personality and marital status than their male counterparts (Bystrom, Robertson & Banwart, 2001). Studies from the Elizabeth Dole presidential campaign revealed that her personal characteristics were commented on more in the media than on substantive issues such as her actual policy stances and platform (Aday & Devit, 2001).

Thusly, not only do women have to contend with the obstacles of being in the minority when running for a position, they must also face an additional layer of scrutiny by the public that their male opponents most likely are not subjected to (Heldman, Carroll & Olsen, 2005).

In essence, the media has the power and influence to reinforce gender stereotypes therefore having the potential of thwarting the progression of women in politics.

Clearly there exists a disparity of women in elected office in comparison to males. This disparity for some, could lead toward an inquiry as to what kind of woman would choose to run for elected office and what common qualities or personality characteristics would she possess. With fewer women than men in politics, what kind of woman generally would choose the path less traveled by other women?

In a 1972 study titled, "Personality Characteristics of Women in American Politics", researchers Werner and Bachtold found that women who ran for office were typically highly intelligent and more assertive than women who do not chose to run for office. The same could be attributes of men who run for office. However specific to women, they were also found to be imaginative radicals, venturesome and unconventional thinkers and were found to generally have more liberal attitudes

regarding quality of life and political ideals (Bachtold & Werner, 1972). These were women who were more than likely balancing more than one career (being a politician was a secondary career) and as well as a family. They maneuvered through multiple roles, juggling varying responsibilities often. Women politicians are also often good public speakers with a certain finesse with people and audiences. Their ability to harness the nurturing persona that women typically embody into an ability to motivate both individuals and crowds, is a skill that has proven to be beneficial in achieving success in the political arena (Jensen, 2008).

With an understanding of the personal background that women generally have when interested in running for office, it is also important to examine their behaviors while running for and while in office. Schlessinger's (1966) ambition theory has been used to describe the political behavior and the lack thereof of women (Constantini, 1990; Sapiro & Farah, 1980). The ambition theory proposes to describe the motivation behind the behaviors of the aspiration for political office. It posits that one's political behavior is directly linked to the elected office that one desires to hold and political goals they might have (Schlessinger, 1966; Black 1972). Comparisons of women and their ascension to public office and the trajectory of their careers have been researched relative to the apparent gender gap that is so pervasive in politics. In past studies, it was found that women generally fell short in the areas of political ambition and were less likely to value it (Kirkpatrick, 1976; Fowlkes, Perkins & Rinehart, 1979). In other studies, generally women were found to score low on the political ambition scales and thus, were expected to be underrepresented in the numbers of elected offices (Costantini, 1990).

However, looking ahead on gender based studies throughout the years, now more than ever we can see that the ambition gender gap has decreased (Dodson, Carroll, & Mandel, 1991). This is certainly made evident by the increase in numbers of women in elected office and in the 2008 presidential election cycle where women were running for the highest and second highest elected office in this country; Hilary Clinton on the Democrat ticket for President and Sara Palin on the Republican ticket for Vice President (Rossman, 2010).

What has helped women to ascend and to further advance their existence in office are the domino effects of descriptive representation on having a woman on the ballot. Descriptive representation has been utilized to analyze the political behaviors of women and those belonging to racial minority groups; groups that have been historically marginalized from the political system. It stems from the inherent problem of the design of the American political system leaving void the voices of the minority because predominate control has always rested with the majority, which are white males.

The crux of the descriptive representation theory is the notion that politicians should be elected to represent specific ethnic and gender constituencies, in addition to other specific minority interest groups, rather than solely by the population at large (Carmines & Stimpson; 1989, Grofman & Handley, 1989a). To have particular groups of people excluded from the pool of positions of power and authority may compromise the equity and legitimacy of policy decisions (Clark, 1991). There is an element of symbolic representation that also has the propensity to cause for others of particular gender to run as well. As more women began to see each other hold offices, they served as role models

for others who had an interest to run, therefore increasing the representation of historically marginalized groups like women (Clark, 1991).

Studies have shown that when women are on the ballot there is also an increase in female political participation (Atkeson, 2003). There appears to be more social capital demonstrated by women relative to political engagement. Women are more likely to support other women candidates and try to influence their peers including males to become involved.

Studies also reveal that women do have an impact on public policy outputs. That in fact, their descriptive representation does translate into substantive representation (Leader, 1977; Saltztién, 1986). Substantive representation is a theory that goes beyond the actual the value of having politicians that look like their constituency but actually examines their effectiveness at passing legislation that supports their constituency (Cannon, 1999; O'Brien 2010). Since the policy process involves public deliberation and discourse and as well the garnering of support from various groups, arguably, descriptive representation is at the foundation of substantive representation because the policy needs of those that they represent are likely best communicated by those who are in fact members of that particular group (Mansbridge, 2000). Their value in office has a direct relationship to the policies they support. Scholarly research has proven that not only do women think and behave differently than men, but that these differences permeate in their approaches toward leadership and policy formation (Shapiro, 1981).

Women as Mayors

At the local level of governance is where the political activity of women is often most visible to constituents. In greater numbers, women are serving in municipal, county

and school board seats nationwide (Alozie & Manganaro, 1993). While they may not be the most opportune elected offices to support national policy issues that are germane to women such as reproductive rights and gender based civil rights; local government is an arena whereby the impact of female leadership and governance is experienced close to home; an aspect of governance that was found to be significant to women (Clark, 1991). This aspect is important to women because for those who may also be mothers and caretakers of families, working geographically near their home provides convenience, versus being uprooted to serve in a statewide or national legislative capacity that could potentially require an extreme amount of travel away from home. Throughout the decades as women became more involved in politics many chose to start in the local arena for a variety of reasons including the perceived comfort level and training it presents (Clark, 1991).

Local government politics is also where most career female politicians “cut their teeth” in the political world (MacManus, 1981). Local government is considered the gateway office for the female politician. This does not appear to be an overwhelming theme for men. Women have considered local government office to be a “safe” choice for a variety of reasons; lesser responsibility in comparison to a statewide or federal seat, and that it serves as a training ground for a more hands on experience in learning the political process (MacManus, 1981). In contrast, most male political careers do not begin with local government seats if their political ambition is for a more visible statewide or national seat (MacManus, 1981; Saltzstein, 1986).

While we understand that women have the propensity to become local government office seekers, how they behave in those offices is significant. Research has

shown that women holding office does make a difference regarding policy issues; particularly at the local level (Boles, 1990). At the local level, there is a difference with regard to policy preferences of women politicians. As an example of substantive representation, women appear to support and create policy agendas that deal less with economic growth or development, but more with issues related to neighborhood safety and social welfare (Sapiro, 1983, Burns & Schumaker, 1987, Schumaker & Burns, 1988). In a 1990 study of local elected officials in Milwaukee, women were found to have a significant impact toward advancing the agenda of women issues, and in doing so, aided in sensitizing their male counterparts (Boles, 1990). Women tend to support policies where they themselves can immediately experience the impact in their neighborhoods, communities and families. The tangible impact of these policies is what helps these women to enhance their investment in their community and to have their leadership more readily experienced by their constituents (Boles, 2001).

Even in mayoral campaigns, findings indicated that merely having a woman on the ballot changed the scope of issues that were presented for discourse on the campaign trail by all candidates (Atkeson & Krebs, 2008). The 2008 study of media coverage of six mayoral campaigns suggests that when a woman was on the ballot, more ‘compassion issues’ were covered and in turn, provided greater discourse and attention by the polity on those issues (Atkeson & Krebs, 2008). Compassion issues like neighborhood safety, supporting families and concerns related to the wellbeing of children; issues that are commonly associated with women (Atkeson & Krebs, 2008). At the mayoral level, having women on the ballot does matter.

Female mayors and their descriptive representation also have an impact on the number of women who work in municipal government. A 1986 study found that in cities where women were mayors, there were a greater number of women employed in municipal jobs. Their descriptive representation led to an increase of female representation in the work force (Saltztien, 1986; Boles, 2001). Other situational factors played a role in supporting the increase in numbers, but overall the presence of women had a positive impact on women being more represented in the workforce, specifically, employment outside of the realm of clerical or non-degreed positions. There was a greater increase in numbers of women at the administrative and management level (Saltztien, 1986).

Likely, because the numbers are greater, most of the research at the local level for female candidates has been relegated more generally to city council or county commission/supervisor seats. More research is needed with regard to female mayors generally. According to the US Conference of Mayors (2012), currently there are 196 or 16 per cent of cities with populations of 30,000 and over that have women mayors. Of the 100 largest U.S. cities only eight mayors are women (City-Data, 2011). To increase the numbers of women mayors it is imperative that we learn more about them.

While America saw its first woman become mayor of a major city in 1926, Bertha Landes of Seattle Washington, it wasn't until over sixty years later 1987 that America would experience the first Black women to be elected mayors of major cities. Ironically, it was two women breaking ground much like 20 years earlier when in 1967, the election of the first two Black male mayors of major U.S. cities (Nelson & Meranto, 1977; Nelson, 1978). In 1987, Lottie Shackelford of Little Rock, Arkansas and Carrie Saxon

Perry of Hartford Connecticut were elected as the first Black women mayors of major U.S. cities (Walker, 1998). While Hartford does not meet the population threshold to be categorized as one of the 100 largest U.S. cities, with a population of approximately 124,000 it is still considered a major city.

The elections of Shackelford and Saxon Perry were considered “breakthrough elections.” This phrase is used when a member of an underrepresented group becomes elected and is the first one of that group. Within the scope of identity in politics, specific to race and gender, breakthrough elections are at the forefront (Walton, 1994). Other than being a member of an underrepresented group within an elite category of individuals, there are unique dynamics that present themselves as a result of being “the first” (Walton, 1994). For example, the impact of the expectations placed upon them while in office, not only from those that they represent, but also from their new peers in the polity. Being the first most notably has a significant impact on campaign strategies to become elected to office (Persons, 2007).

In the history of mayors of the 100 largest U.S. cities there have only been six breakthrough elections for Black women. To date, only seven Black women have served as mayor; Lottie Shackelford of Little Rock Arkansas, Sharon Pratt Kelly of Washington, DC, Sharon Sayles Belton of Minneapolis, Minnesota, Shirley Franklin of Atlanta, Georgia, Yvonne Johnson of Greensboro, North Carolina, and Sheila Dixon and Stephanie Rawlings - Blake of Baltimore, Maryland (US Conference of Mayors, 2011).

Currently, of the 100 largest U.S. cities only one has a Black woman mayor, Stephanie Rawlings–Blake of Baltimore Maryland, who took office in February 2010. (Center for the American Woman and Politics, 2010). The six Black women who were

the predecessors of Stephanie Rawlings – Blake represent a unique cadre of trail blazing women whom the literary world knows little about. As a result of their breakthrough elections, they were elected to an office in their city that no other Black woman held. The impact these women may have had on politics, local government and in the fields of public affairs and political science has yet to be examined from a scholarly perspective.

Black Mayors

Black politicians have been studied extensively and have a distinguished presence within the scope of politics and public affairs. Generally, scholarly inquiry has examined them from the perspective of breakthrough elections, within the national realm of congressional and senate positions, state legislative positions and with respect to regional and geographical considerations such as redistricting (Steed, Moreland & Baker, 1987; Desmond-Harris 2012). In particular, a faction of Black politicians who have received considerable literary attention has been Black mayors (Walters, 1974; Colburn & Adler, 2001).

Black mayors first came to the national scene during the pivotal decade of the 1960's. This was a time of social turbulence in American history and thusly, Black mayors were expected by their constituents and the greater polity to have an agenda laden with social reform (Persons, 1985). Events such as the voting rights act and redistricting ensued which allowed for more minority-majority districts to be created, which in turn, gave minorities a greater opportunity to win elections and become members of the elite American political system (Cannon, 1999).

At that time, most Black mayors were elected on the premise of the dissatisfaction with the previous administration, which was more than likely led by whites (Keller,

1978). On the heels of the Civil Rights Movement, Black mayors embraced a charge of “righting the wrongs”, working toward equality; but no longer from a bystander or spectator perspective, but rather as a key decision maker in the governing process.

November 7, 1967 marks a day in American political and urban history where political empowerment by Blacks was achieved in the cities of Cleveland, Ohio and Gary, Indiana. This was the day that the first Black mayors of major US cities were elected into office (Nelson & Merranto, 1977; Biles, 1992; Colburn & Adler, 2001). Since the elections occurred in proximity to the conclusion of the civil rights era, it was perceived that successes gained such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in particular, created a domino effect of greater political engagement experienced by the Black community (Colburn & Adler, 2001). In essence, the election of Black mayors was nationally viewed as the evidentiary fruits of reclaiming rights and living proof of an actualized victory.

Like many Black politicians throughout the years, the elections of Carl Stokes of Cleveland and Richard Hatcher of Gary were considered to be “breakthrough elections” (Persons, 2007). Their elections and what they did in office was of significance both in the political world and to the Black community. This was the first time that Black politicians gained national attention with respect to local governance.

While less than ten percent of US mayors of cities of populations of 50,000 or more are African American, some of our largest cities have at one time or another, in the last two decades been led by Black Mayors; for example, Chicago, Detroit, Atlanta and Washington DC (US Census Bureau, 2011; Joint Center for Political Studies, 2011; Biles, 1992). In fact, of the 100 largest U.S cities in 2011, twenty cities have Black

mayors (US Conference of Mayors, 2011). However, there is limited research dedicated to Black mayors. The research that does exist tends to focus on how they manage a troubled environment, rather than how their leadership infuses a proactive approach toward governance. As a result, there exists a gap in the literature with respect to the impact Black mayors have had on local governance and on the broader American society. This is significant because at one time during the 1980s, eight of the 100 largest U.S. cities were being led by a Black mayor (Snipe, 2000). An evaluation of the impact these mayors may have had on American society during that time remains to be conducted.

Further study and evaluation is needed in large part because, Black mayors have a myriad of issues to contend with outside of the realm of their often conflictual yet concomitant existence of being persons of political authority within the majority, but also belonging to a historically marginalized group of people. Although they may possess the personal characteristics that lend themselves toward being dynamic leaders and catalysts for change, they are also met with constraints stemming from the political, social and economic realm that can impede their ability to effectively govern (Nelson & Merranto, 1977; Swain, 1993; Davis, 2007). These constraints include political opposition, bureaucratic obstacles and dwindling fiscal resources necessary to support agendas toward improvements. In fact, researchers have coined the phrase, “hollow prize” to indicate the Pandora’s Box of city problems that a Black mayor inherits when he/she wins the election (Friesma, 1969).

They often deal with governing cities that are wrought with economic disinvestment, high crime rates, poor educational rankings and many other challenging societal ills (Rich, 1996). In a study conducted in 1993, findings indicated that Black

mayors of major cities are more likely to deal with the issue of urban decline (Swain, 1993). Urban decline is defined as a decrease in employment and population and other functional changes that occur within cities that cause them to have problems in governance (Brown, 1997). The daunting challenges these mayors and many others they inherit when they take office have a direct impact on their effectiveness as mayor.

Other studies have provided another perspective on the so-called “hollow prize” (Keller, 1978; Persons, 1985). In reference to how a Black mayor is generally perceived or accepted, there have been studies to indicate the symbolic presence of a Black mayor added to urban decline, causing “white flight” (Catlin, 1993). The presence of a solidified and stable Black political base was proposed to be the cause of the mass exodus of white businesses in Gary, Indiana after the re-election of then-Mayor Richard Hatcher. Additionally, in a study tracking retail success in white versus Black mayor led cities during the 1970’s and 1980’s it was found that an increase in retail was enjoyed by those cities governed by White mayors, while cities governed by Black mayors experienced a noticeable decline (Brown, 1997). Essentially, these findings beg the question if the presence of Black mayors contributes to or perpetuates urban decline.

The election of a Black mayor is indeed symbolic. The descriptive representation that they personify can serve to increase the attention given by the state and federal officials for issues affecting the Black community, and urban America. The representation can also serve to give constituents in the Black community a sense of empowerment and a feeling of fairness because they have a voice in the political arena. Swain asserts, “They represent political, economic and social aspirations of Black

communities to have control over some aspects of their environments” (Swain, 1993, pg. 26).

Because of the symbolic representation of a Black person in office, one might surmise that a Black mayor identifies with the salient issues that are affecting the Black community of the city they represent. Their Black constituents may have the propensity to link the mayors’ perceived power toward their ability to make marked changes to benefit their community (Rich, 1996). Past studies have shown that for Black mayors, achieving success while in office is largely dependent upon the strength of their relationship to the Black middle class (Persons, 1985; Rich, 1996).

The presence of a Black mayor with the support of the Black community can lead to increased political involvement. Theories relative to political socialization have emerged that serve to explain group consciousness and behaviors (Hardy-Fanta, 2007; Prestage, 1994; Dawson, 1995). Within studies related to the political behavior of racial minority groups, it was found that when minority is in office or even running for office, there exists more political participation by minorities of the same group (Dawson 1995; Tate 1994). In particular for Black Americans, Dawson discusses a “black utility heuristic” which argues “African Americans can and do infer self-interests from African American group interests more generally” (Kaufmann, 2003, pg. 200; Dawson, 1994). This heuristic is often reflected in the political behavior Black Americans as it is “efficient for individual African American to use the perceptions of the interests of African Americans as a group proxy for their own interests” (Kaufmann, 2003, pg. 200). A Black person on the ballot represents and encourages Black political participation and mobilization (Travis, 1994).

Another by-product of the presence of Black mayoral leadership is the impact of an increase in diversity of the municipal workforce. A 1982 study of forty three U.S. cities under which Black mayors were governing yielded a positive relationship between the existence of a Black mayor and an increase in diversity in city government (Eisinger, 1982). The notion that Black political power can increase the presence of Blacks in the workforce over which they govern is in fact true (Levine, 1974; Eisinger, 1980, 1982; Nye, Rainer, & Stratmann, 2010). Affirmative action practices may have also contributed to the rise in Black civil service employees; however there is a well-researched relationship between Black mayors and the ratio of Black employees (Eisinger, 1980; Eisinger, 1982, Nye et al., 2010). In a 2010 study of the effectiveness of Black mayors toward the improvement of Black employment outcomes, it was found that there is indeed a positive correlation, especially in the realm of city of government jobs (Nye, et al., 2010).

The number of Black mayors has increased over time. Currently, there are 657 Black mayors in American cities ranging in populations from 550 to 1.5 million (US Conference of Mayors, 2011). As the propensity for Blacks to assimilate and acculturate has increased, so has the presence of Black politicians, specifically in the local arena with mayors (Marshall & Meyer, 1975; Karnig & Welch, 1980; Alozie, 2000; Gilbert, 2006). This theoretical link between social stratification and political advancement exists because Black politicians were able to secure the support of the white mainstream culture often times due to their educational advancements and their ascent socially and professionally to the middle or upper class designation (Marshall & Meyer, 1975). Cities with a larger percentage of Blacks in a higher socioeconomic status were more than likely

to have Black mayoral candidates and consequently Black mayors (Marshall & Meyer 1975; Gilbert, 2006). Black mayors can now be found as mayors of cities that are not majority-minority and generally do not have identical issues encountered in the early days of the genesis of Black mayors (Alozie, 2000; Gilbert, 2006). This occurrence is also in part due to de-racialized campaign strategies that they employed to simmer the divisive effects of race identification; making themselves more attractive and appealing to non-Black voters (Perry, 1991; Alozie, 2000).

In an effort to be fair and remain favorable in public opinion, the success of a Black mayor is largely dependent upon his/her ability to remain responsive to the needs of all constituents, despite the propensity and expectation for them to be more empathetic to the Black community. In a 1978 study on the impact of Black mayors and public policy, it was highlighted that Black mayors often experience internal conflict within their leadership; feeling the responsibility to be supportive of the Black community while desiring to remain “electable” and garner the confidence and support of their peers and non-black constituents (Keller, 1978). This conflict is experienced by most Black politicians and is further exacerbated by the critical expectations of Black constituents (Nye, et al, 2010). This struggle is aligned with the theories of descriptive and as well substantive representation.

Race matters. In a study examining the approval ratings of Black mayors versus white mayors, it was found that race had a greater impact on the approval of a Black mayor than do white mayors utilizing a performance model based on outcomes (Howell & Perry, 2004). In a 2000 survey of the mayors of the cities of Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans and Charlotte, it was found that racial polarization existed and that most of the

respondents utilized race in determining their overall approval of both white and Black mayors. It was found that in those cities with the highest Black populations, the approval rating for various municipal services, were extremely low (Howell & Perry, 2004).

But who are Black mayors and what are the common characteristics that they possess? Establishing a profile of Black mayors is significant in that this is a unique group of individuals who have chosen to put themselves in an elite category of public servants despite the many perceived obstacles. In the Colburn Study of sixty seven Black mayors in large US cities from 1967 to 1996, characteristics of mayors included a variety of conclusions. Close to ninety-nine per cent of the mayors were college educated, with the majority having advanced degrees such as masters or doctoral degree; fifty per cent of the mayors had law degrees. More than half had previous experience with local government politics. Previous employment experience ran the gamut from lawyering in the private sector, to serving as professors, working in federal government and in the military. However the most salient characteristic of this group were that they were predominately male. Only four of the sixty seven mayors were women (Colburn & Adler, 2001).

The scarcity of women in this sample was not on purpose; those were the only women available (Colburn & Adler, 2001). The fact that the sample had a very small sub group of women sheds light on the dearth of Black women mayors. Because there are grave inequities with the numbers of males versus females, it begs the question of why this is so. Why are there more Black male mayors than Black female mayors? A logical step in answering that question and others regarding Black women mayors, lies within

researching them. They are a unique group of women and currently there is little research solely dedicated to address them.

Black Women

“The black woman in the American political arena has dared to be different, despite a history of legal, social and economic obstacles to her inclusion in the American polity. The twin legacies of racism and sexism in the United States have had a double impact on black women and have shaped the focus and extent of their involvement in the political processes of our country” (Harmon-Martin, 1994, pg. 209).

Within politics, as women as a whole have been historically marginalized, there are racial subsets of women who have also experienced this exclusion; their cultural experiences can be major factors or indicators as to their behaviors as politicians (Bass, 2009). In particular, for Black women politicians, they are members of two groups that have been historically excluded from the more formal roles of civic life such as holding an elected office. They experience the burdens of both sexism and racism simultaneously. The paucity of research on Black women politicians is evidence of this exclusion (Prestage, 1991; Clayton, 2003).

Highlighting the dearth in research is important because of the rich history of Black women leaders in this country and the impacts created. Black American women have always have displayed leadership in creating change for their community (Bass, 2009). Early accounts of their demonstrations of leadership in America date back to the pre-emancipation era where enslaved Black women organized silent protests; for example corralling other enslaved women to terminate pregnancies originating from rape at the hands of their slave masters (Prestage, 1991).

They also served as leaders and organizers helping their fellow slaves escape to freedom as known by the famous accounts of Ms. Harriet Tubman “conductor” of the Underground Railroad (Prestage, 1991). Ms. Maria Stewart, a noted Black feminist was the first Black woman to speak at an Abolitionist conference with a mixed audience of men and women, white and Black, and is on record as the first speech publically performed by a Black woman in 1832 (Prestage, 1991; Collins 2001). Renowned community activists and civic leaders Mary Church Terrell and Ida B. Wells assisted in the early discussions of anti-lynching laws and even secured meetings with the President of the United States, Benjamin Harrison in 1892 (Giddings, 1984). But even while displaying leadership within their community in that era, Black women were still considered to be in lower regard than Black men. Sexism was experienced even within their own culture (Giddings, 1984).

Moving forward to post emancipation and Post-Civil War eras, the Suffrage Movement and the passage of the 19th amendment was when an opportunity to collectively champion the rights of women presented itself, Black women were still marginalized. In fact, the role of Black women in the movement is not well chronicled and only a few researchers have been able to recount what actually occurred (Giddings, 1984). However what was written is how relations between Black women and the women’s movement was described as ranging from “troubled to conflictual” (Prestage, 1991, pg. 94).

While the goal was for all women to enjoy the fruits of greater equality, specifically the right to vote, “For Black women suffrage was both feminist and a racial demand for equality” (Giddings, 1984, pg. 159). Black and white women activists had a

difficult time working together due to the differences in goals (Giddings, 1984). The aftermath of the civil war created a tense atmosphere for the potential of any positive relations to blossom between Black and white women fighting together in the women's liberation movement. Primarily, white women saw it necessary to distance themselves from Black women in order to legitimize their efforts in the perspective of white males (Prestage, 1991).

The women's liberation movement, which saw its' peak in the mid 1960's, has been cited as a pivotal influence in creating greater opportunity for women to be in leadership positions and run for office (Nelson, 1984). The National Organization for Women (NOW) was founded in 1966 as a means for securing and ensuring equality for women and that women leaders were supported to further champion the efforts of other women (National Organization for Women, 2012). However this movement did not have the same yield for all women, even though the premise of the fight was by all accounts the same; to combat the longstanding history of the patriarchal system that kept women from positions of authority, power and influence (See, 1989).

Women of color, namely Black women, were not recipients of all the benefits the women liberation movement. They were not as easily embraced by the movement. In fact, many Black women who ran for office during this time did not receive the support from the women's liberation movement that they might have expected (Giddings, 1984). One specific illustration of this is when in 1972 New York State Representative, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm (the first Black female elected to the U.S. House of Representatives) became the first Black woman to run for President of the United States. Chisholm received dismal support from her female comrades involved in the liberation

movement (Harmon-Martin, 1994). During critical times throughout her campaign she felt she was left “high and dry”, fending for herself not only as a woman in a male dominated political world, but also as a Black woman in a White dominated political world (Chisholm, 1970). Like Shirley Chisholm, other Black women were frustrated by the same lack of support and inclusion and in 1973 The National Black Feminist Organization was formed due to NOW not addressing the unique issues affecting Black women (Prestage, 1991). Subsequently, because of these and other major occurrences in history, there exists somewhat of a divide between Black and White women, especially in the realm of politics (Hill Collins, 2001).

However this divide is not only evident racially, but also with respect to gender. Black women politicians also appear to be lost in the midst of scholarly research dedicated to Black politicians (Clayton, 2003). Research has shown that there is a distinct correlation between the power and strength of the resources in the Black community to the propensity for the existence of and success of Black politicians (Alozie & Maganaro, 1993). Research only supports this to be the case for Black male politicians. Historically, resources geared toward political empowerment in the Black community have been disproportionately allocated toward the Black male politician (Karnig & Welch, 1980; Sigelman & Sigelman, 1982; Alozie & Maganaro, 1993).

Hill-Collins states, “Forbidding the Black woman to vote, excluding African-Americans and women from public office, and with holding equitable treatment in the criminal justice system all substantiate the political subordination of Black women” (Collins, 2001, pg. 4). The injustices relative to discrimination and racism that permeate American history have influenced the behaviors, more specifically the political behaviors

of Black women. While the true impact of these injustices which has in some instances led to the oppression experienced by Black women are not easy to quantify or measure, they still provide a context from which to understand generally the political behaviors exhibited by Black women.

Conceptual Framework: Descriptive Representation and Black Identity Development

In analyzing the role of race and its' impact on mayoral experiences, theories that provide a framework for understanding include descriptive representation and the Black Identity theory. Descriptive representation refers to the notion of individuals who are elected to represent specific ethnic and gender constituencies (Bratton & Haynie, 1999). Depending on the constituent base, some elections for mayors in this study could have been as a result of descriptive representation. However, once elected, the Black Identity theory, which explains the obligatory inclination to help the Black community, may be applicable (Keller, 1978; Cross, 1985; Prestage, 1991; Harris, 1995). Likewise, a collective responsibility to "right the wrongs" through political means may underscore some of their political behaviors (Rogers, 2005). A major assumption is that the Black community had a significant role in their achievement to become mayor. Also, the Black middle class as a sub population is assumed to have impacted the mayors' success (Marshall & Meyer, 1975; Persons, 1985; Rich, 1996; Gilbert, 2006). As a result, their perceived allegiance to the Black community throughout their term is explored.

With respect to gender and its impact on their mayoral experiences, literature has shown that gender does indeed provide a context from which to better understand female political behavior. Women are known to operate as consensus builders, are very assertive, have unique communication styles and tend to be more liberal (Bachtold &

Werner, 1972; Welch, 1977). Women mayors have been found to be more responsive to the community and tend to support “compassion issues” such as neighborhood safety and social welfare (Sapiro, 1983; Shumaker & Burns, 1988; Atkeson & Krebs, 2007). Black women in elected office have been found to operate with a strong sense of collegiality and utilize teaming approaches (Carroll & Strimling, 1983; Prestage, 1991).

While it is expected that race and gender have impacted the mayoral experiences of the women in this case study, whether the impact of race and gender were ever experienced in a mutually exclusive fashion allows for the theory of intersectionality to be considered. Black Feminist Theory undergirds the concept of intersectionality and examines how race, gender and the long term consequences stemming from of a history of the impact of discrimination of Black women. The term “double outsider” is often used to describe how Black women feel in professional settings (Hill Collins, 2001; Catalyst 2004; Byrd, 2009; Marie, Williams & Sherman 2009). Black Feminist Theory postulates that as a result of those feelings and cultural considerations that there are unique leadership qualities of Black women (Hill Collins, 2001; Catalyst, 2004; Byrd, 2009; Marie, Williams & Sherman, 2009). Black women are typically found to demonstrate an ethic of care and Black women leaders are found to use their sphere of influence to take corrective action toward unjust situations may be a prominent finding (Hill Collins, 2001; Bass 2009).

Given the history of discrimination experienced by Black women and the dearth of Black women elected officials, the career paths and roadmaps that led toward the decision to run for mayor are also examined. Previous leadership experience in politics, local government and community organizations would aid in the political finesse of these

mayors (Colbern & Adler, 2001). Albeit there is a perceived lack of political capital and access due to the history of marginalization of Black women in American politics (Collins, 2001). However the fact the women of this study are trailblazers with high expectations of performance, their behaviors in office may be explained by the ambition theory which posits that political behavior is directly linked to political goals; (Schlessinger, 1966; Black 1972; MacManus, 1991).

Intersectionality

Collins and Moyer (2008) assert, “Black women are silenced between the rocks and hard places of racism and sexism. One way to begin to think about this space is suggested by the concept of intersectionality” Intersectionality is a theory that encapsulates the burdens of oppression that are uniquely experienced by minority women due to the nexus race and gender (Byrd & Stanley 2009; Collins, 2001). Intersectionality is defined as “the various ways in which race, gender, and social class interact to shape the multiple dimensions of the everyday lived experiences of African American women” (Stanley, 2009, pg. 552). Intersectionality denotes a “multiplier effect”; oppression in the spheres of race, gender and social class are experienced simultaneously by Black women (Hill Collins, 2001; Stanley, 2009; Parker, 2005)

In defining and in some cases, redefining herself, the Black woman is on a constant journey of mitigating the stereotypes and discriminative practices that have historically served to thwart progress and weaken her stance as a leader (Woodard & Mastin, 2005). While intersectionality can be experienced by women who do not identify as Black, “This dual vulnerability of African American women does not simply mean that our burdens are doubled, but instead, that the dynamics of racism and sexism intersect in

our lives to create experiences that are sometimes unique to us” (Collins & Moyer, 2008 p. 219). In particular, slavery and residual effects left of that significant facet of American history on the American culture and on Black Americans is primarily why intersectionality was conceptually born out of the study of Black women and Black Feminist Thought. Intersectionality was first introduced as a theory for which to better understand the unique experiences of Black women in America (Collins, 2001). How the occurrence of intersectionality impacts the perceptions Black women have of themselves, and how others perceive them, is directly correlated to the behaviors they exhibit (Crenshaw, 1992; Collins, 2001).

Black women experience intersectionality as a result of how others may negatively perceive them, which is often the consequence of stereotypes (Crenshaw, 1992; Collins, 2001). Stereotyping has been identified as the key component as to how the occurrence of the negative effects of intersectionality remain ever-present even still today (Woodard & Mastin, 2005). Predominating stereotypes that have been identified for Black women are “the mammy, the matriarch, the sexual siren and the welfare mother or queen” (Woodard & Mastin, 2005 pg. 266). The “angry Black woman” is also an image that is commonly referenced. This image depicts Black women as aggressive and overbearing, difficult to work with and with a constant chip on their shoulders (Collins, 2001). These images have historic value as to how Black women were portrayed in the media and thusly how mainstream America’s perceptions of them were formed (Collins, 2004; Giddings 1984).

Mitigating these stereotypes and others can impact both the professional and personal lives of Black women. The pressure to over perform, to people please, to gain

the respect of others are just a few of the burdens experienced by Black women often times due to how intersectionality is experienced (Giddings, 1984; Collins 2001). There exists a legacy of struggle that is often a recurring theme both in and out of the work place. This is not say that all Black women have the same experiences or that they respond to them in the same manner, but that there are core themes that are shared within the historic context of racism and sexism.

In a 2004 study on Black women in corporate America, it was found that Black women were more likely to experience instances of the questioning their credibility and authority than their black male and white colleagues of each gender. Overall they were found to be more likely to experience the effects of being a “double outsider” because unlike Black men and white women, Black women were least like most of their managers who were White males (Catalyst, 2004; Marie, Williams & Sherman, 2009).

Whether it is in corporate America or the realm of politics, intersectionality does influence behaviors. The impact of intersectionality encountered by Black women politicians is a unique experience and thus impacts leadership and decision making that is difficult to ignore (Collins, 2001; Bass, 2009; Byrd & Stanley, 2009). Intersectionality as it is experienced has been found to be at the base of the unique leadership qualities that Black women are likely to demonstrate (Collins, 2001).

Research has revealed that Black women’s approach toward governance differs from the typical Eurocentric or Western tenants of politics. It involves more than just the acquisition of decision making power and authority, rather there is the recognition of the existence of a communal perspective that incorporates independence from the majority (Harmon-Martin, 1994). It is the acknowledgement that more often than not, a Black

person in politics exists in two worlds, being one of the majority, representing a majority minority district but existing as a minority within the greater realm of the polity (Rogers, 2005; Bass 2009).

For Black women, there is a larger sense of responsibility in politics that incorporates a context of being part of a collective; a collective that has been manipulated and marginalized by the American political process (Rogers, 2005). Collective responsibility is the framework from which many Black women politicians lead. An “ethic of care” underscores this framework. The ethic of care incorporates helping their community by taking corrective action toward unjust situations and leading others to do the same (Harmon-Marting, 1994; Bass, 2009). This ethic care has its roots in a legacy of oppression and the perceived obligation to rescue future generations from it (Bass, 2009).

Also guiding the collective responsibility are the influences of family, church and community which are overwhelmingly driving forces behind a Black woman’s decision to run for office (Rogers, 2005). Black women politicians overwhelmingly state that membership to community and religious organizations and as well, serving in leadership capacities within those organizations have supported their quest for political office (Prestage, 1991).

In a 1983 study, it was found that Black female politicians belonged to more community and other organizations than did their white female and males of any race counterparts (Carroll & Strimling, 1983; Prestage, 1991). Collegiality and teaming with others appears to be significant components to the portrait of the Black woman in elected office. In many cases this consensus building spirit is a necessary component for success (Bass, 2009).

The political activities of the Black women politician are geared toward trying to assuage their perceived underprivileged or disadvantaged status. In the 1983 study conducted by Carroll & Strimling, they found that in comparison to their white male and female counterparts, that Black women elected officials were actually found to be “highly qualified, politically experienced and self-confident, outdoing women office holders overall, who are themselves outdoing men” (Carroll & Strimling, 1983, p. 37).

Other findings included that while Black women lacked more formal political ties and experience; proportionally, more of them attended college, and one of the more salient findings was that membership to organizations and groups were the primary avenues to which they gained political access, many of them having leadership positions in these organizations. Their membership was not only maintained after becoming elected to office, they were often times elevated into leadership positions. These were considered to be very nontraditional activities after becoming elected because many of these special interest groups were considered to be civil rights organizations such as the NAACP that may leave a perception of favoritism to a particular segment of the community.

In comparison to their white female counterparts, other findings included that they were less likely to be married, less likely to have children, and if they did have children, they were usually under the age of twelve when they ran for office which indicated a sense of urgency felt by the Black woman to run rather than to wait until what most would consider a more opportune time where their children were older. Also, they were overwhelmingly found to be Democrats, more so than white women (Carroll & Strimling, 1983).

As leaders, Black women politicians are often guided by the need to foster a sense of activism coupled by an “ethic of care” (Noddings, 1984; Hill Collins, 2001; Bass 2009). These guiding forces combined with the general personal characteristics of Black women politicians adds to the mystique of who these women are and what impact they have in politics.

Research should continue to discover more about Black women politicians. The Black woman mayor is a phenom that begs for more attention, more scholarly research, more exploration. With so little information known about Black women mayors, it begs many questions. What makes Black women mayors unique relative to their other mayoral counterparts or other politicians in general? A glaring distinction is that they have the propensity to experience concomitant political barriers due to their race and gender, which are never mutually exclusive. Other questions then arise as to how race and gender and the concept of intersectionality can impact their overall mayoral experience.

The study of six Black women mayors who came into office as a result of “breakthrough elections” may provide greater understanding as to the experiences of Black women politicians. Their stories could be of benefit to both males and females of all ethnicities. There is a sense of obligation to study these women; to make the world more aware of who they are, and their impact on America.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Restatement of Problem and Research Questions

This chapter provides a road map as to how data was retrieved and analyzed so as to achieve an understanding of Black women mayors with respect to how the dynamics of both race and gender are experienced. Due to the lack of research pertaining to this small population of elected officials, qualitative phenomenological research methods will be utilized on this select category of Black women. In the history of the 100 largest U.S. cities, there have only been seven Black women to serve as mayor. Only six of those seven are distinguished as the first Black women to serve as mayor of cities in the category of the 100 largest U.S. cities. These women are in a very elite category of mayors, not only are they Black women mayors, they are the first Black women to serve in major cities. The dynamic of them being the “first” may potentially have an influence on their experiences as mayors and policy makers. Because they were a “first” is why they were selected for this study.

Within the realm of academic research dedicated to mayoral leadership and African Americans in politics, Black female mayors have largely been ignored. This study explores their perceptions of their lived experiences as mayors. At the foundation of this study is that the mayors, from their own perceptions, shape the research without the ability to truly juxtapose their insight to other groups.

Through the use of transcribed data derived from in depth qualitative interviews, their lived experiences will be described, categorized, themed and analyzed.

Overarching Research Question

How do Black women mayors of big cities perceive their racial and gendered identities impacting their experiences as mayor?

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design. According to Stake (1995) provides, “qualitative researchers have pressed for understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists” (p. 37). Historically, qualitative research has had a focus of understanding better what is largely unknown about groups or individuals or that has not yet been fully explored (Creswell, 2009). Indeed, it would be easy to surmise that this focus is inherently the intrinsic value of research, methodology notwithstanding. However, qualitative research and its inductive methods of data collection promote an empathic understanding by the researcher as participant techniques. It serves as a form of analytical discovery without the use of statistical methodologies and search for cause which is more commonly associated with quantitative research (Stake, 1995).

Understanding denotes the seeking of a deeper meaning behind actions versus an explanation of on the surface causal account of occurrences. Understanding gained through the use of interpretation as a lens of qualitative data analysis has value (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). Qualitative as an empirical form of research begins with a broad research question that allows for the researcher to have greater flexibility in arriving at how to best approach forming answers to that question. While there are no definitive or concrete answers, those answers are achieved through deriving the lived experiences of the research participants and the descriptions and interpretation of those experiences from the researcher. In essence, the answer is purely providing a descriptive understanding of

the participants' personalized definition of their world (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). The actions that are most commonly associated with achieving said understanding are “visiting personally with informants, spending extensive time in the field, and probing to obtain detailed meaning” (Creswell, 2003, pg. 193). The researcher serves as the data collection instrument. Interviewing is the primary method of data collection for this study.

Phenomenological Approach as the Qualitative Methodology

There are several approaches toward qualitative research, each one having their own unique style of data collection and analysis. According to Creswell (2009), phenomenology, as a form of qualitative research “is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants” (Creswell, pg. 3). This is a practice of research that allows for the participant to guide how behavior is interpreted and understood. Bogdan and Taylor (1975) assert “The Phenomenologist examines how the world is experienced. For him or her, the important reality is what people imagine it to be” (Bogdan & Taylor, pg. 2). Because this is a group of elected officials and the goal is to learn more about their perceptions of the influence of gender and race on their governance. Media coverage and stakeholder input will also serve to tell their story. Outside of interviews, there are other avenues of learning about their experiences.

The origins of Phenomenology date back to German Philosopher, Edmund Husserl who in the beginning of the 20th century intended to create a new philosophical methodology that would “lend absolute certainty to an disintegrating civilization” (Eagelton, 1983, pg. 54). Disappointed with the direction of the philosophical

underpinnings of science solely focusing on study of material things, or simply explaining cause and effect for relationships, Husserl strongly believed in the strength of one's own immediate experience as the construct for their personal consciousness. Experiences are devoid of presuppositions and influences from the external world (Moustakas, 1994). Experiences as they occur are our reality. Husserl asserted that realities are indeed personal and should be treated as phenomena (Gronewald, 2004).

Through the use of interviewing, and other methods of data collection, the phenomenologist is afforded the opportunity to descriptively tell the story of the participants through their own words. Experiences are described through the use of open ended and follow up questions that are aimed at delving deeper into a realm or phenomenon that has either not been explored or that is largely misunderstood. Interviewing as a form of data collection allows the researcher to develop a product of how the participant interprets their world. Lincoln and Guba state as described by Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993) "Interviews allow the researcher and respondent to move back and forth in time; to reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and predict the future" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, pg. 85). For this study, data are contained within the perspectives of the six women mayors who were the first to Black women in American history to hold a mayoral seat in six of the 100 largest U.S. cities.

Research Population

For phenomenological research methods, the recommended number of participants is between three and ten (Moustakas, 1994). Small and manageable numbers of participants is optimal whereby intimate data analysis can be achieved. Six

participants are studied in this body of research. In U.S history, these are six women who were the first Black women to serve as mayor in six of the 100 largest cities. To date, there have only been seven Black women to serve as mayor in those cities. The only Black woman mayor currently in office is the successor of the one of the women included in this study. The select population of women for this study includes the following mayors from the following cities. They are listed in Table 1 titled Research Population in chronological order from when they took elected office with the population of their respective city, the percentage of Black community in their city and the form of city government under which they served.

Table 1

Research Population

NAME	CITY	YEARS IN OFFICE	POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF BLACK COMMUNITY (WHILE IN OFFICE)	FORM OF GOVERNMENT
Hon. Lottie Shackelford	Little Rock, AR	1987 -1991	191,930	38.16%	Council - Manager
Hon. Sharon Pratt Kelly	Washington, DC	1991- 1995	599,657	55.6%	Strong Mayor
Hon. Sharon Sayles Belton	Minneapolis, MN	1994-2001	385,542	18.0%	Strong Mayor
Hon. Shirley Franklin	Atlanta, GA	2001-2009	540,921	55.8%	Strong Mayor
Hon. Yvonne Johnson	Greensboro, NC	2008-2010	255,061	37.4%	Council - Manager
Hon. Sheila Dixon	Baltimore, MD	2007-2010	637,418	63.2%	Strong Mayor

Data Collection

Each of the participants were contacted via email and telephone to schedule an appointment for the interview. However, connecting with each of the participants was no simple feat given their high profile and busy schedules. In total, approximately four months elapsed between the time of the initial contact for the first research participant and the point at which all interviews were scheduled.

In four out of the six instances, the assistance of an outside party was necessary to secure contact with the participants. A friend who was a former staffer for the Arkansas State Democratic Party helped to connect with Lottie Shackleford. I was able to call her directly to schedule the interview. As a form of snowballing research methods where one participant engages another individual to participate in the study, Ms. Shackleford called her comrades at the Democratic National Committee to connect with Sheila Dixon. After several emails clarifying the purpose of the interview, Ms. Dixon accepted the invitation.

To connect with Sharon Pratt, I had the benefit of becoming acquainted with the wife of her former chief of staff. This couple facilitated a connection via email with Ms. Pratt that allowed for the scheduling of an interview. A friend of my mother who resides in Minneapolis has a mutual friend with Sharon Sayles Belton who provided a connection also via email. After several emails, Ms. Belton agreed to be interviewed.

I was able to connect with Shirley Franklin directly via email through an internet search of her nonprofit, Purpose Built Communities. Due to Yvonne Johnson currently serving as Mayor Pro Tem of Greensboro, I contacted her directly through the City of Greensboro website.

After appointments were solidified with each of the mayors, flight and hotel arrangements were scheduled in order to travel to each of the participants to interview them face to face. All six mayors still resided in the cities where they governed as mayor. Interviews with the six mayors were audio recorded with their permission. The informed consent form was made available and signed by each participant (Appendix B).

The participants' experiences were shared in their own words during structured interviews conducted by the researcher. Moustakas (1994) states "evidence from

phenomenological research is derived from first-person reports of life experiences” (pg. 84). Interviews were conducted in the city where the Mayor governed and in a place of the mayors’ choosing.

A series of probing open ended, in depth, interview questions were asked in an attempt to garner the mayors’ experiences relative to the influence of their perceptions of race and gender; as they occurred in concert and as mutually exclusive. Questions were “directed to the participant’s experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions about the theme in question” (Welman & Kruger, 1999, pg. 196). Interview questions are displayed as Appendix A. The duration of the interview and word counts are listed in Table 2 and are listed in the order they were interviewed.

Table 2

Interview Measurements

MAYORS	INTERVIEW DURATION (minutes)	TOTAL WORDS	NUMBER OF TRANSCRIPT PAGES
Hon. Lottie Shackelford (Little Rock, AR)	77	5,738	12
Hon. Sharon Pratt Kelly (Washington, DC)	88	9,793	16
Hon. Sheila Dixon (Baltimore, MD)	74	8,003	15
Hon. Yvonne Johnson (Greensboro, NC)	76	7,214	14
Hon. Shirley Franklin (Atlanta, GA)	105	12,268	22
Hon. Sharon Sayles Belton (Minneapolis, MN)	141	14,868	26

At the conclusion of the interview, demographic questions were asked of each of the mayors so as to build a profile. The participant profile is in Chapter Four displayed as Table 10. Each interview was then transcribed by the researcher. After the interviews, field notes from the researcher’s perspective that would best describe the initial thoughts, feelings and behaviors displayed by the participant for each question were developed.

Field notes were then utilized throughout the analysis process as point of comparison to actual transcribed data. Gronewald states “Field notes are a secondary data storage method in qualitative research” (Gronewald, 2004, pg. 15). Time is of the essence with the completion of field notes and they should be produced within a twenty four hours of each interview due to the natural limitations of memory. Field notes as an initial method of data analysis is beneficial in comparing overall themes that emerge from the recorded data. In addition, reflexive journaling was conducted as another point of comparison. Reflexive journaling is a process where the researcher provides an expository account of the interview from their perspective. Once all interviews were conducted, transcribing the interviews ensued in order for data to be analyzed.

Data Analysis

For the researcher, the process of analysis can appear to be never ending as one pours over the transcribed data to ascertain thematic conclusions. However, there are clearly delineated processes that are recommended as best practices. Husserl as cited by Moustakas has identified four critical phases of phenomenological data analysis of which said data underwent; Epoche or bracketing exercises that aid in the researcher becoming more self-aware and proactive toward mitigating any preconceptions or presuppositions (Moustakas, 1994). The second phase is Transcendental Phenomenological Reduction which requires the researcher to create non repetitive statements and units of meaning from the data. The third phase is a grouping process referred to as Imaginative Variation where the clustering of units of meaning into rich themes in order to achieve a structural description occurs. Lastly, Synthesis of Meanings and Essences, the final phase involves analyzing the experiences of the participants as a collective. The researcher provides an

overall composite of thorough and all-encompassing description from the grouped units of significance. Essentially, the units of significance are coalesced to offer an overall description of the essence of phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Cresswell 1998; Gronewall, 2004).

Hycner another Phenomenological researcher breaks down the process even further, providing more granular steps of analysis that are aligned with what Moustakas suggests (Hyner 1985). Table 3 illustrates those steps, however within Chapter five is where the data analysis is operationalized.

Table 3
Steps in Phenomenological Analysis

MOUSTAKAS	HYCNER
1. Epoche	1. Bracketing
2. Phenomenological Reduction	2. Delineating Units of Meaning (Horizontalization) 3. Delineating Units of Meaning Relevant to the Research Question 4. Eliminating Redundancies
3. Imaginative Variation	5. Clustering Units of Relevant Meaning 6. Determining Themes from Clusters of Meaning 7. Identifying General and Unique Themes for all Interviews
4. Synthesis	8. Contextualization of Themes

Steps in Phenomenological Analysis

Step One: Epoch/ Bracketing

Epoche involves the researcher setting aside personal prejudgments and biases that can hinder the interpretation of perceived experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The goal is

for the researcher to have the ability to examine data value free; this is also known as bracketing (Hycner, 1985).

Objectively examining the data value free was the overarching goal throughout the exercise of bracketing. While it is impossible to be completely value free or achieve pure objectivity Hyner (1985) argues that this is in fact the crux of Phenomenological research; he states, “the phenomenologic reduction teaches us the impossibility of a complete and absolute phenomenological reduction” (Hycner, pg. 281). The purpose is to attempt to understand what the participants are saying from their perspective and not from mine. Actually listening to what they are saying versus what the researcher expects them to say.

Due to my lived experiences, it is a safe assumption that there may exist several presuppositions about Black women mayors that could impact the lens from which this research is conducted. Many of the struggles or obstacles that are highlighted by the participants in this study are those that I as the researcher identify with, either from observation, or my own personal lived experiences. I am both sensitive and empathetic to the historical context of Black people in America, and how that history permeates through the everyday lives of Black Americans. I am arguably even more sensitive to the history and lived experiences of Black American women. Black women have a shared view of historical reality and resistance (Collins, 1991).

Hycner (1985) suggests two methods for bracketing that were utilized. Those methods include consistent dialogue with the dissertation committee to acknowledge and recognize presuppositions and creating a list of presuppositions to serve as reminder to strive to be value free and to create a list of presuppositions. In meetings before data

collection, throughout data collection and data analysis, I met consistently with my dissertation chair and had candid dialogue as to what I expected to find from the interviews in comparison to what I actually concluded. The list of presuppositions that were utilized is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Presuppositions for the Researcher (Constance Brooks)

RESEARCHER PRESUPPOSITIONS	
1.	Being the “first” had an impact on their governance; possibly a negative impact; always a challenge being the first to do something.
2.	As with many Black professional women Intersectionality is experienced and presents some problems.
3.	The Black community was critical in them being elected, so supporting the Black community and preserving or displaying “Blackness” was important.
4.	Women in leadership typically experience gender issues.

As units of meaning were identified, clustered, and emerging themes identified, I rigorously reviewed the data several times while remaining aware of my presuppositions so as to make certain it was the actual data that led me to the thematic conclusions and not my own values or judgments. As result, what is discussed in great detail in chapter six, are the thematic conclusions developed about the research population.

Step Two: Phenomenological Reduction /Delineating Units of Meaning (Horizontalization)

Phenomenological reduction is akin to data mining and is considered to be most labor intensive and difficult to finalize. This is where the researcher invokes horizontalization, a never ending process whereby the researcher examines the essence of each statement from the same vantage point. Hycner suggests that as horizons or units of meaning are identified, that they be coded (Hyner, 1985). For this study, they were coded

using numbers. Using an excerpt from the transcript, an example is provided in Table 5.

This excerpt is taken from the participant response to the question “If you had to prioritize race over gender, which had the greatest impact?”

Table 5

Example: Phenomenological Reduction/Delineation of Units of Meaning

ACTUAL TEXT	IDENTIFIED UNITS OF MEANING
<p>1. But the conflict for me is, and 2. this is what I always said back during the day when 3. they accused Black women of being “two-fers” with affirmative action and what not.</p> <p>4. When my Mom and Dad were expecting me, they knew they were expecting a Black baby. 5. So Black is always first, always first, always first. 6. So I’d say look that’s a given 7. and was known before anything else was known.</p> <p>8. It speaks to that inner conflict that 9. people want Black women to take these issues separate. 10. And I’ve always said I cannot do that. 11. Anything that I do is predicated on the fact that 12. I am Black and I am a woman. 13. They work together 14. not in separate corners. 15. They work together.</p>	<p>1. Conflict for me</p> <p>2. I always said back in the day</p> <p>3. Black women being “two-fers” with Affirmative Action</p> <p>4. Mom and Dad knew they were expecting a Black baby</p> <p>5. So Black is always first</p> <p>6. So I’d say that’s a given</p> <p>7. Was known before anything else was known</p> <p>8. Speaks to inner conflict [being Black and woman]</p> <p>9. People want Black women to take these issues separate</p> <p>10. I’ve always said I cannot do that</p> <p>11. Anything I do is predicated on the fact I am Black and a I am woman</p> <p>12. They work together</p> <p>13. Not in separate corners</p> <p>14. They work together</p>

Reviewing every spoken word offered by the participant and then numbering or coding the phrases is a process that allows for the researcher to arrive at the essence of

meaning for each of the coded phrases. This is illustrated in the right column of Table 5, “Actual text.” The process of identifying and separating out the units of meaning as shown in the left column, Hycner (1985) describes as “It is a crystallization and condensation of what the participant has said, still using as much as possible the literal words of the participant” (Hycner, pg. 282). For each paragraph of transcribed data this phenomenologic reducing exercise of delineating the units of meaning was conducted.

Step Three: Phenomenological Reduction/Delineating Units of Meaning Relevant to the Research Question

The next step under phenomenologic reduction is to delineate the units of meaning that are specifically relevant to the research question. Statements that were coded from the first step of delineating units were then examined as to their relevance to the research question. This is when the units of meaning are distilled down to identifying only those that appear to show some relationship to the actual research question, otherwise known as explicating the data. Hycner (1985) explains, “In other words, the researcher addresses the research question to the unit of general meaning to determine whether what the participant has said responds to and illuminates the research question” (pg. 284). Therefore, there are statements that appear to be inconsequential toward describing the phenomenon are eliminated. This step highlights the propensity for subjectivity, however the bracketing exercise aids in mitigating that notion. (Hycner, 1985). What is most significant in this procedure is what Hycner (1985) states, ‘The units of relevant meaning of a segment end up being somewhat different than those which would emerge if the entire context of the interview could be used as a control’ (pg. 285).

Table 6

Example: Delineating Units of Meaning Relevant to the Research Question

UNITS OF MEANING RELEVANT TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION	
*	1. Conflict for me
	2. I always said back in the day
*	3. Black women being “two-fers” with Affirmative Action
*	4. Mom and Dad knew they were expecting a Black baby
*	5. So Black is always first
	6. So I’d say that’s a given
	7. Was known before anything else was known
*	8. Speaks to inner conflict
*	9. People want Black women to take these issues separate
*	10. I’ve always said I cannot do that
*	11. Anything I do is predicated on the fact I am Black and a I am woman
*	12. They work together
*	13. Not in separate corners
	14. They work together

As shown in Table 6, the original fourteen units of meaning were then reduced to ten units that can be used to inform this study on phenomenon. Numbers 2, 4, 6, 7, and 14 have been determined to either be inconsequential to the research question or redundant.

Step Four: Eliminating Redundancies

Hycner (1985) describes this step of phenomenologic reduction as the point at which the researcher not only reviews the units of meaning and dismisses them but also pays attention to the number of times a unit or word is mentioned and in what context it is

mentioned. Hycner (1985) also provides that distinguishing the number of redundancies, “since that in and of itself might indicate some significance; for example it might indicate just how important those particular issues were to the participant” (pg. 287). For example, utilizing the excerpt shown in Tables 5 and 6, it is significant to note the number of times a unit of meaning relative to “Black” was mentioned. This is displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

Redundant Units of Meaning

REDUNDANT UNITS OF MEANING	
1.	<u>Black</u> women being “two-fers” with Affirmative Action
2.	Mom and Dad knew they were expecting a <u>Black</u> baby
3.	So <u>Black</u> is always first
4.	People want <u>Black</u> women to take these issues separate
5.	I am <u>Black</u> and a I am woman

Step Five: Imaginative Variation/ Clustering Units of Relevant Meaning

Moustakas (1994) states, Imaginative Variation is “to arrive at structural descriptions of an experience, the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced; in other words the ‘how’ that speaks to conditions that illuminate the ‘what’ of the experience” (pg. 98). This is where statements are examined for attributable factors such as cause and effect. Structural themes are developed at this stage.

Hycner reduces imaginative variation down to a two-step process, first clustering units of relevant meaning and then determining themes from clusters of meaning. In the first step, Hycner suggests the entire interview be utilized as a context versus examining the units of meaning in an isolated fashion. After revisiting the bracketing phase to renew the commitment toward phenomenon the essence of the units of meanings are identified

and clustered into groups or categories (Hycner, 1985). This is a significant stage in that this is the basis from which themes developed. Table 8 displays the clustering of themes for one interview participant, Lottie Shackleford.

Table 8

Clustering Units of Relevant Meaning

UNITS OF RELEVANT MEANING	CLUSTERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mom and Dad knew they were expecting a Black baby ▪ I am Black and a I am woman ▪ So Black is always first ▪ They work together ▪ Not in separate corners 	Self-Identification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Black women being “two-fers” with Affirmative Action ▪ Anything I do is predicated on the fact 	What Happens as a Result of Being Black and Woman
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People want Black women to take these issues separate 	Expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conflict for me ▪ I’ve always said I cannot do that 	Subjective vs. Objective Conflict

Step Six: Imaginative Variation/ Determining Themes from Clusters of Meaning

Moustakas further provides, “The uncovering of essences, the focusing on pure possibilities, is central in the Imaginative Variation process (Moustakas, 1994, pg. 98).

Thorough examination of the clusters is where emerging themes are identified that convey the essence of the clusters (Hycner, 1985). Table 9 shows how the theme of inner conflict associated with self-identification was determined.

Table 9

Themes Developed from Clusters

CLUSTERS	THEME
Self-Identification	As a result of being Black and woman there are expectations from others that can cause a subjective versus objective conflict regarding self-identification.
What Happens as a Result of Being Black and Woman	
Expectations	
Subjective vs. Objective Conflict	

Step Seven: Imaginative Variation/ Identifying General and Unique Themes for All Interviews

Structural themes are formulated from the aforementioned steps of Phenomenologic Reduction. The themes are rigorously analyzed so as to formulate unique, individualized themes that pertain to specific interviews which led to the development of general themes that serve to inform the overall phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Step Eight: Synthesis and Contextualization of Themes

The final stage of phenomenological analysis is Synthesis. Synthesis is a process that according to Moustakas (1994) is “a unified statement of essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole” is developed (Moustakas, pg. 100). The “essence” is comprised of a common thread of experiences that inform an underlying structure. The essence leaves the researcher with enhanced knowledge; as Creswell (2007) offers, “I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that” (pg. 62).

Testing Validity and Credibility

The role of the researcher as interviewer involves the delicate balance of maintaining neutrality and a healthy detachment from the participants while displaying

empathy and the ability to identify with the story of the participants (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). Researcher effects on data collection remain one of the consistent criticisms of qualitative research (Stake, 1995). That said, there are number of mechanisms that the researcher will have to employ in order to support this balance.

As the researcher for this study, I present biases that on their face would provide cause for questioning the validity and reliability of data analysis. Those biases include race, gender, current employment and hobbies. My lived experience as a Black woman, my employment as a bureaucrat in state government, my access to elected officials because of my employment, my involvement in grass roots political and community endeavors, and that I tend to follow politics for pleasure, are facets of my being that could garner the potential for extreme bias to be pervasive throughout this study.

To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of data collection and analysis, methods more commonly associated with Naturalistic Inquiry will be utilized. Member checking is a Naturalistic Inquiry practice that is used to support credibility in a study. This is a method, which gives the participant the opportunity to provide an immediate assessment as to the accuracy of the perception of the researcher on the information they have provided (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

For the purposes of this study, member checking was accomplished via three mediums. First, at the conclusion of each interview, the researcher briefly summarized and restated participant responses to the participants. Second, if similar issues are expressed among the participants, the researcher restated them to participants without the use of identifiers to assist with validating emergent themes. Lastly, the dissertation

committee served as formal mechanism for member checking during the completion of the final draft of the study (Erlandson, et al., 1993).

Reflexive journaling, another Naturalistic Inquiry method, supports credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of a study (Erlandson, et al, 1993). Reflexive journaling is when the researcher throughout the study maintains a journal to provide insight as to their thoughts and feelings throughout the data collection process. This is useful to the researcher as they are to refer back to the journal on a consistent basis during the data analysis portion with the goal of validating and mitigating and bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson, et al., 1993).

Due to the lack of research on Black women mayors generally and more specifically on this unique cadre of Black women who are the first Black women mayors to be elected to govern six of the 100 largest U.S. cities. Their contribution toward mayoral leadership and governance will be explored through their lived experiences; not just because there are so few of them, but because they should tell their own story. As a result of their shared perceptions, we will be able to better understand intersectionality and its impact on Black women in elected office.

To achieve that end, any quantitative data would be difficult to statistically compare to the larger body of research on mayors, Black mayors or women mayors. Relative to the nexus of race and gender in politics, the quantitative research is rather scant and again there would be much difficulty in achieving a comparison analysis. Thus, qualitative methods, more specifically phenomenological research methods are apropos for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PARTICIPANT PROFILES

This chapter provides background information on the six participants of this study. The sources for information concerning the six participants were drawn from newspaper, magazine, scholarly journal and internet/blog articles. To aid in understanding more about the backgrounds of the participants, for each mayor, I present a brief but detailed composite summary of their lives and their term as mayor. Table 10, following this chapter, provides an illustration significant descriptors or facts for each of the participants from the time at which they were elected mayor. Facts identified are whether they were a native of the city, their age, marital status, how many children they had, college education, sorority affiliation, religion, occupation, prior elected office and involvement with the Democratic Party.

The Honorable Lottie Shackleford

Recognized as not only the first Black woman mayor of Little Rock, Arkansas, Lottie Shackleford is also the first woman mayor in Little Rock's history. Elected mayor of Little Rock in 1987, Ms. Shackleford's election was historic on a national scale because she is also known for being the first Black woman mayor in the history of the 100 largest U.S. cities (Gordon, 2005).

Elected as a one-term mayor, Ms. Shackleford brought with her a rich history of public service after having served for nine years on the Little Rock Board of Directors otherwise known as the city council. She first ran for the Board of Directors in 1974 and lost, but was then appointed to the Board in 1978. After completing her term of appointment, she successfully ran for three consecutive terms on the Board. Her career on the Board was followed by her election as mayor (Chicago Citizen, 1991).

Caring for and contributing to her native city is arguably part of what defines Ms. Shackelford. She is not only a native of Little Rock, she also decided to live there as an adult and attend college at Philander Smith where she majored in Business Administration (Thomas, 2011). Ms. Shackelford's life's work is imbedded within the history of Little of Rock. She still resides there currently.

Although her love for her community was and is quite evident, her quest for public service was born out of her involvement with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA afforded her the opportunity to hone leadership skills and understand government as she rose to become one of the leading advocates of the PTA in Little Rock and statewide. Other organizations where Ms. Shackelford was not only a member but also an office holder included the National Association of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League, the Links, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, a sorority dedicated to public service. Ms. Shackelford is a woman who has a proven track record of being involved in her community and standing up for change (Thomas, 2011).

From her PTA involvement, Ms. Shackelford joined with other women community activists to form Black Female Action, a small organization that worked to gain support for women in their community who were facing struggles with employment, parenting, school and other pressing issues. While Ms. Shackelford credits the PTA as the beginning of her community activism, it was the support from Black Female Action that propelled her into the public service arena and helped to make the decision to run for office (Chicago Citizen, 1991).

After losing her first race for the Board of Directors, Ms. Shackelford enrolled as student with the Institute of Politics where she began to hone her leadership skills and

become better prepared to run and win the next time she ran for office. Her experiences with the PTA, Black Female Action and then the Board of Directors provided a solid foundation to prepare her successfully run for the office of Mayor. At that point, she had name recognition and was quite credible with voters.

More often described as a humble woman but a strong leader, Ms. Shackelford credits her success as mayor to the citizens of Little Rock who supported her to succeed (Thomas, 2011). Little Rock has a unique history due to the desegregation of Little Rock High School in 1957. The “Little Rock Nine” are a group of students etched in the annals of history as the students who were met with extreme racism and violence upon entering school as the first Black students after the Supreme Court decision to desegregate schools. In an effort to change the negative perception of Little Rock, Ms. Shackelford was well supported by the citizens. Her term in office was viewed as symbolic in an effort to change the reputation of Little Rock. Ms. Shackelford’s term in office received national attention (Thomas, 2011).

Although she only served one term, Ms. Shackelford left a rich legacy of economic development and made a significant impact on administration of local government. She presented professional papers on those topics and served in a leadership capacity with the National League of Cities. Ms. Shackelford is looked to as a pioneer in local government (Thomas, 2011).

Beyond the reach of local government, she was involved with politics both at the state and national level having served within the Democratic National Committee. Just two years into her term as mayor she was elected the first Black woman Vice Chair of the Democratic National Committee. Placing her in an even greater position to effectuate

politics on a national scale, shortly after her mayoral term ended she was named deputy campaign manager for the Clinton – Gore presidential campaign in 1991. During the second Clinton administration Ms. Shackleford gained international notoriety by becoming the Clinton presidential appointee to the Board of Directors for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), where she developed expertise in international trade (PR Newswire, 2002).

Ms. Shackleford has received numerous awards and honors throughout her professional life. In 1984 she was named in the Registry of Outstanding Women, Esquire Magazine and was voted Woman of the Year, Arkansas Democrat/Gazette Newspaper. In 1993 she was inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame and appointed a U.S. delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, Vienna, Austria. In 2007 she won the National Forum of Public Administrators; National Annual Leadership Award and 2009 she was listed as one of 25 Arkansas Business Minority Trailblazers.

The Honorable Sharon Pratt

A native Washingtonian and daughter of a DC Superior Court Judge, once married to a Washington, DC City Councilman, Sharon Pratt developed an understanding of local government and the value of serving the public in elected office. However that understanding did not begin with supporting her then husband as he served on the city council, she studied local government, home rule and statehood while a law student at Howard University; she graduated with her law degree in 1968 (Morely, 1992). She began her political career at the national level in 1977 working with the Democratic National Committee (DNC), and was named the first female committee woman for Washington, DC. It was after running the unsuccessful mayoral campaign of Patricia

Roberts Harris, a prominent DC bureaucrat that Ms. Pratt began to entertain the idea of running for mayor.

With no prior elected experience, Ms. Pratt was elected for one term in 1990 with her tenure as mayor as a source of scrutiny from the onset. Succeeding a popular and well liked mayor, Marion Barry, who had been in office for twelve years, Ms. Pratt ran on the platform of right sizing government, and as she called it, “cleaning house” (Morely, 1992; Cummins, 1993). Her campaign symbol was a shovel. She was frustrated with the urban decline of her city and the lack of statehood that she felt was an impediment to the progress of her hometown (De Witt, 1994). She was not expected to win, but after a series of televised debates against her opponents, Ms. Pratt, to the surprise of many, won the confidence of the majority, including an endorsement from the Washington Post (Washington Post, 1990).

Later, after being elected, that same newspaper and others in the press would launch several negative articles describing how either Ms. Pratt appeared to have used racial tension within the city to her advantage, pitting one community against another; or how her preoccupation with the statehood of Washington, DC distracted from her agenda of reform; or how they felt she failed to keep the promises of her campaign. Additionally, Ms. Pratt was criticized for having strained relationships with Congress as she stated that the reason why her budget request for one hundred million dollars was not fulfilled was because of race (Cummins, 1993). Those funds were to be used to assist with eradicating crime and addressing issues in the poorest and high minority resident areas of DC. At one point, she accused Congress of being “plantation overseers”, thus adding to the racial tension and fueling her passion for DC to become the fifty-first state (Cummins, 1993).

There appeared to have been some struggles for Ms. Pratt with respect to the Black community. Ms. Pratt is very fair skinned and highly educated and it was rumored her “Blackness” was sometimes questioned (Cummins, 1993). The Black community of D.C. has a history of strained relations based on class warfare and to some degree, complexion. For those who are several generations native Washingtonian like Ms. Pratt, that tension is still alive. She endured struggles with a particular segment of Black voters from the poorer communities of DC, as they viewed Ms. Pratt as an elitist, intangible, and unrelatable. For one period during her tenure she refused to grant interviews to the press, to include the Black newspapers. This created a dilemma for her with respect to how she was respected within certain segments of the Black community (King, 2010).

Soon after becoming elected, Ms. Pratt faced a budget deficit of \$336 million and was forced to recommend a series of taxes in an attempt to offset the deficit (Washington Informer, 1994). In addition, although she pledged to downsize government throughout her campaign, the deficit she faced made that an immediate reality. She had to lay off several hundred government employees early on in her tenure (Nell, 1993). This bold move also added to her unpopularity, so much so that a group of individuals unsuccessfully devoted their energies toward a recall vote to dismiss her from office. In addition to the budget crisis, Ms. Pratt was also met with an alarming crime rate and to the displeasure of many residents there was no substantial impact toward decreasing that high crime rate while she was in office (Bousain, 1993).

Ms. Pratt also upset many sports fans and supporters of the Washington Redskins when after months of arduous negotiations, then Mayor Pratt and her legal counsel were unable to broker a deal with Redskins owner Jack Kent Cooke to build a new stadium in

D.C. (Powell & Haggerty, 1996). Later it was discovered that Jack Cooke worked concurrently with suburban politicians while working with Ms. Pratt and her staff.

Although Ms. Pratt's tenure was fraught with criticism, but she worked tirelessly to improve her community. She especially cared for the well-being of the children of DC and strived to improve conditions for schools. She had a strong interest in deterring children from crime early on in their lives and supported a number of extracurricular programs to keep children safe and occupied with activities (Washington Post, 1997). Ms. Pratt also expressed her concern for the impoverished residents of her community. She and her staff embarked on several initiatives to improve the public welfare system in DC (Nell, 1993). Ms. Pratt ran on the promise of reform and from her perspective, she was successful; however from the perspective of voters when she ran for re-election, she did not achieve those goals to their satisfaction, and ultimately she lost against Marion Barry in 1994 (King, 2010).

The Honorable Sheila Dixon

Elected mayor of Baltimore in 2007, Ms. Dixon was first appointed to the office of mayor in 2007 while she was city council president, to finish Mayor Martin O'Malley's term as he became Governor of Maryland. She served as an appointed mayor for a little less than one year. Ms. Dixon was appointed due to the regulations stated within the city's charter for mayoral succession (Stevens, 2010). She was first elected in 1987 to the Baltimore City Council and served in that capacity for ten years. Ms. Dixon is a Baltimore native and mother of two children that she had while in office as City Councilwoman. She is a former kindergarten and adult education teacher. She is a

graduate of Baltimore's Towson's University and received her master's degree from John's Hopkins University. Ms. Dixon is a lifelong resident of Baltimore.

After working as a teacher, Ms. Dixon became more familiar with the inner workings of local government as the school district is under the authority of the City of Baltimore. However before running for city council, Ms. Dixon was employed with the State of Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development. She worked specifically on international trade issues. (Stevens, 2010; Dishneau, 2010). While working for the state, Ms. Dixon in 1986 ran for a seat on the State Democratic Committee and won; this was her first official and visible role in politics (Urbina, 2010).

Ms. Dixon's rise in local government is interesting because of the unique constitutional structure of the state of Maryland. Baltimore is actually considered a county and therefore is provided a greater level of authority over local matters in comparison to a city without county status (Stevens, 2010). This is significant because the level of authority under the mayor of Baltimore is far reaching. While a city councilwoman, Ms. Dixon was elected City Council president in 1999 and she was the first African American woman to hold that post in Baltimore's history.

Ethics and Ms. Dixon's use or misuse of them was always source of inquiry by the press, the State Ethics Commission and Baltimore Ethics Board. (Donovan, 2012). When she became city council president, she was encouraged to discontinue her employment with the state due to potential conflicts of interest; Ms. Dixon refused causing a level of discontent in public opinion (Dishneau, 2010). Whether it was voting to grant contracts to businesses that her sister worked for, or the unreported gifts and expenses from her then married beau on her financial disclosure statements, to the misuse

gifts to the city, Ms. Dixon was under an ethics probe several years before she became mayor and while she was mayor. She has admitted to having a relationship with a married man who owned a company who contracted with the city during her tenure (Dishneau, 2009; Urbina, 2010).

The years of investigation ultimately led to a tragic ending to Ms. Dixon's twenty three year political career. In 2009, at age 56, she was indicted for embezzlement of gift cards donated to the city of Baltimore designated to be distributed for charitable purposes to the needy. She was found guilty of embezzlement. Approximately \$500 of those gift cards were found in the home of Ms. Dixon, and with other gift cards she was caught on camera at various stores purchasing items for herself (Donovan, 2010). These were actions she committed while in office as a City Councilwoman, but she was not indicted until she became mayor.

Following the conviction, and in an effort to avoid another trial for acts of perjury related to financial disclosure reporting, Ms. Dixon entered into a plea agreement whereby she was officially deemed on probation for four years, had to step down as mayor, she had to complete 500 hours of community service, she would not seek a new trial, she would not run for any elected office while on probation, and she had to donate \$45,000 of her own money to charity (Urbina, 2010; Scharper 2012). Because she accepted a plea deal before the trial, she will not have a criminal record at the completion of her probation.

It is sad her political career ended on a sour note because she was a popular and well liked mayor and city councilwoman who accomplished a lot for her city. In fact, her popularity remained in spite of and after her conviction (Dishneau, 2009). She worked

tirelessly to ensure that her campaign slogan “Cleaner, greener, healthier, safer” was not just something she used to get elected but were tangible areas where she and her constituents could enjoy improvements.

Many credit the decrease in homicides to Ms. Dixon’s leadership and her collaborative efforts with the Baltimore Police Department and the strong stance she took against guns (Stevens, 2010). She saved the City of Baltimore over seven million dollars annually with the city’s first recycling program that she implemented (Urbina, 2010). In addition, under the leadership of Ms. Dixon the city of Baltimore sued Wells Fargo for unfair lending practices toward Black home buyers (Dishneau, 2009). In spite of the criminal acts, the city of Baltimore was impacted positively by the legacy of Ms. Dixon.

The Honorable Yvonne Johnson

Affectionately called the “hugger in chief”, Councilwoman Yvonne Johnson is known both for her stern leadership and peacemaking abilities with the use of hugs. She hugs almost everyone with whom she comes in contact (Banks, 2007). She appears to genuinely care for others and it’s evident by her sustained career in public service that spans almost two decades that she also cares for her hometown of Greensboro, North Carolina.

A native of Greensboro, Councilwoman Johnson has a record of volunteer work and community activism, as contributing to her community is significant to who she is as a person and political leader. As a young adult, at age nineteen she was a participant in both the March on Washington and the Sit-in Movement. The historic Sit-in Movement began with four Black college students at the lunch counter in the Greensboro Woolworth’s and spread across America (Jones, 2008; Rowe, 2009). Although

Councilwoman Johnson was not one of the original four students, she did participate in the sit in that lasted several months. She is very prideful of her participation in that national movement, and that it started in Greensboro (Rowe, 2009).

Councilwoman Johnson began her college pursuits at Bennett College in Greensboro but left to attend Howard University in Washington DC where she received her bachelor's degree in Psychology. After living in Maryland for a few years, she and her husband, Walter Johnson an attorney, returned to Greensboro. They had four children and shortly after the birth of her fourth child, she began graduate school at North Carolina A&T State University and later received her master's degree in guidance and counseling (Banks, 2007; Jones 2008).

With degrees in psychology and counseling, Councilwoman Johnson embarked on a career of helping others. She worked for a state mental institution, and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in social service programs. Currently Councilwoman Johnson is the Executive Director of One Step Further, Incorporated and has served in that post for 29 years (Jones, 2008). One Step Further is a United Way Agency that provides services to non-violent offenders.

With a rich background in contributing to her community and helping others, she first ran for office in 1992 at the suggestion of good friend who encouraged her to run for city council to represent eastern Greensboro in an at large seat (Banks, 2007). She often says that she did not feel she was ready for such a high profile position but that her friend was relentless in her pursuit to convince her to run (Jones, 2008). She won the election for city council and was reelected seven times, continuing to serve in that post for fourteen years; and for six of those years she served as Mayor Pro Tem (Yes Weekly,

2009). Councilwoman Johnson is a very popular politician in Greensboro as she won the distinction of mayor pro tem because she received the most votes of any at large candidate (Banks, 2007).

She was elected mayor of Greensboro in 2007 making her the first Black person and first Black woman to become mayor. She served one term as mayor, and was in office until 2009. Councilwoman Johnson tried to run for mayoral reelection in 2009 but was defeated by Bill Knight (Yes Weekly, 2009). That loss never diminished the fire in her belly for public service as she ran again for city council in 2011 and once again received the majority of votes placing her in the position as the current mayor pro tem (Banks, 2007).

Prior to becoming mayor, when she was still a member of the city council, Councilwoman Johnson endured controversial periods of discord among her city council members. In particular, Councilwoman Johnson was criticized for using identity politics and putting race before sound judgment as the council faced a tumultuous time when corruption was discovered within the city's police department. The police chief and staff members who were all Caucasian were dismissed after it was discovered that Black staff were being unjustly monitored and reprimanded (Guarino, 2009). Subsequently, a Black police chief was hired and Councilwoman Johnson claimed she did not support him because he was Black, but others have scrutinized her support who felt the contrary.

She experienced other bouts with controversy and waning public opinion to include when during her tenure as mayor, Councilwoman Johnson, more specifically her husband, was involved in a scandal related to tax evasion. Her husband, Walter Johnson was the subject of tax lien lawsuit where for a period of eight years, he fell behind in

payments for federal, state and county taxes on properties that he owned (Hammer, 2008).

In spite of the controversies, Councilwoman Johnson has led many successful endeavors for her beloved city of Greensboro which gives credence to her sustained popularity. Due to her support of the business industry, she was awarded the 2011 Stanley Frank Lifetime Achievement Award from the Greensboro Economic Development Alliance. She has worked to secure bonds as a mechanism for economic growth, with the bonds serving to provide \$150M in roads and infrastructure (Yes Weekly, 2009). Also, the Sustainability Council created under her administration serves to administer stimulus funds for projects within low income areas of Greensboro. Those are just a couple examples of the countless accolades and achievements that illustrate the passion Councilwoman Johnson has for serving her community through public service.

The Honorable Shirley Franklin

Ms. Franklin is not Atlanta's only Black mayor but she holds the distinction of being Atlanta's only female mayor in the history of the city. She is also the first Black woman mayor of a major southern City (Wells, 2008; Jackson, 2009). Ms. Franklin's introduction to politics began with working on campaigns and volunteering behind the scenes. She assumed that would be the extent of her political career, helping others. However, with the encouragement of friends and mentors, her career trajectory veered into a different direction (McWilliams, 2012). Over the course of a several years she was asked and coaxed by community leaders to run for mayor. She resisted for quite some time until in 2001 when she decided to run for mayor. She served two consecutive terms, and was in office from 2002 to 2010 (Wells, 2008).

Her rise in politics is unique because Ms. Franklin had never held an elected office before running for mayor. She had virtually no public identity and was not well known by many (Hal, 1999). What she lacked in elected political experience, she made up with her intimate knowledge of the inner workings of city government. Ms. Franklin held two key positions within city government working within the administrations of her mentors; she was the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs for former Atlanta mayor Maynard Jackson and the City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer for former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young (Jackson, 2009).

A self-proclaimed feminist and Philadelphia native, Ms. Franklin learned about female leadership early in life, first from her family and then by attending the Philadelphia High School for Girls. Following high school, she went to Howard University and received a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and then masters in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. While a student at Howard, at the age of nineteen she participated in the March on Washington. She later moved to Atlanta in 1972 and has resided there for the past forty years (Wells, 2008; McWilliams, 2012).

Ms. Franklin was as popular of a mayor as she was unpopular in some instances. She is known as an efficient and brave leader, but was not a woman who operated or governed on feelings (Dewan, 2009). She rarely displayed emotion and was always very businesslike in her professional roles. Most notably, under her leadership, the "Clean Water Atlanta" initiative was enacted that revamped the sewer system and brought it from a state of literal collapse, to the delight of many residents (Blalok, 2005; Dewan, 2009). In addition, she led the effort to keep the papers of Martin Luther King Jr. from being sold by auction, but instead housed by his alma mater Morehouse College, through

fundraising efforts to the tune of thirty two million. She is very proud of that accomplishment as it was Martin Luther King Jr. to whom she credits her inspiration for her drive and enthusiasm for social change (Dewan, 2009).

Known as a mayor who focused on economic vitality, what caused her unpopularity among many residents and stakeholders in the business community were the increases in taxes under her leadership. Due to a looming budget deficit coupled with the experience Ms. Franklin had in previously managing the city, she recommended several tax increases, to include property tax. She also led the effort in four rounds of layoffs within city government (Dewan, 2009). At the start of her first term, her effort to increase taxes was initiated before the collapse of Wall Street and the great recession as she forecasted an even greater deficit for the city and worked toward planning ahead in order to brace Atlanta from devastating economic decline. Many of her colleagues did not share her vision for saving the economy in a proactive fashion. In 2008, during a critical vote to increase taxes to prevent cuts in public safety, she was outnumbered by the council and the major tax increase never occurred. In fact, city council voted unanimously to cut taxes. While her decisions were then unpopular among her colleagues on the city council, many of them later appreciated her wisdom and foresight (Dewan, 2008).

Ms. Franklin also received national recognition for her leadership and was named co-chairwoman of the 2004 Democratic National Convention. She was named one of U.S. News and World reports' "America's Best Leaders", she received the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award, County magazine honored her as "Municipal Leader of the Year", and in 2006 she was named one of the "8 in '08", a cadre of women

political leaders who had the potential of becoming a candidate for president of the United States (Blalok, 2005).

Even with all of those, and many other accolades, Ms. Franklin humbly stays committed to her family first, and then her community (Saunders, 2002). A divorced mother of three adult children, Ms. Franklin continues her passion for community development. Ms. Franklin is currently the CEO of Purpose Built Communities, a nonprofit agency that aims to support mixed income housing while infusing early childhood development. Purpose Built Communities utilizes a holistic approach toward eradicating poverty and creating social change for the residents of the East Lake section of Atlanta (McWilliam, 2012).

The Honorable Sharon Sayles Belton

Mrs. Belton sustained an incredible career in local government politics spanning over eighteen years. She was first elected to the Minneapolis city council in 1983 and served in that capacity until 1993 when she was elected as mayor. For three of the years served on the city council she had the honor of being elected city council president by her peers. In 1993, she was elected the first Black and first Black woman mayor for the city of Minneapolis and she was reelected in 1997. Mrs. Belton unsuccessfully ran for a third term of mayor but lost to R. T. Ryback (Anderson, 2001). Her being elected twice for mayor was surprising to many, not only in Minneapolis but nationwide as she was elected mayor twice of a city that is almost eighty per cent Caucasian (Bryson, 1996).

Mrs. Belton is a native of the twin cities otherwise known as St. Paul/Minneapolis. She has never resided anywhere else, choosing as an adult to contribute to the community where she was raised (Anderson, 2001). She attended

Macalester College in St. Paul majoring in sociology and biology but never finished.

After attending college she married and had three children. Her lifelong residence in the twin cities was by choice as she genuinely cares for her community. She learned from the example of her grandfather about neighborhood advocacy and encouraged her neighbors to coalesce on issues impacting their quality of life (Bryson, 1996). Her career prior to becoming elected is demonstrative of her concern for and contribution toward community, women and family issues. She was a parole officer and advocate for victims of sexual assault. She is also known as a self-proclaimed feminist often referring to women in politics as “feminocracy” (Huges, 2001).

Her accomplishments while in office as mayor are noteworthy. A champion for both economic development and community revitalization, Mrs. Belton made bold strides toward increasing awareness of and improving the status of the city of Minneapolis. Before she became mayor, Minneapolis had experienced over fifty years of slow and steady economic decline. As the new millennium approached, Mrs. Sayles Belton labored to inversely change the direction of the decline and managed to leave a legacy of prosperity.

Mrs. Belton encouraged a business friendly atmosphere that would be inviting to both large scale and small businesses. During her tenure she was responsible for several big corporations opening in Minneapolis such as Target and American Express. In particular, she and her administration steered businesses toward the downtown area that was at that time fraught with economic disinvestment (Anderson, 2001; Olson, 2001). Currently, the downtown area of Minneapolis enjoys a booming economy and many credit Mrs. Belton.

With respect to community revitalization there were several projects that began with her leadership; one that was quite innovative and different for the city was the notion of community schools. Community schools allows for students to stay within close proximity of their home communities to be schooled rather than being bussed into foreign neighborhoods where the students potentially would have no investment. Community schools also assists with creating safe and healthy neighborhoods as well as supporting families (Mann, 1999; Olson, 2001). The city council voted unanimously in support of the community school initiative. The local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) went on record in strong opposition, as they felt students may be robbed of a better education that could be offered in a school outside of their neighborhood. The NAACP even staged protests. This placed Mrs. Belton in the position of appearing unsupportive of the city's most prominent organization advocating for the Black community (Mann, 1999).

Mrs. Belton was quite successful while in office for two terms but her success was not experienced without facing several challenges. When she first took office as mayor in 1993, Minneapolis had an appalling crime rate and was city infested with drugs and criminal activity. She and the city council approved the hiring of a new police chief to drive the crime rate down. However in doing so, the high minority populated areas of the city were targeted which flared already heightened racial tensions (Olson, 2001). Racial tensions notwithstanding, many residents credit a safer Minneapolis to the leadership of Mrs. Belton.

Mrs. Belton's leadership was recognized by prominent organizations and companies. In 1984 she was a Minnesota delegate to the Democratic National

Convention. She is a recipient of the American Association for Affirmative Action Rosa Parks award. She was also honored by the National Bar Association, an association supporting Black attorneys, with the Gertrude Rush Distinguished Service Award (Anderson, 2001; Bryce, 2001).

In addition to her many accolades, Mrs. Belton is highly respected business community both locally and nationally. In 2010 she was hired by Thomson Reuters, an internationally and nationally recognized law firm, as their Vice President for Community Relations and Government Affairs (Ebert, 2010). Prior to her appointment with Thomson Reuters, she was a Senior Fellow at the Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice.

Table 10

Participant Profile (when elected mayor)

MAYORS	NATIVE	AGE	MARITAL STATUS	CHILDREN	COLLEGE	SORORITY	RELIGION	OCCUPATION	PRIOR ELECTED OFFICE	DEMOCRATIC STATE/ NATIONAL COMMITTEE
Lottie Shackelford <i>Little Rock, AK</i> (1987-1991)	Yes	46	Divorced	3	Philander Smith (B.A. in Business Admin.)	Delta Sigma Theta	Baptist	Executive Director	City Council (10 Years)	Co-Chair, 1988 DNCC; Co-Chair, DNC Rules and Platform Committees; AK DNC Delegate
Sharon Pratt <i>Washington, DC</i> (1991-1995)	Yes	46	Divorced (remarried while in office)	2	Howard University (B.S. in Political Science and J.D.)	Alpha Kappa Alpha	Episcopal	Attorney	None	Co-Chair DNC Rules Committee; Member, DNC Ad Hoc Credentials and, Judicial Council
Sheila Dixon <i>Baltimore, MD</i> (2007-2010)	Yes	53	Divorced	2	Towson University (B.S. in Education) John's Hopkins (M.S. in Education Admin.)	None	African Methodist Episcopal	Teacher	City Council (12 years) Council President (8 years)	Member, Baltimore City Democratic State Central Committee
Yvonne Johnson <i>Greensboro, NC</i> (2007-2009)	Yes	64	Married (47 years)	4	Bennet College (B.S. in Psychology) North Carolina A&T (Master of Education)	Alpha Kappa Alpha	Episcopal	CEO of Non Profit	City Council (14 Years) Mayor Pro Tem (6 years)	Member, North Carolina State Central Committee
Shirley Franklin <i>Atlanta, GA</i> (2002-2010)	No	55	Divorced	3	Howard University (B.S. in Sociology) University of Pennsylvania (B.S. in Sociology)	Delta Sigma Theta	Presbyterian	Small Business Woman	None	DNC Super Delegate
Sharon Sayles Belton <i>Minneapolis, MN</i> (1990-1993)	Yes	39	Married	2	Macalester College (Completed 3 years but did not finish)	None	Baptist	Corrections	City Council (10 Years) City Council President (3 years)	N/A

CHAPTER FIVE: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

In this chapter I present and discuss findings from each of the interviews conducted on the case studies of this research. Data analysis is a systematic process of identifying variables, examining relationships between variables and distinguishing their interconnectedness among the whole (Spradley, 1980). According to Creswell (2003), data analysis with respect to qualitative research methods incorporates “an ongoing process involving continual reflection about the data, asking analytic questions” (pg. 24). Specific to phenomenological research methods, research designs are aimed at examining the “meaning of experiences” for individuals who share a unique connection or phenomenon, and data is “based on the premise that human experience makes sense to those who live it” (Creswell 1993, pg. 49). Thus perception and interpretation of that perception are the primary determinants for the categorization and reduction of experiences into a particular meaning, or essence (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2007). It is perception and interpretation that are the drivers for analysis and arrival at thematic conclusions about a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 1993; Moustakas, 1994).

Individual themes that were developed from the transcripts of the six interviews are described in detail in the following paragraphs of this chapter. The theme heading is followed by explanatory paragraphs to include quotes derived from the transcripts that provide insight as to how the themes were selected. Figures 2 through 7 display the thematic conclusions for each mayor in the form of a flow chart that corresponds with the narrative. Those figures can be found at the conclusion of this chapter.

The Honorable Lottie Shackleford: City Pride

Ms. Shackleford's interview was a spirited conversation peppered with many points of laughter and at the end, sorrow. Ms. Shackleford is a leader who absolutely loves the city where she has resided for her entire life. The six themes that emerged from her interview were, "Family and Upbringing", "Preparation", "City Pride; City-wide Support; Being the First", "Women in Politics", "Conflict Regarding Self-Identification" and "Pipeline for other Blacks and Women."

Family and Upbringing

Family and the upbringing experienced by Ms. Shackleford were frequently mentioned. She credits her parents' teachings as to how she was able to not let barriers or obstacles stand in the way of achieving goals.

"My parents never allowed us to use race or gender or anything like that as any kind of excuse. My mother used to say, if you started complaining about this that, what you could and couldn't do....she would say, 'There were some slaves who learned to read' she would just come up with things like that or say 'Fredrick Douglass did this and this.' There are always going to be folk, if they are willing, to overcome whatever obstacle there is."

Preparation

Prior experiences that served as preparation to run for mayor were significant to Ms. Shackleford. She credits both her professional background and volunteer work in the community and in particular with the Parent Teacher Association as critical experiences that helped to prepare her for a leadership role such as a run for mayor. She stated "I

always felt that my whole venture into the electoral political arena was evolutionary coming out of the PTA. I had been very active in PTA, doing everything from being a room mother, to local school PTA president, to the Little Rock PTA Council and State PTA. Had a lot of experience in PTA which is an excellent training ground for how to get things done.”

The PTA served as the genesis for her love of local government politics. This where she was able to witness the formation an implementation of policy and how transformative that process can be.

“Local government was and still is a love for me. That is where you have the greatest tangible impact on folk’s lives; who’s picking up your garbage, who’s protecting your family and property; that’s local government. doing those things, that’s the closest to people.”

She considers her ten years of service on the city council as being the natural training ground and as source of comfort in her decision to run for mayor, but also mentions supplemental training programs that she felt helped her as a woman in a leadership position.

“Rutgers University for example were constantly doing all kinds of trainings sessions and seminars and all, for women , to help women not only just learn what they were supposed to be doing, and helping them the technical skills, etc. But to learn confidence; you could do the sharing, and talking with women and you could look at someone and they knew what you were talking about as opposed to being in a room and someone is acting like, now where is this coming from?”

City Pride; City Support; Being the First

City pride was an emerging theme for Lottie Shackleford. As a native of Little Rock and she reflected on how much she loved the city and couldn't imagine her life in public service anywhere else. She states "Yes I was born and reared here, but I chose to live here as a result." Further, she offered when she was asked about why she decided to stay in Little Rock her response was, "For me, Little Rock offered, in its size; it was small enough for me to claim every little bit of it, every little inch, but yet it was large enough to give me a little urban flair; and that was something I still relish about Little Rock. That was one of the driving forces for my decision to run for mayor." Most importantly, her pride in her city was the impetus for her decision to run for mayor.

Ms. Shackleford's pride in Little Rock runs deep, in spite of the history of racially charged undertones that still plague the city. Unique to Little Rock's history was the 1957 school desegregation crisis and the disparate treatment of the "Little Rock Nine." As reported by Ms. Shackelford, this period of civil unrest is an embarrassing reflection of all that Little Rock has to offer. As a result, the city viewed her run for mayor as a mechanism toward changing the national mindset regarding race relations in Little Rock and as a result she received overwhelming community wide support.

"I'd say I think people just wanted to pinch me to see is this real. Because of Little Rock's history, the '57 crisis and all. I would be remise if I didn't factor that in. A lot of people in Little Rock, the white community and all and across the country thought this was a real plus. And it did a lot to tamper down the thoughts and impressions people had about Little Rock. Because for a lot of folks, the only thing they knew of Little Rock was the

'57 crisis. Just like anything in life, timing is everything, and at the time when I was Mayor so many folk here in LR understood that, and tried to do probably much more in the sense of trying to ensure we had a successful run.”

According to Ms. Shackelford, it appears as though the significance of her being the first Black woman mayor to Little Rock meant more to others than it did to her. She stated, “You know I really hadn’t thought that much about the label.” She humbly stated how she did not feel like she was special or did anything spectacular by becoming the first Black woman mayor.

“My deal was whatever I was doing at the time, it wasn’t because there were many folk before me had they been given the opportunity, they could’ve done, they could’ve succeeded. I mean you know. I am thankful to the Lord for all of the opportunities and blessings I’ve had. But I know there were so many other folk particularly Black women who went on way before me; given the opportunity they could’ve excelled in so much, so much. And so that’s what drives me. Just because I was born in 1941 and they were born in 1841 they didn’t get the chance. But it certainly wasn’t because they weren’t qualified. And that brings tears to my eyes. Just because I was fortunate enough to be in right place at the right time and the Lord blessed me.”

Women in Politics

Ms. Shackelford mentioned throughout her interview the differences between women and men relative to political behavior, leadership qualities and simply professional behavior. Setting the tone she stated “when I got started into electoral

politics, there were very few women, Black or white involved at that time, and naturally there were still fewer black women.” She went to explain generally how women usually get their start in politics, “I think, most women that I know who enter into electoral politics out of a community based something.” To greater context into the unique political behaviors of women she further offered:

“If you talked to women across the spectrum, the majority of them got involved because of an issue close to them that they were working on; and you work with others to get something done. It teaches you basically how you build coalitions and the strength through numbers. See women like to reach their goal, but they also wanna know that it’s still important and its being taking care of, so they do a lot more follow up. It’s not like, I get this passed and that’s it. I still wanna know that the grass is growing on a park ground we worked so hard to get some funds for. I think the majority of women elected officials still come from a background of community work, school work, what have you. So those are sort of ingrown constituencies.”

Conflict Regarding Self-Identification

Ms. Shackleford spoke at length about a very distinct experience that highlighted how the expectations of others for Black women can potentially create conflict. During the 2008 presidential campaign race, being from Arkansas where then Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton was from, she was expected to have negative emotions when Hilary stepped down to allow for then candidate Barack Obama to accept the nomination,

making him the first African American to accept the nomination for President in our nation's history. Here is her account of that experience:

“Being from AR, it was so amazing...it was so amazing, right after Hillary decided to basically bow out, and there were women who would up to come me, in tears, ‘this was our first time’ and blah blah blah. I would just say, ‘Stop, look at me, think about what you are saying to me and it’s a Black man, and think about that!’ ‘Oh Lottie I’m sorry’. You see I considered myself being in a position that I was gonna be happy either way. You wanna take away my other happiness? Think about it, and sometimes I would just say ‘think about what you are saying to me, Obama is a Black man’. And the most of them hadn’t really thought about it. ‘Oh this was our time to get a woman in, blah blah blah’. They hadn’t really thought about it like that, they were so hurt and disillusioned. It talks about that inner conflict that people want Black women to take these issues separate. And I’ve always said I cannot do that. Anything that I do is predicated on the fact that I am Black and I am a woman. They work together not in separate corners. They work together.”

Pipeline for other Black and Women

With respect to race Ms. Shackleford expressed her concern for what she called “losing ground.” In fact, that concern could be interpreted as sorrow or despair as the inflection of her voice changed and she appeared to be troubled. She is dismayed by the lack of Blacks in politics and as well, Black women in politics. It has been twenty five years since Ms. Shackleford was elected and she feels as though there has not been

enough of an increase in the numbers of Black people within the political arena. She was very emotional as she expressed her disappointment.

“We don’t have Black folk in the political consulting business, we don’t have them doing the political analysis, I mean it’s just the whole gamut, we don’t have them. And we are losing ground. And so, I just think something we have not done right. Because we should have more than a pipeline. More people, more women in the pipeline.”

This concern brought to light a revelation as questions her own legacy; whether or she did enough to help others along. She expressed, “And that to me is making me question, ok did we not do enough in the sense of trying to bring others along.”

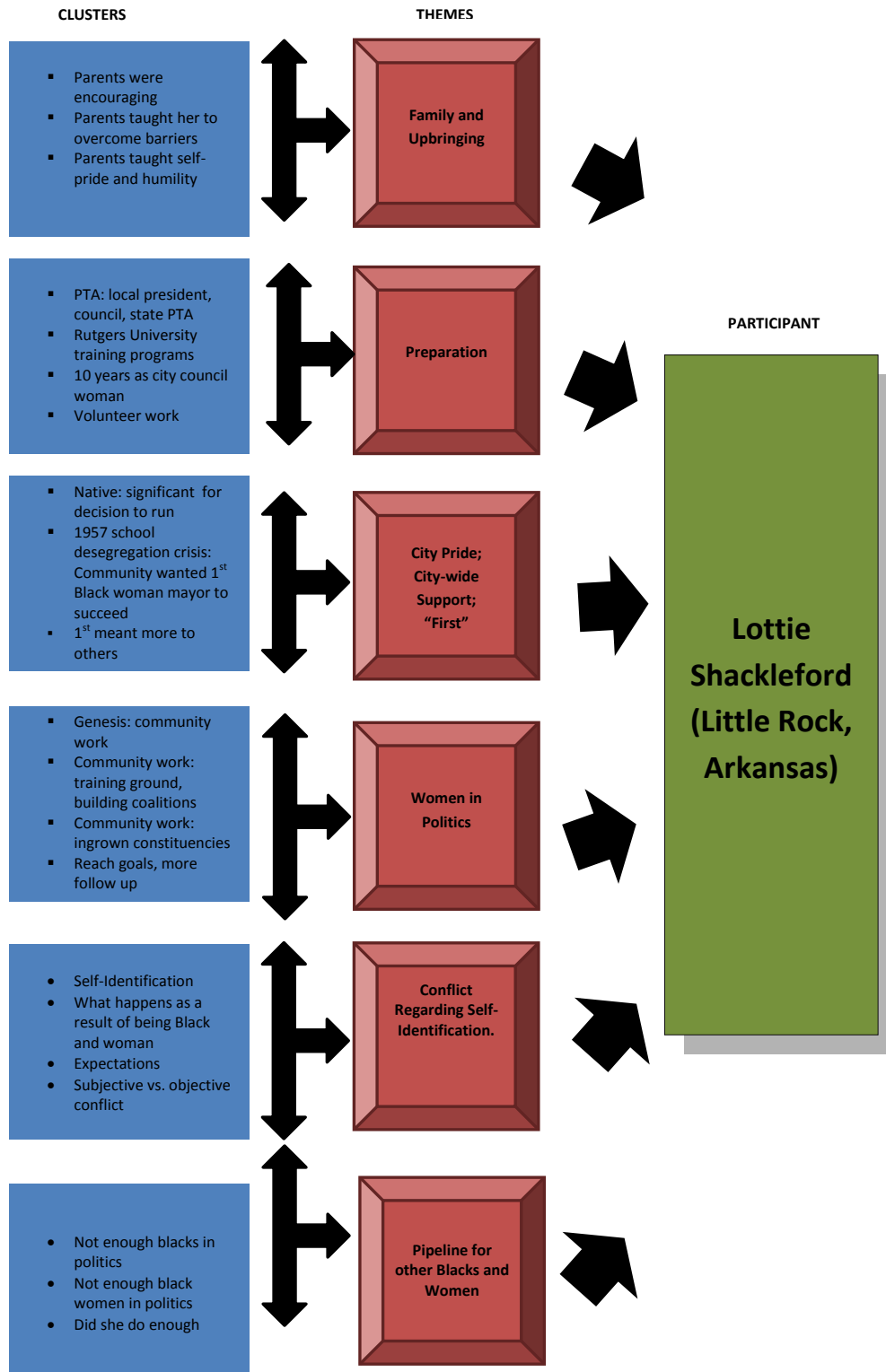


Figure 2. *Thematic Analysis of Lottie Shackelford*

**The Honorable Sharon Pratt:
Champion for Statehood; Antagonist of the Status Quo**

Statehood means a great deal to Ms. Pratt. Not only has she fought for it, but she has studied it intensely. As a native of Washington, DC and as a politically astute citizen, she incorporated her feelings about the lack of statehood throughout the interview. As an aside, while Ms. Pratt has great pride in her hometown, she expressed disappointment in the complacency of some of her fellow residents. The six themes that emerged from Ms. Pratt's interview were "Family and Upbringing", "Political Capitol", "Not Expected to Win", "Gender: Politics; Women vs. Women; Not a White Woman, Not Black Man", "Race as Barrier" and "Changing the Dialogue/Legacy."

Family and Upbringing

The loss of a mother was an experience that Ms. Pratt and her sister Binnie endured early on in life. Ms. Pratt was only five year old. As result, she and her sister were primarily raised by their father with the help of extended family.

"I think having a father who was so available to us and who encouraged us to be outspoken, encouraged us to use our minds, not just because he thought it was you know, a noble thing to do, he thought it was a very practical thing to do. He also thought that if you thought you were gonna be attractive to men, 'I hope you didn't think you could be dumb'. So I mean he was always pushing us, and he was affirming qualities and personality traits that weren't always affirmed. But having our father there affirming us, and pushing us and encouraging us, and demanding of us, did a lot for Binnie and I, having some gumption; having gumption."

Political Capital

Ms. Pratt had high sense of political capital as she was once married to a City Councilman and was involved in and ran several campaigns at almost level of government. In addition, Ms. Pratt was heavily involved with the Democratic National Committee and held several committee elected offices. This exposure allowed her to garner positive and influential relationships across party lines and on Capitol Hill.

“I had been elected as an at large member to the Democratic State Committee. Patricia Roberts Harris became secretary of HUD, and then Bunny Mitchell was her alternate to the DNC, and then Bunny was chosen by President Carter to work in the White House, so then I was selected to become the Democratic National Committee Woman. So I became a member of the National Democratic Party. I was the chair of the Eastern Regional Caucus and I had people like Matty Davis who later became a well-known, warrior during the Clinton years. I was active with people like Gerry Ferraro out of New York because I was chair of that region.”

Not Expected to Win

However even with all of the aforementioned political capital, perhaps because Ms. Pratt had not held public office, she was not expected to win the mayoral race. In fact she had difficult time with fundraising; she stated “we never really raised any money.” She went on to describe how some groups; unions in particular, did not have a problem with her campaigning “because they just hadn’t counted on me winning.” Media endorsements while campaigning were virtually nonexistent, “because they didn’t bother to cover me.”

Gender: Politics; Women vs. Women; Not a White Woman, Not Black Man

In addition to the unfortunate and negative interactions she would sometimes experience, Ms. Pratt also discussed contextual experiences relative to her gender. First she describes the context of Washington, DC as a city. She felt this context had some significance with respect to her effectiveness as a female mayor.

“You know unlike even New York where there’s arts centers and theatre, it has other dimensions to it. And it has therefore what I call a more feminine quality to it in traditional terms. A city like Paris is a very feminine city, but Washington is a very masculine city and it’s still a very masculine city. And so in order to assert yourself in feminine form would always be problematic and that’s what she was speaking to when I was promoting the candidacy of Pat Harris was the first time I really stopped and thought about it.”

Within the atmosphere of a masculine city, Ms. Pratt was a female city leader who tried to advance the city in spite of the ever present biases that appeared to be against her. She tried to ignore those biases but stated, “There’s just always the distraction of being a woman, it’s just a distraction in so many ways.” Some of the treatment she received from both men and women was, she felt was interference as to what she was trying to accomplish for the city.

Another distraction of her being a woman was her changing her name after she got married post-election. She went from Sharon Pratt Dixon to Sharon Pratt Kelly. She felt she had established a brand with her maiden name, and then because of her respect of her husband she changed her name, ultimately affecting her brand.

“They had all these kind of articles written up on it, that I changed my name and really that was not a smart thing to do. Because I had created a brand called Sharon Pratt Dixon and within a year of being elected I tried to change that brand into Sharon Pratt Kelly, but I didn’t want to hurt my husband’s feelings, but he knew this when he married me. I’m not mad at him, I’m saying, that requires self-examination because within that move there was a very traditional woman and maybe not a woman adequately expressing her own power; not adequately expressing her own power. That’s an important turning point I’d say. Maybe the same way I said my exercise of power made a lot of women uncomfortable. I’m reflecting my own conflicts, inner conflicts.”

Other conflicts Ms. Pratt experienced, deal with other women. Women appeared to be the most critical of Ms. Pratt as mayor. She stated “The prejudice exists just as profoundly with women, just as significantly with women as it does with men.” She went on to say, “Frankly men hung in there more with me than women.” In particular when discussing her relationship with the media she specifically discusses how one female reporter often was critical of her appearance and she felt it was for no good reason.

“Kathy Hughes made it a mission to talk about me five days a week. I just can’t believe she would do that would with any man. I mean five days a week; I mean there’s just no way in the world. And it was always personal. It’s never I disagree with her policies, I don’t like her programmatic priorities, it’s always, I don’t like their hair do, I don’t like their pants suit like with Hillary Clinton, I mean it’s just always personal,

they get on Pelosi for she always smiles too much. It's always personal, always at a very personal level and that is so unhealthy. But they do it and it's a very interesting dynamic but it still operates today.”

She went on to discuss how her interactions as mayor with other women were often times troubling.

“My view is when a woman does exercise really executive power, women are very put off by it, I think they are. It makes I think, this is me being, trying to be the psychologist but I think it made a lot of women uncomfortable about who they were. I don't know how to describe it. Not they thought I was all bad or the mayor was all bad, it's just that it taps into maybe personal issues when you see a woman asserting herself and exercising executive power. We are supposed accommodate, we're supposed to collaborate, which I think many women do as executives, but there is definitely a different manner of exercising power when women exercise power.”

Now when it came to race and gender, Ms. Pratt eloquently quotes Patricia Roberts Harris who was the first Black woman to be named to the Presidential Cabinet as Secretary of Housing of Urban Development under the Carter Administration, “She said, ‘Sharon, when they mean Black they mean men and when they say women they mean white.’” This quote refers to how Ms. Pratt felt that Black women are often left out of the discussion in the arena she refers to as “the environs of power.” She felt this quote exemplifies the struggle Black women face within the discourse of politics, she felt that often times they were invisible. It should be noted that Ms. Pratt and Mrs. Roberts

Harries were good friends and Ms. Pratt was the campaign director for the unsuccessful mayoral run for Patricia Roberts Harris.

Another issue with respect to race and gender was the treatment of women in the Black community. She finds the lack of women leaders within the Black community very troubling.

“We are a matriarchal society as African Americans, you look at all of the positions of real power in our community and they’re occupied by men. And your churches, I guess you know, you have our churches or civil rights groups, I mean if they didn’t have the national council of Negro women, you wouldn’t have a woman at the table. All of those groups are still basically run by men. What is it that does exist in our community where there is this conflict in the system to exercise executive power among our women? And even though we know that so much of the survival of the black community is often at the enterprise and resourcefulness of women. Maybe it’s because we know that, there is a discomfort; there’s a deep issue going on there.”

Race as a Barrier

Ms. Pratt had unique contextual factors in comparison to the other cities in this study, or for that matter unique to other cities in the nation. Washington DC, while having a mayor with executive power, does not have full home rule and is under the authority of the federal government.

“And I knew you have a very strong executive in the DC in the role of mayor, no city manager, but at the same time a strong executive who is

under the thumb of Congress. So you have to be a supplicant to the president, which is alright but, the president, and all the president's cabinet. Somebody who's a congressman out of New Hampshire can come in and hold your budget hostage."

Other contextual factors included the role of the Black professional class. It appears as though this group were not as aggressive about change as Ms. Pratt would've liked. They did not support her notions for radical change in "right sizing" government and its workforce. In comparison to other cities, Ms. Pratt described the Black professional class as "timid." She stated, "I find that here in this town the professional class does not lead." She felt that this lack of leadership was in large part due to government being the dominant source of employment in Washington, DC.

"Particularly Black middle class, or working class is pretty much defined by having government jobs which is one reason of course; understandably, people resisted the notion of right sizing government. The government was the only one at the table. So there was also a timidity that also comes with that and I think that is reinforced."

However when discussing race and its impacts, although Washington, DC had a high Black population, with respect to race she offered, "The issues around race were much more apparent and much more I think, relevant once elected." She felt this was due in large part to the expectations of Black mayors but describes biases relative to race in the context of the limitations of government and the expectations of the Black community.

“So you start off behind the eight ball and there are those expectations are not necessarily shouldered by white elected officials coming from our community, but we just hope that our black mayor will be our great champion, so that’s a challenge.”

Even the issue of home rule and statehood, which was so important to her, she felt, was tied to race due to the high population of Blacks in Washington, DC. She stated, “And I do believe that so much of lack of home rule is tied to race in that regard and the fact that I kept wanting to push people to challenge the system.” She went on to say,

“I perceived race to be such a defining force in the nation’s capital and in within this city and its political structure and because I sort of railed against it was a really big I’d say a real defining part of that four years. A lot of the institutional leaders who were thrilled that I won because they wanted a new direction, were very annoyed with my preoccupation with statehood.”

Changing the Dialogue/Legacy

Challenging the system to make a difference were important facets to the legacy left by the Ms. Pratt. She stated, “I’m not certain I did it because I was so eager to be elected as I was eager to change the dialogue.” She did so with the help of the youth of DC. Ms. Pratt took great pride in discussing how the youth helped her to get elected. “But the real power was when I attracted young people. Most of the campaign was populated by, driven by, young people. And so they just had a notion that it was time for change, they had just faith, unbridled faith.” Empowering youth are what she says kept her going

and helped to keep her passion alive for her goal to “clean house.” Ms. Pratt helped to improve the personnel system and worked toward reform in government.

However in addition to what she did for youth, she credits herself for her ability to recognize talent and giving certain individuals a launching pad from which to boost their careers. She offered several examples, “The person who eventually became my chief of staff who had never thought she’d go into to politics later became chief of staff for all the AFL-CIO and later became deputy chief of staff for Pres. Clinton. The person who became my city administrator became deputy secretary of commerce.”

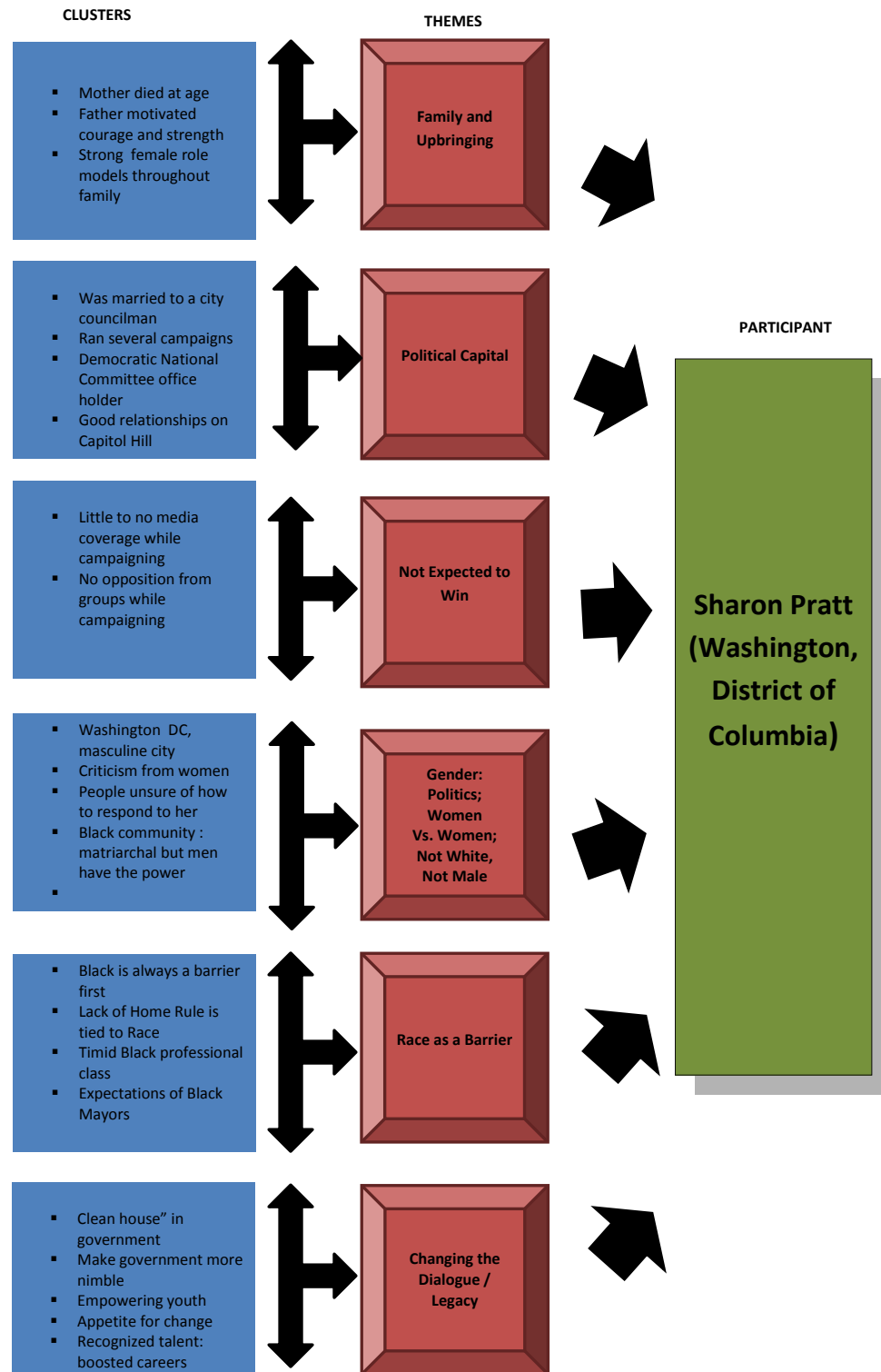


Figure 3. Thematic Analysis of Sharon Pratt

The Honorable Sheila Dixon: Understood Government but was Misunderstood

Ms. Dixon enjoyed a long twenty plus year career of elected public service, but unfortunately was the subject of an investigation that led to an indictment which ultimately led to her stepping down from mayoral office. The investigation nor the indictment were discussed during the interview. As the researcher, I secured the interview with the assistance of another interview participant who communicated to Ms. Dixon that the interview protocol was positive and not specific to any investigations. Ms. Dixon's interview was a demonstration of her understanding or expertise in the matters of local government and as well her success in office as she worked toward the betterment of her hometown of Baltimore. The five themes that emerged from her interview are "Prior Experience; Understanding Government", "Diverse Community Support", "Hollow Prize: Challenges of Baltimore; Black Middle Class", "Female Leadership", "Misunderstood" and "Legacy."

Prior Experience; Understanding Government

A combination of experiences provided Ms. Dixon with foundation of understanding the inner workings of government. From my analysis these experiences provided a good basis from which to lead and govern in a world that prior to those experiences she had no familiarity. She stated that she felt she was successful, "Because I really had set the foundation for understanding our city government and really all aspects of what goes on in the city."

Her first exposure to understanding government was when Ms. Dixon was a teacher in the public school system and she felt that gave her an eye opening experience to the operations of the school system. "Teaching school for a number of years when I

graduated in undergrad and I taught early childhood and child psychology and I was able to get to know the school system which was at that time when I entered the city council and still under the city government and still was controlled by the mayor.” In fact, she was a teacher when she was first elected to the city council in 1987.

Serving on the city council for twenty years and as city council president for eight of those years was an obvious training ground for becoming mayor. However getting elected by her peers as city council president was a pivotal experience for Ms. Dixon because she felt that this position was the closest role to that of being mayor. In essence, it was good practice for her.

“Because after being elected the city council president; you are actually the second highest office within the city of Baltimore. And you also serve and you chair the Board of Estimates which is the entity where all the large contracts come through and most decisions are made as it relates to development and really most things that impact the city the board of estimates and its chaired by the city council president.”

Diverse Community Support

One of the strengths of Ms. Dixon’s campaign for mayor and her mayoral tenure from her perspective was the immense community support she received. In fact, she credits leaders from the community for being her source of initial encouragement to run. She stated, “I was encouraged by community leaders to strongly consider running for mayor; I was encouraged by; I would say the community at large, particularly those areas in the city that I really worked with over the last twenty years.”

Since she had a long record of consistent public service, Ms. Dixon had made a name for herself and was able to garner support from several factions of the community in addition to the community leaders.

“Community groups is where my strength was because when I was serving my constituents I was always active and involved in various community groups and in particular ethnic groups; I also had support because of relationships over the years and in the Greek community, we have a number of wealthy developers and I maintained those relationships and they were very supportive. In the Indian community I got support and also in the Asian community, particularly Korean.”

Hollow Prize; Challenges of Baltimore; Black Middle Class

“Hollow prize” was coined as a phrase to describe the dichotomy of the experience of Black mayors when they were first elected to major cities in 1967. The dichotomy is that while it is a source of empowerment for the Black community that a black mayor is in elected office, they often times inherited a city that was fraught with major challenges such as a declining economy, high crime rates, and economic disinvestment in the form of individuals moving out of the city.

For Ms. Dixon, these are the same challenges she faced as mayor. “Baltimore in particular, we’ve lost population over the years and we also have the highest property tax in the state of Maryland.” From her perspective, the population decline was an issue because it also meant that there was disinvestment and that people were generally not pleased with Baltimore. This was a challenge she tried to overcome.

But there were also challenges specific to the Black community. One might expect that she was overwhelmingly supported by the Black the community. As she perceives it, this was not the case. She described, “We in Baltimore, we’re a very peculiar place as it related to African Americans.” She went on to describe how there appears to be a lack of unity among the Black community, and that there was no real focus for community development or change. When she discussed the role of the Black middle class she offered, “Our middle class population is the largest population who’ve left the city. Over the last twenty to thirty years now, the largest group of people that have left Baltimore are African American middle class.” She felt that the gap in this segment of the Black population was a significant factor in the lack of unity.

In addition to the aforementioned challenges, public opinion regarding the city of Baltimore was in her perception, for the most part, negative. She stated, “For every ill that there is, our numbers are like one and two.” As a result, she stated that even the national opinion of Baltimore was negative, especially since the television show *The Wire*, a crime show that depicted Baltimore in a very negative light. She described an encounter while on a short vacation, “I was in Florida, my sister and I have a time share and we were in Pompano Beach and my son was going to the game shop, getting some game and I had to show my ID and the guy saw my ID and saw Baltimore Maryland and he said “oh that’s *The Wire*, your city is violent.” She went on to state that she always felt defensive about that perception and as a result felt she as mayor needed to work toward changing that image. She offered, “So really changing the image of the city, and that was really the biggest thing, because we have so many great neighborhoods and so many great people and sometimes it’s not portrayed as well.”

Female Leadership

Pertaining to the impact of the leadership position on her personal life, she discussed that the impact was substantial. She was constantly working toward finding a balance between her personal and professional life. She shared she had to endure many sacrifices in her pursuit to maintain that balance. She stated, “I mean that’s why when a woman wants to get into it you really make a lot of sacrifices.”

When discussing her decision to have children, she described how her children were part of her public persona.

“My political career really started before I had children. Most women generally get into it after they’ve had children and blah blah blah. I ended up having my daughter while I was on the city council, so they ended up calling her the ‘council baby’. So had my kids while I was in the public office. It’s really balancing the personal and professional life.”

Being a woman in leadership provided both challenges and triumphs for Ms. Dixon. This was a theme for her because as she reflected on experience relative to her position as a woman and leader, she felt she was both encouraged and motivated to continue on and to do better. When Ms. Dixon took office this was a very unique time for Black women leaders in Baltimore. There was a sense of empowerment in noting that for many of the key positions of leadership were held by Black women. Ms. Dixon describes this with an air of pride.

“The fact that not only was I the first African American woman but at that time, this was the first time that all of the key city wide positions controlled by women. Myself, mayor, city council pres. Woman,

controller woman, and the state's attorney was a woman; and that that had never happened before. And all African American women.”

This sense of empowerment stemmed from not the face value of the fact that Black women were in powerful positions of leadership, but for those women to ascend to those ranks, there were several hurdles for them to overcome. First and arguably most important, struggles encountered as a result of fundraising. She stated, “First in most cases with women period, fundraising is always a factor, people give more to men than they do to women and it's not only black women but white women.” Fundraising can become a problem for women due to several factors, but Ms. Dixon notes that one of the primary reasons is because the purse strings are controlled for the most part by men. She stated, “I don't know what the reason is except for men put predominately control most of the finances in the business community so that's always been a factor.”

While Ms. Dixon was an established city leader after having served on the city council, she still encountered difficulty in what she describes as having to prove herself, almost on a regular basis. Because she led in the political realm which was historically white and male dominated, even in Baltimore, she felt that as a woman she had to constantly assert herself and justify her existence as mayor. But even beyond her position as mayor, Ms. Dixon had thoughts about how women have to do more to stay relevant and at a more basic level, heard.

“But what I think particularly as a woman because you're gonna have to prove yourself even more than men do, when you're involved in making decisions and sitting on boards etc. within most cases predominately white males. I just think that one has to be on top of their game and they really

have to know not only the subject matter as much as possible but also be able to communicate in a diverse environment.”

In addition to expected hardships Ms. Dixon endured due to her being a woman in a leadership position, she also experienced unique occurrences of resistance to her leadership that she felt were unwarranted. Among her colleagues on the council, there were instances where she struggled with maintaining positive relationships and thus garnering their support on specific matters. While she says that “I did overall get quite a bit of support from the council.” She did recount that.” And so it was give and take and in some cases some people were very surprising in their lack of support for me.”

In particular, Ms. Dixon had some problems with the woman who was her successor, who at the time when Ms. Dixon was mayor, this woman was city council president. Ms. Dixon wasn’t specific with her exactly what happened or how this resistance was displayed but she mentioned it as a critical occurrence that still troubles her to this day.

“Where I did get resistance was, which was very surprising because of my help with the city council president who is now the mayor, I did get a lot of resistance after she got elected as president; from her, which was very surprising because of how helpful I was for her. She would not have been in that position if we didn’t go beyond what we did just out of my campaign to help her get elected.”

There were also instances where she experienced resistance from city staff. However she didn’t always view that resistance as negative. She stated that “I mean there were some challenges but only based on me getting them to work closer with other

agencies because they weren't used to it." But there was one instance that she vividly remembers as being extremely negative. She stated, "To be honest with you it was a black woman who was head of my Recreation and Parks. She got caught on the phone saying some derogatory remarks about me. She didn't know that when she had hung up from a staff phone call that for some reason her message was still recording, So it was clear she wasn't supportive." She didn't indicate whether she was so bothered by those remarks because it was staff or that it was by a Black woman.

Misunderstood

Unfortunately, throughout the mayoral term of Ms. Dixon there were several instances where she was misunderstood due to her actions and choice of words. From her perception, she was misunderstood by the press, city council, staff and the public. While this bothered Ms. Dixon, she didn't let it stop her from being who she was and accomplishing the goals she set forth.

"I mean I know that I was targeted, it is what it is. I mean there were some things that if I could do differently, I would have. But they picked at me and everything and it was interesting because I mean I knew for a fact that other elected officials had done things even worse and in particular, white."

She felt that she was portrayed negatively by media and thus it impacted public opinion about her. The most infamous of these happenings of misunderstandings is Ms. Dixon's comment "the shoe is on the other foot" which she stated while she banged her shoe on the table during a city council meeting. This comment was directed to one of the city councilman who was white. The press took this comment to mean that since now

there was a Black woman as mayor, that she was exerting her power trying to right the wrongs of the past administration led by a white man. However, this was not the case.

“And me trying to protect, or help one of my colleagues there was a huge battle not a fight physically but verbally on the council floor I took my shoe and I banged one the table and it was really not to say the shoe’s on the other foot, it was really gonna hit one of my colleagues, because when you talk about people’s mom’s in the black community, that’s fighting words. And instead of hitting him with my shoe, I banged it on the table, and the media wrote that it symbolizes the shoes on the other foot. So of course I was labeled a racist.”

As a result, she felt that the public began to view her in a different light. She felt that public opinion was drastically influenced by how the media portrayed her.

“But when I took over, people were fearful, the white community was fearful, not because of who I was, well it was because of who I was; but they were fearful that I would not be capable to run the city. They had the impression of me, the impression of me with the shoe and I don’t know what other impression they had of me.”

Legacy

Ms. Dixon worked hard to overcome that negative public opinion. She didn’t want her legacy to be tainted by misunderstandings. Because of her efforts to mitigate that opinion and other negative opinions, she stated “And so I heard it time after time after time, people were pleasantly surprised at the way I ran the city.”

She perceived that they were pleasantly surprised due to her leadership style and the substantial initiatives that were implemented under her administration. She describes her leadership style as “I have a team approach where I wanna hear other people’s decisions or input before making a decision.” She went on further to state, “I would say that I was a cooperative person who wanted feedback’. Ms. Dixon felt this style of leadership went a long way toward improving public opinion about her.

Ms. Dixon ran on a platform of “Cleaner, Greener, Healthier, Safer.” She had several initiatives that were developed under her administration that helped her to achieve a cleaner, greener, healthier and safer Baltimore.

“So my whole thing was “cleaner, greener, healthier, safer” and that encompassed a new strategy for crime because the prior mayor, that was his whole thing; crime and it didn’t go down under him and he went through a dozen police commissioners. The city was filthy and dirty and I believe in the environment, but we had some good things that were going on. The city wasn’t as green so I came up with everything that I could to put every neighborhood and every issue in these categories and so I came up with a strategy, prime strategy and to this day it’s working. From the time I took office until now it’s the lowest that crime has been in Baltimore city. And what I did was I hired an experienced police person who was in the police dept.”

In addition to the reduction of crime and helping to make Baltimore a safer city, Ms. Dixon is extremely proud of her initiatives that helped the city to become cleaner and greener. This is largely because she collaborated and worked in concert with

communities. She stated, “Cleaner, the city got cleaner than ever, because I involved and engaged neighborhoods and communities in a way that I tried to empower them, but I also required and demanded from agencies that they step up and that they were gonna be held accountable.” This was also the case for the greener components of her initiatives. She stated “Single stream recycling; people don’t or didn’t recycle in Baltimore. That’s one of the things we tried to get people to do to make the city cleaner.” She went on to describe a very successful recycling program that is still in existence after her term.

Lastly, a city-wide initiative that was very near and dear to Ms. Dixon’s heart was that of making the city healthier. Ms. Dixon is an avid bicyclist and enjoys working out on a daily basis. This type of lifestyle is important to her and she was concerned about the physical health of the residents of Baltimore. So she stated, “Because Baltimore is a city of obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure; so me and my staff we came up with ‘A Healthier and fit Baltimore.’ We worked with communities and the media; we started noon day walks; we went around to different community centers.”

The more tangible and perhaps the most meaningful part of her legacy is the impact she had on young people. She views that her being recognized as the first Black woman mayor for Baltimore as source of encouragement for young women. Being first Black woman mayor “It’s relevant in respect to if it means encouraging other young women to dream and accomplish goals that they want to accomplish, whatever that is and when I talk to young women and others in particular, that comes up as a result of you achieving that goal.” It is as if Ms. Dixon feels that a natural outgrowth of being the first is the impression that she leaves on the young people to follow in her footsteps.

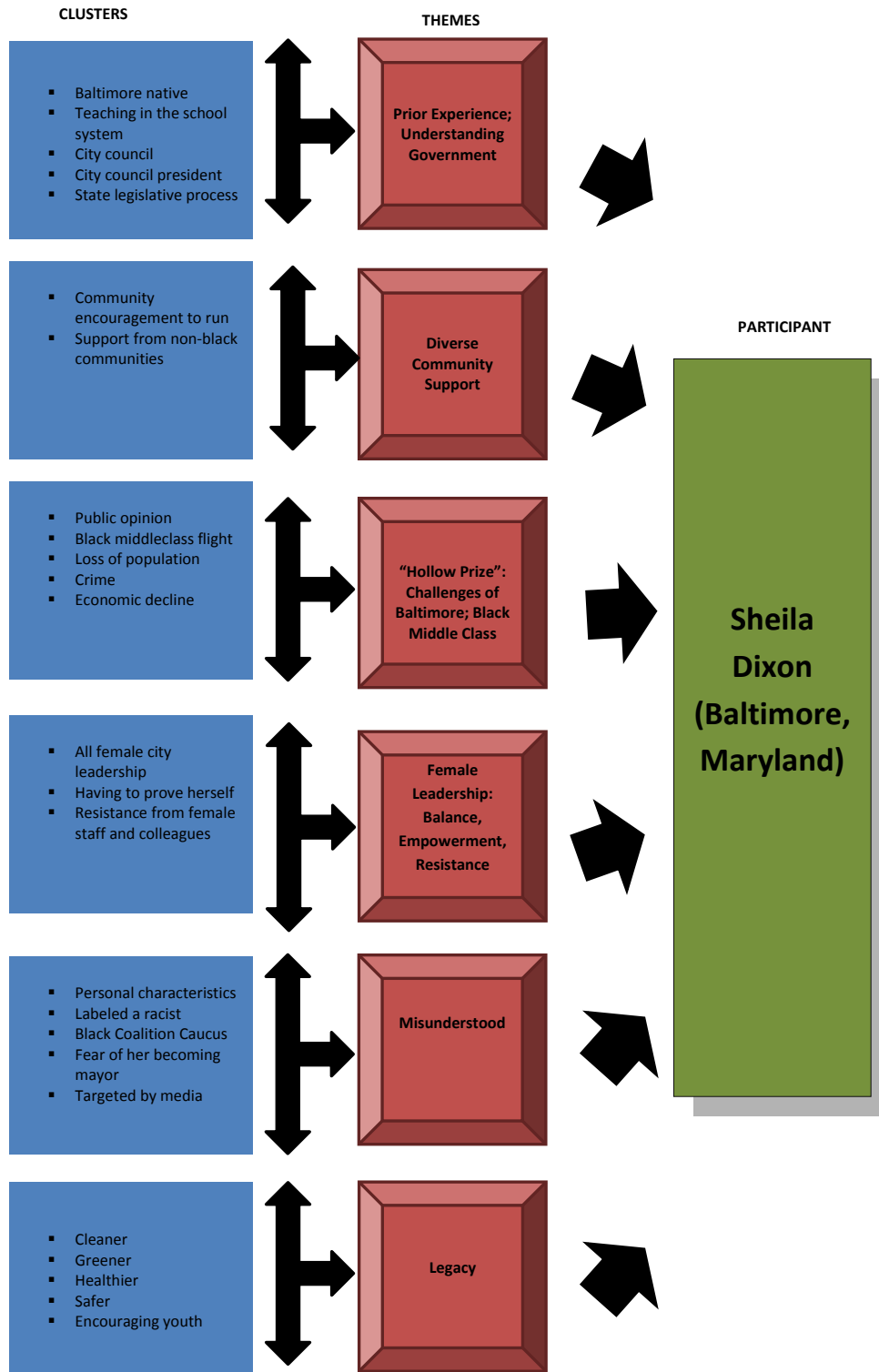


Figure 4. Thematic Analysis of Sheila Dixon.

The Honorable Yvonne Johnson: Patchwork Quilt of Skills and Experiences

As Councilwoman Johnson summed up her prior experiences, skills and talents, she explained metaphorically how they comprised a patchwork quilt that provided her with what she needed to eventually run for, and be successful while in public office. The six themes that emerged from Councilwoman Johnson's interview were "Family", "Faith", "Preparation", "Diverse Groups", "Under the Microscope" and "Legacy: The First, Role Modeling, Pay it Forward."

Family

The first patch of that quilt stems from her family and upbringing. She had a unique upbringing as she described it. She explained that this unique living arrangement allowed her to receive a good education which she perceived was one of the pivotal underpinnings of her development.

"My mother had an operation when I was going in the second grade and I don't think they thought she was gonna make it. So I went to live with my aunt and uncle so they could take care of me while she was in the hospital. And the school; the schools were segregated schools at that time here. The school I went to was better and I just excelled at the school. I got the attention and I got people who were wonderful teachers and interested in me and so Mom got better; as a matter of fact, she healed and when she came home the decision was I would stay with them and go to the school during the week and come home on the weekends."

Faith

Throughout the interview, in just about every response to a question Councilwoman Johnson mentioned some aspect of her religious faith. Whether it was in relation to why she chose to be involved with politics at all or what her faith meant to her family and how she was raised, faith is clearly a theme that is of premier significance.

When it came to how Councilwoman Johnson discovered that serving her community through public service was the career path that best suited her, she gives all the credit to God and her faith. She stated with great conviction, “And I did it for myself because I think my purpose in this path that I’m walking is public service, I really do. And you know, people say you have; or your talent is, or your gift is you can bring people together, and I do that. I love doing that. It’s a blessing to be able to do that.” She felt as if being a public servant is what she was born or created to do.

Even though she later discovered that public service was what she was meant to do, she mentions how being involved with church and church activities were helpful toward her development. Not only did she practice her faith at church with her family, but she also learned how to work in groups, demonstrate commitment and discipline. She compared it to her experience with the Girl Scouts, “As I mentioned to you, scouting was a big part of my life and so was the church. So I was in the church group as was very active with my church.”

Even within her advice for other women who may have an interest in politics, she encourages them to be in tune with who they are and at the very foundation of that is having some concept of faith. She offered, “Know you’re purpose. Know what your gifts and talents are. Use them. And if you don’t have a particular gift or talent, find somebody

close to you that can point them out.” She believes that faith provides guidance and direction and helps one to know their purpose.

Preparation

Preparation came in many forms as Councilwoman Johnson was active in her community, and had prior experiences with being an elected official. She felt she was prepared to be a public servant in the capacity of mayor based on these and other experiences that contributed to her development as a leader. Community service was another part of that quilt that she credits her ability to learn about leadership and collaboration.

“Well I just did a poster for the girl scouts because I was a Girl Scout for seventeen years, through Brownies and Sr. and camp counseling and leading Girl Scout troops, etc. And I think scouting was factor in preparing me in terms of leadership and that kind of thing; and in terms of working with diverse people.”

In addition to being a Girl Scout, Councilwoman Johnson described how her volunteer work in the community was a good learning experience as well.

“I think that’s what helped me, was that for years prior to me running for anything I served on a number of boards and commissions. I helped to establish a program called Summit House for Women as an alternative to incarceration. So I worked with a lot of people in the community that I probably would’ve never known and built relationships.”

It’s obvious that her years as a city councilwoman and mayor pro tem were another part of the fabric of that quilt. She stated, “Well I had been on council for 14

years, and I had served as an at large member for fourteen years.” However in addition to serving as city councilwoman, she also had the honor of serving as mayor pro tem. She stated, “I ran seven times. Three or four of those times I became mayor pro tem. I forget how many. So I served and then I ran for mayor.” She described running that many times as a good training ground from which to establish herself.

“So I had served fourteen years, I had served as mayor pro tem which is vice mayor for six years at least and done much of the stuff except sign legal documents that the mayor did. There was a time I was mayor pro tem and the mayor at that time lost his child and I had to run the meetings for a period of time. So I had the experience and I just wanted, and I just wanted; there were some things I wanted to initiate and a lot of people encouraged me and I decided to run.”

While serving as a councilwoman and mayor pro tem gave her the exposure and experience to help her feel prepared, it was her first race that appeared to have been a defining segment of her quilt. She first stated, “My first election at the two black precincts I got 100% of the vote in one and 98% in the other. And all of the curb side votes, those are the older people. Now that’s significant to me.” While the win was important the race itself proved to be an incredible learning experience as she described it.

“And so the night of the election several people said; I could never forget these white males, ‘You made a good showing there, you probably won’t win. You run again you might win’. Well in the primary I came in last. I don’t care if there are twenty people running you have to come in

the first six, I was number six. So I thought to myself, ‘Okay, I got to move up’. And so in the general election, I came in third which meant I won a seat. People were shocked; many people were shocked. Some people were shocked, many people were elated. So that’s how that happened.”

“And it was really interesting, it was fun, it was a challenge, I learned a lot and became a council member and I began to really learn so much about the city and what we make decisions about. I felt like I was back in graduate school because I believe that when you say you gonna serve that what you should do so you have to do your homework. I knew nothing about zoning. So I really just kinda took the book and did a crash course in it so that I could really make good and fair decisions.”

Diverse Grass Roots Support

Due to the diverse and international composition of the Greensboro population, Councilwoman Johnson relied on the support from all walks of life to support her campaign efforts. She prides herself on the fact that she was “everyone’s mayor” and that she amassed support at the grassroots level from a rainbow coalition of sorts. She stated, “So I put together when I came home, this really grassroots campaign committee. It looked like the United Nations.” But her appreciation for her diverse support base did not stop at what they could do to help her get elected. She expressed appreciation for the relationship building that took place. She went on to state, “A diversity of associates and friends. Because get to know people who are different from yourself and build

relationships with them. Because the more you do that, the more you're able to really serve all the people." She went on to discuss how much those relationships meant to her.

"I think acceptance by these very diverse groups of people was extremely important to me. I mean it just; it warmed my heart and you know when you visualize unity in community and one of your goals is to promote that unity; and these folk didn't necessarily know that was my goal at the time, but it was wonderful to be able to experience the different ethnicities."

Because of her love for the diversity of people of Greensboro, Councilwoman Johnson developed a reputation for being open and accepting. She was known to be supportive of all people. She offered, "It makes a difference when you call on people all over the community to help you. Because then they know a set of people and they can vouch for you and they can say you know, I know her, I've worked with her, you know, she's solid; blah blah. And so I used that."

Under the Microscope

In Councilwoman Johnson's own words, "I'm always gone be under a microscope." There were a few missteps that occurred that Councilwoman Johnson felt caused her to be under scrutiny by the media and the public. One of those instances was brought to light during her campaign for mayor. The media tried to link her to her husband's choices relative to what he owed the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

"My husband took care of his mom she had Alzheimer's for ten years and he got behind in his taxes and they blasted all of that in the paper. And my response to that was: I didn't go into his business because he's a very

private person. I just said ‘this is my husband’s situation and I’m not gonna let anyone stop me from pursuing my dream.’”

Another account or misstep that brought what she felt was undue scrutiny happened soon after she became mayor. She described an error in judgment as she tried to remedy a situation that would have caused her to lose money.

“I just bought \$700 some worth of meat, and we had a bad storm and the lights went out. So I came to a meeting and I said “does anybody have a generator,” I mean I was really asking the council. Well afterwards the Fire Chief came and said we have one. You know, I should have paid attention to my gut and he said I’ll have it delivered. I said “I don’t mind going and picking it up.” Well of course somebody at the fire department leaked it to the paper.”

Lastly, Councilwoman Johnson described that at times, her own council added to the perception of her being under the microscope. It wasn’t just the media she had to contend with, it was also the examination from her colleagues she endured often times as she made decisions. She said repeatedly that she had a “difficult council.” She recounted an issue stemming from her council that incited racial tensions in the community. She was against the majority of members on her council on this issue and as a result was heavily criticized.

“I had a difficult council, you know, people who for example, we had a closed the landfill which was in a predominately African American community. We had done that in the early 2000’s. We had wanted to look

at opening the landfill again, which just opened all that animosity and pain that people had in that community.”

Legacy; The First; Role Modeling

In addition to Councilwoman Johnson being the first Black woman mayor of Greensboro, she discussed many other instances where she experienced being the “first.” This appears to be a theme for Councilwoman Johnson. She seemed as though she was both motivated and challenged by being the “first.” She discussed the “first” with great pride.

With regard to the community, she stated, “I was the first African American to be invited to the Jr. League in Greensboro.” The Junior League, an organization comprised of only women, has long history of providing benevolent resources to help the underserved. Councilwoman Johnson was invited to join in the mid 1970’s.

Also, as part of her work in the community before becoming mayor, Councilwoman Johnson was a member of the, “first Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the United States. This is in the 70’s where the Klan Nazi thing happened.” The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed in response to a tragic incident where she stated, “Well we had a group called the Communists Workers Party, they did this march and then the KKK came and shot and killed several people in one of our African American communities.” She went on to describe the significance of this commission, “I knew that this was a piece of history for Greensboro and I felt the incident itself was a terrible. It was an awful piece of history and maybe this [the commission] was a piece that would try to heal and right what had happened.”

Moving forward to her professional career, before becoming mayor, Councilwoman Johnson ran for city council and served fourteen years. She experienced a first as she became a city councilwoman.

“Actually I was the first African American elected at large in Greensboro since the district system. Now there were some African Americans prior to me and everybody ran at large, but then we put in a district system which gave, kind of guaranteed to some degree two seats for African Americans. And nobody since the district system had run at large and won that was African American.”

During her tenure as mayor, Councilwoman Johnson was instrumental in creating a couple of commissions that were the first of their kind in existence. These commissions were goals of hers prior to becoming elected. She described, “Greensboro is an interesting city. It has over 105 different ethnic groups and 90 different languages spoken in our schools.” This was the impetus for her creating the first international commission.

“Because one of the goals when I was running for mayor, was to have the first international commission, which I did. Because of the makeup of Greensboro, the diversity of Greensboro, I wanted people who were Phillipino or Asian or African. We have a number of African groups here, I wanted them to feel a real part of the city. And so I was able to promote the first international commission.”

“I’m very concerned about the environment and how we approach waste management in the environment, and the future. And so I established the first sustainability commission in the city of Greensboro.

Those are two things, I really wanted to do that were important to me. And I did them.”

Also during her mayoral tenure, Councilwoman Johnson was able to make in impact with respect to the hiring of staff within city government. Regarding the city manager, she stated, “I was mayor when we hired the first Black manager and the only Black manager we have ever had, Rashaad Young.” This was something that Councilwoman Johnson was very proud of.

In addition, being the “first” was seemingly a family trait. As she explained with tremendous pride how her uncle who helped raise her, “was the first African American to get a Ph.D. in Dairy Science in this country and then he ran the Dairy Science department at North Carolina A&T State University.”

While Councilwoman Johnson was no stranger to being the “first”, given all of her experiences, she spoke of the responsibility that being the first carries, in particular, what it means to young people. As Councilwoman Johnson engaged in her thoughts about whether she made a difference and what kind of impact her mayoral term truly had, she spoke fondly about what her interactions with children and serving as a role model to them. She enjoyed and still enjoys the time she spends talking with children and engaging with them.

“I’m the kind of person since my service on council, who never, unless I had a conflict, turned down going to schools and talking to young people because I believe that’s so important; they are our future. And I think when I was mayor I went to forty some schools to speak to classes and to speak to students. And I had done that prior and probably not as many, but

I had done it. So I thought it was important to be a role model. I thought it was important for young people to see somebody different from white men to be honest with you.”

It is important to her to not only spend time with youth but to make an impact. Councilwoman Johnson recognized that more than likely her greatest impact was just being who she was, a Black woman in a prominent position of leadership. She wanted youth to see her and believe that they too can achieve and be whomever they strive to be. She shared a story about how she encountered two women in the grocery store who were positively impacted on election night when Councilwoman Johnson became Mayor Johnson.

“These two young women came up to me and said, ‘When we heard you won, I just cried.’ Now I don’t know these women, but I just know that they were young African American women, maybe late teens, early twenties and that meant so much because it said to them that ‘things are possible for me’. And that was so, I think it was defining. It was all worth it. But those kinds of things often happened. And I mean awards, people are always giving you awards and I mean its humbling and all of that. But it was those young women that just said ‘can I get a hug’ and you know, ‘I just cried, I stayed up waiting til the results’. You know, I said ‘you don’t even know, me’ But that meant a lot to me.”

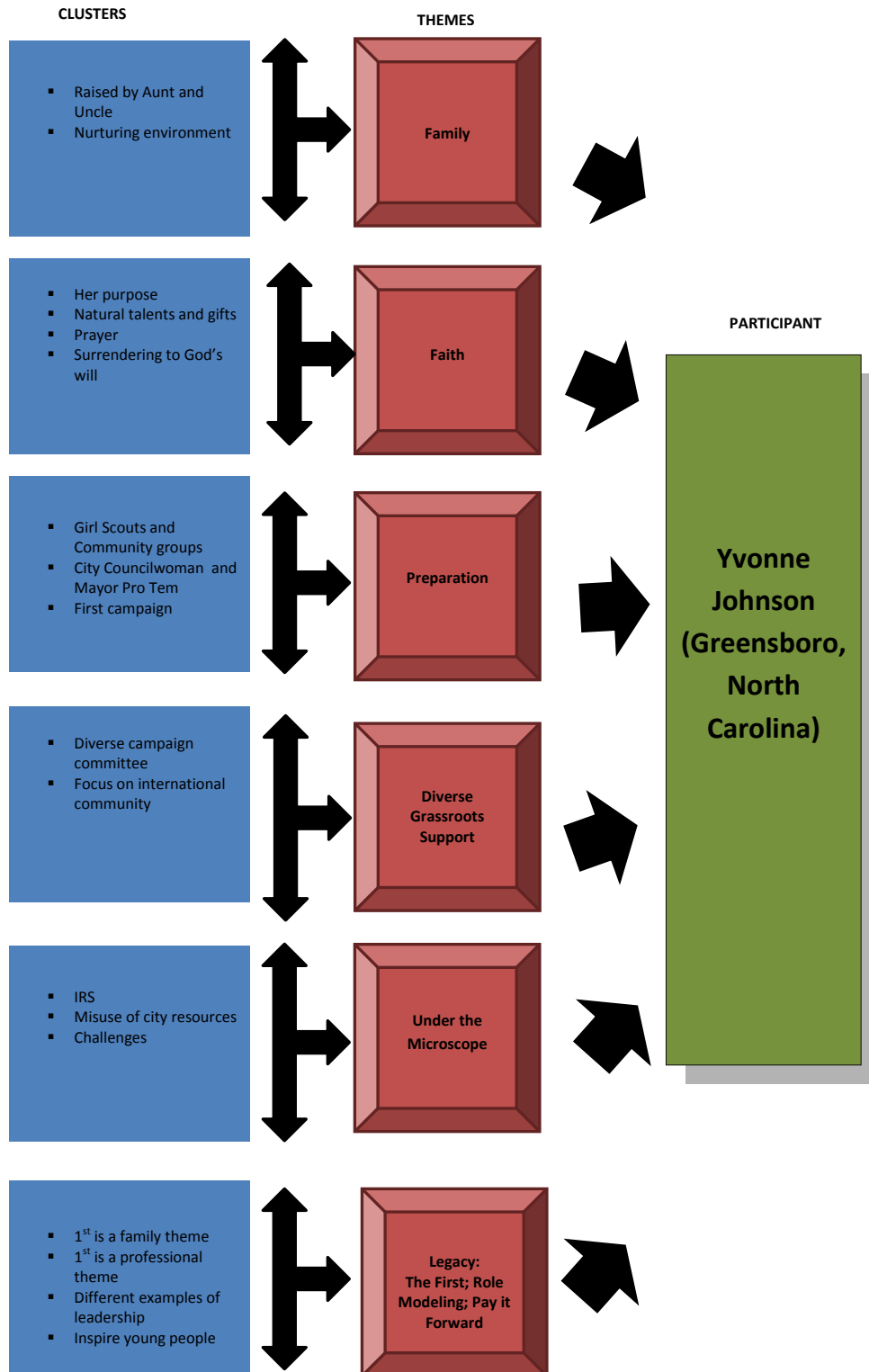


Figure 5. Thematic Analysis of Yvonne Johnson.

The Honorable Shirley Franklin: Introspective

Mrs. Franklin provided very thoughtful and introspective responses to interview questions. Her ability to utilize introspection was evident as she discussed critical moments of her decision to run and her mayoral experience. Themes that emerged from Mrs. Franklin's interview were, "Personal Characteristics", "Holistic Assessment", "Reluctant Decision to Run", "Time for a Woman", "Race, Gender: Scrutiny, Criticism, Black Middle Class."

Personal Characteristics

As Ms. Franklin describes herself, she mentions how her personality traits and communication styles impacted her tenure as mayor. She proclaims that she has unique personal characteristics that she feels helped her to be both decisive and inclusive. She started by describing herself as a child. She stated, "And I was pretty shy as a child, so I was very shy. I was right up under my mother. I did not sit in the front of the room. I was good student but I was very shy. I had strong opinions, I've always had a strong opinions but the way I express them was not to seek leadership."

Those strong opinions are still guiding her, she explained that she leads with humility, often times not thinking of herself as a leader. When describing herself, she stated, "I'm kind of blunt and matter of fact. Now I do it with a smile and I don't hold grudges; but I don't back down either when I believe in something. But if I'm not in the lead, I don't have to lead. So I'm happy to follow."

The way she expresses those opinions was fodder for criticism from others including the media, but she did not let that criticism change the way she communicates. She explained, "The press called me feisty. People would say I was intimidating because

I was hard-nosed, very bold, very candid. I viewed myself as; it's a very powerful position so a certain amount of intimidation comes from the position."

Ms. Franklin did not let what others thought of her communication style impede her perceived effectiveness as mayor. She stated that one of her many strong suits is that she is able to make the decisions that others are afraid to make. She explained that she would not have done the position justice by trying to please everyone and avoiding making tough decisions.

"Now people who know me will tell you that I'm very; I'm a pretty tough decision maker, I mean I'm hardnosed; and so they would not necessarily use the word nurturing with me. I'm kind of a bottom line person. The way my father would say it is, that I don't suffer fools, but it doesn't mean I don't love everybody and respectful of them and listen to them."

"But I mean I made decisions based on the set of facts and research, the history; and I really just was stubborn about getting off of that. So some people would say I was stubborn. I didn't find any real value in just making a deal to make a deal. I mean to this day, people will say we should do this because it will make some powerful leader happy. And I'd say you know that's just not on my list. I want them to be proud, I want them to understand it and think we were sensible, but the happiness, eh hh that's for somebody else to do."

Holistic Assessment

Since the decision to run for Ms. Franklin was extremely difficult, she had done a lot of what some would call soul searching in order to assess if she was ready to make such a leap. Ms. Franklin was quite analytical about her assessment of herself, and took a hard look at herself from all angles. It was a holistic approach. She shared, “So I did do a needs assessment, both personal and otherwise. And I assessed; that was the first year I really thought about whether I could be effective in the job. I was methodical in lots of ways.”

So she started with assessing herself first by seeking the help of a therapist in order to get to know herself better.

“I actually sought some counseling in 1999. I started going to see a psychologist because the whole world was talking about 2000 and Y2K and the implications of Y2K on American business and life; and I remember going in to see this woman and saying. ‘You know I’m not a computer, but I’d like to be ready for the next century.’ So I spent many months, nine or ten months in counseling. Really spending time understanding what my mission might be in this new era called the 21st century. I wasn’t troubled as much I was inquisitive about myself and my experiences. As an only child and a very private person I didn’t have a lot of people I felt comfortable talking to.”

While undergoing that endeavor of self-awareness, Ms. Franklin also assessed her financial stability with the understanding that if that if that area of her life wasn’t stable

then that could create a distraction in her quest for office. She explained that she did not want to have the burden of financial worry.

“I spent that entire year organizing my finances. As a single woman I felt strongly that I needed to be financially stable; in other words living within my means and knowing both what my means were as well as my expenses. Which was not something I had not taken too seriously before then. I mean I managed but I wasn’t intentional about it.”

Ms. Franklin also took inventory of her both her natural skills and talents. This was another avenue of self-assessment. One of them was fundraising. With low name recognition this skill would prove to be critical to her ability to have a successful campaign and win as mayor.

“Well I’m a good fundraiser. So I mean we’d organize fundraisers from here, but together work on strategies for Harold Washington, David Dinkins. I’ve always been someone who’s not afraid to ask for money for something I believed in and also, willing to give my own, and so the combination of the two makes a good start for fundraising. That was one of things I brought that I don’t think people fully appreciated.”

This assessment in the form of an inventory also took the shape of assessing her professional experiences that would help her be not just successful in her campaign but also an effective and successful mayor.

“I worked for two mayors and I served as the COO and Chief of operations. I knew how city government ran. I knew what I was getting into, I knew the influence the mayor could have, and I understood the

responsibility. So I had a clear advantage of going in. I mean the reason I ran for mayor is that's the job that I knew the best."

In addition to those posts within city government, she had other positions that allowed for her to foster a connection with the community. She explained that civic engagement was important to her.

"I was the VP of community affairs in local government. So I worked with communities that were directly impacted by the construction in the Olympics. So I had good working relationships there and I had a lot of creditability and those were the groups, the grass roots groups that were most in my corner and most willing to stand up and stand up for me."

Not only did her profession allow for her to be civically involved, this was also a passion for Ms. Franklin during her personal time. She has a long history of community involvement and she is still involved to this day. Specifically, the arts is an area that Ms. Franklin prefers as she explained that she loves the arts and recognizes its' value to the community.

"I was on the Symphony board in the 1970's, I was actively engaged at the High Museum with the Ballet, with the annual trips of Alvin Ailey to Atlanta. So I had a network of relationships associated with the arts in addition to whatever family relationships I had through soccer, ballet, school and PTA; and all of that. So I had a broader network than was obvious, from my resume."

It not just being involved in the community that was important to Ms. Franklin, she also assessed the needs of the community. Part of her assessment also included

gaining understanding of what the community's needs were, but from the community's perspective and not just hers as a city government bureaucrat.

“And that year, I did essentially a listening tour. Anyone who invited me; and this was everyday most days; invite me to visit with three or more people. So I would go anyplace there are three or more people who wanted to talk to me. And did that nonstop for almost a year. And so I would say I learned a lot, I learned a lot about this city, but I also learned a lot about the hopes and dreams of the people who lived in this city and what they were looking for.”

Ms. Franklin also did an assessment of the three women who ran before her. She examined their races to ascertain if there was anything she could learn from their experiences. She explained, “I studied the races of several other women. I studied the race of the women who ran for mayor. I studied the races of two black women who ran for mayor and then two white women ran for congress and should've won in Georgia and none of them gave themselves enough time.” She felt that learning from their missteps was a valuable lesson. She did what she could to avoid their pitfalls.

After becoming more self-aware from an emotional, personal, financial and professional perspective, coupled with her assessment of community engagement and studying the races of the previous mayors, Ms. Franklin thought it important to assess her nucleus of a support group. She understood that her close network of supporters which included her children and parents would be essential to a well-run campaign. She describes her family as being very important to her.

“So I spent the year preparing myself so that I would feel comfortable to consider running for office. And so at the end of the year I had spent all this time in counseling, I also spent time just reflecting on what my contributions might be. And I spent time assessing the impact of my running for office on my family. I had aging parents at the time. Both my father...my father died before I decided to run for office, but at the time I started thinking about it, I had my mother and my father and their spouses. I was concerned about them.”

“So, I took it as a project so to speak. Both to assess myself, my emotional strength and depth, my financial stability, my family’s; I mean they didn’t know it, but I was assessing their; my children and my parents’ health and wellness so to speak in the broadest sense of the word. And at the end of that year in Nov. 1999, I concluded that I would run.”

Reluctant Decision to Run

The decision to run for public office for some, is not easy. More often than not candidates have the “fire in their belly,” a strong desire to run. That was not the case for Ms. Franklin. She stated, “I had never thought about running for office, had not thought about running for city council or the school board.” Ms. Franklin was coaxed and prodded by others to run for several years before she made the decision. She explained, “I decided to run for the office of mayor because I was encouraged by two former mayors, Andrew Young and Maynard Jackson; both of whom I worked for and in their administrations at the cabinet level.” But it was not only former mayors, she stated, “The women were business women and women in the public, no elected women; and they

urged me to consider running for office beginning in the mid 1990's. And I put them off, and put them off, and put them off, and finally they just became a nuisance." She went on to say, "I was persuaded that I really ought to use my skills, my leadership and administrative skills from my years in city government on the executive side. I was very reluctant, it took years for people to convince me to do it.

Her reluctance stemmed from a variety of sources. One of those sources was the belief in her own capability. She said, "Well at first when I was approached, I didn't feel prepared at all." Ms. Franklin explained that she didn't think she was ready to run, but also that she didn't feel worthy to run.

"In the sense I held Andrew Young and Maynard Jackson in such high regard I couldn't imagine ever holding an office that they had held. I mean it was just beyond the realm of possibility. I had been behind the scenes. I had worked behind the scenes in city government with both of them; and was really awed by both their leadership and courage and vision. And just never imagined that I would be good enough to do the job."

In addition to her personal feelings, she also recognized her limitations.

She explained, "I had very low name identification. I had not been in the public arena. I had been in the public arena, but completely behind the scenes. I had no public image." There she was concerned about her ability to garner the public support necessary to win.

Time for a Woman

In spite of her reluctance, there were others who encouraged her to run because as Ms. Franklin perceived, they felt it was the right time for Atlanta to finally have a woman

mayor. There were three other women who ran before Ms. Franklin and had lost. So when she was considering her bid to run, she had support from women in the community.

“But there was a small group of women; about ten women who were a lunch time group. A handful of them were in the media, and a handful were in business. And they invited me to lunch and talked to me about the importance of women in leadership and running for mayor and encouraging me to consider it.”

Ms. Franklin felt that that was a source of motivation for her to answer the call to run. In addition, she described a women’s movement that was inspiring. The movement also supported the notion that it was the right time for a woman.

“And there’s a strong movement of women in their 30’s, 40’s and 50’s; at the time there was a strong movement of women around integration of business opportunities, employment opportunities, leadership opportunities. So women were itching to have a woman run for office; run for mayor. And I would’ve been; I was the fourth woman to run in a relatively short period of time.”

She went on to share, “So there was a sense in the city that it was time for a new kind of leadership and for many people, a woman represented kind of; another breakthrough.” Ms. Franklin explained that the appetite for change in the city was a motivator as she too felt it was time for a change in the form of female leadership.

Race, Gender: Scrutiny, Criticism, Black Middle Class

Even though Ms. Franklin underwent a labor intensive exercise in self-analysis and finally felt ready and comfortable to run, she still experienced quite a bit of criticism

and scrutiny. This scrutiny and criticism came from a variety of angles. She described, “I had a hard time and I assumed that the best; my best quality as a candidate was that I knew how city government operated. People were not interested in that at all.” She went to on explain how in general, people tended to gloss over her experience as a city bureaucrat and focus on her personal characteristics. Criticism stemming from other women and the Black community was somewhat surprising and troubled her.

There were a couple of instances where Ms. Franklin was confronted because of her gender. She was confronted because there were some individuals who felt she should not run for mayor because she was a woman.

“I had a woman tell me; I knocked on her door and she had just come out of the hospital and she was older than I. And she said she thought; you know, maybe I should let the guy who was running win and clean up whatever the problems were, or her perceived problems. And I asked her, I said ‘well don’t you think I’m strong enough?’ She said ‘yes I think you’re strong enough, I just don’t think that’s that women should do.’ And this is 2001.”

“I had a man say to me after my election, we were standing at a reception at a church and outside the church. And he said ‘I don’t know what I’m gonna do’ and I said ‘what’s the problem?’ He said ‘well what if you do better than the men?’ I said ‘well (laughter), what if I am doing better than men?’” But what he meant was, that I was getting out of my place.”

There were also leaders in the Black community who felt it was not the right time for a Black woman mayor. In particular, those leaders were ministers. They were also very critical of Ms. Franklin. She described, “There were other black ministers who felt that we had a Black sheriff and a Black school board superintendent a Black congresswoman at the time and that we didn’t need any other Black women and they said that to me.” This was disappointing to Ms. Franklin.

From women who were generally strong supporters of other women who ran for office, she was scrutinized for her ability to win. She shared, “And so the question was ‘why do you think you can win?’ And I had women tell me, activists women say, ‘I want to support you, but more than that I want to support the winner and you have to prove to me that you can win as a woman. Not as a black person, but as a woman.’” Even though there was a good number of women in the community who felt it was the right time for a woman to run, there were others who felt she may not win because she was a woman. She stated, “Women who had been involved in neighborhood activism and environmentalism and things like that. They did not want to support the loser. And they weren’t sure that a woman could garner enough votes. It was one of the more fun challenges I had. So I was constantly being scrutinized as to whether I will have winning campaign.”

With respect to her race as a Black person, criticism from the Black community was ever present throughout her campaign and while she was in office. There was a faction of the Black community who questioned Ms. Franklin’s “Blackness.” They were uncomfortable with her as they perceived she wasn’t comfortable being Black. She explained, “There were people who felt I wasn’t black enough, in other words, and my

answer to that; I always enjoyed saying, ‘I was born black, I will die black, I’m proud to be black’. You want a more complicated answer than that? I’ve lived in a black community; I’m educated from a black college, I mean a long list of things.”

In particular, she had feedback from Black men who were critical of Ms. Franklin and her comfort level with being Black. She perceived that they felt if she wasn’t comfortable being Black then she couldn’t represent the Black community in earnest. She stated, “There were African American men in the focus groups who felt that I was not comfortable being black because I was blonde. And they questioned whether I – you know – appreciated my heritage because my hair was blonde and it had been blonde for a little while and they questioned that.”

In addition to her hair, she was told that she “didn’t look the part.” At the time, Ms. Franklin had a different style of dress; different in comparison to most of the middle class Black professional women were wearing in Atlanta. As a result of her personal style, she perceived that many in the Black community were uncomfortable with her. Her mentor Andrew Young told her, “He said ‘Black middle class women don’t think you look like the mayor’. Then my friends would say ‘Shirley everyone else is dressed up and look at you’ I was the most underdressed and that was a big deal in the Black middle class.”

In essence, Ms. Franklin had to mitigate several assumptions on whether or not it was the right time for her to run, if she would win, and how she looked while running. She said, “So there were; so the obstacles were just the typical stereotypes; sometimes it was because I was a woman, and sometimes because I was Black, and sometimes when it was both. But I don’t recall as many times as it was both as I recall when it was one or

the other.” These experiences she recounts as result of her race and gender, she recounts them separately.

But she also recounts them in a positive light. She viewed these instances as motivational. Ms. Franklin, said she felt like it was her time to break stereotypes. She stated, “There was as sense that I was breaking through some of the stereotypes and they were uncertain as to how that would play out over time. I didn’t take it as negative, I took it as just an honest reflection of when there’s as substantial change, people are nervous. They’re apprehensive.”

Continuing the Legacy

With respect to her term in office, Ms. Franklin discussed the themes of race, gender and generation as having significant impacts to her tenure. She expressed how she felt honored to serve in a capacity where other pioneers had already blazed the trail. Those pioneers left a legacy for others, and Ms. Franklin felt she was indeed part of that legacy. Pertaining to the Black community, Ms. Franklin expressed great pride reflecting on the progress of the Black community throughout American history, and how she wanted to play a role in continuing that legacy of progress.

“I feel an obligation to the African American community on a wide array of issues that I brought to the campaign. It was not my first encounter with that, remember I was in school in the early ‘60’s. I mean I felt an obligation to understand the issues in the Black community. And to speak them in particular, to give voice to those concerns. I mostly felt committed to see if we could offer ways that we could find solutions to problems, that seemed impossible to solve.”

She discussed the historic nature of race in America's political history with respect to Black mayors. She again felt like she was part of a legacy that she felt obliged to support. She was asked in particular why race was significant throughout her tenure.

“Race because I was continuing a tradition that I had followed as a college student, going back to Stokes and Hatcher and being very intrigued by their leadership; and certainly Andrew Young and Maynard Jackson and Bill Campbell. I was intrigued by the influence that men of great vision and intellect and commitment can have on the life of the city and the people of the city for a long, long time.”

Her obligation to support the Black community paralleled her desire to represent women in a positive light. As a self-proclaimed feminist, how she was viewed as a woman was of deep concern to her.

“As a woman I felt a deep and abiding obligation to demonstrate that women have been for centuries...phenomenal leaders often not written about and don't talk about it themselves and I very much wanted to be a woman who opened the door for other women, for women of color and for white women. I wanted to leave office without people saying “well we did that once we don't need to do it again.”

“I mean really, it's shameful that of the top 100 cities that there have only been six of us. We've been Presidents of colleges we've been astronauts, we've been Secretary of State, Cabinet Officials, etc. There is nothing about this job that African American women and women generally cannot do. And it is very, very rewarding; it is worth the

sacrifice because you can help to shape your city, your town, your state if you run for governor; for future generations, not just for your own family but for people you'll never know. I mean there's no question we are capable for these jobs."

While Ms. Franklin understood the enormity of becoming Atlanta's first Black woman mayor, she said she was not at all phased by that title. She stated she concerned herself more with supporting the strides taken by her predecessors and making sure she did well so that others could come behind her.

"Oh I don't have any feelings about it, it is accurate I am the first woman mayor. I was the 58th mayor, that's a long time to wait (laughter). And the truth of the matter is there were many women who contributed mightily to Atlanta's success who would've been great mayors. The three women who ran before me were smart and capable. They didn't win so they weren't able to serve. What I hope the future says, "Atlanta's first black woman mayor and there were more'. The key is to keep the door open."

"My goal was to open the door and to make sure it was open when I left, for other women, women of color and women. So that after my service, I judge myself by whether there is a general belief in the public among voters that women can do the job. And if there is a general belief then it's our job as women interested in public service to push; you know to walk through the door."

“Well in the sense that I believe deeply that women have, many women, generations of women have leadership skills. Ultimately one of the factors in my running, was saying to young women time and time again, you can do and be anything you want in the world if you work hard and if you build the support base etc. When in fact there had been no woman mayor, so in many ways I felt that it was important for me to take up that kind of baton. Not so much for myself, but so that I could open the door for other women. Women in executive positions were fairly; are still rare; and Black women in executive positions are still fairly rare. And so I had been a feminist since the age of thirteen. So, it mattered to me.”

Ensuring that generations after her would have the opportunity to follow in her footsteps, ignited passion in Ms. Franklin. As she discussed what generations before had accomplished to help pave the way for her to succeed, she spoke with what appeared to be a resounding sense of pride.

“Generation because I came at the tail end of; I mean I’m a beneficiary, a direct beneficiary of the civil rights movement, so I very much recognize the obligation I had to advance the cause of social justice and fairness and equality in whatever ways that I could. Now everyone’s trash has to be picked up and everyone has to have fair police treatment but I also felt an obligation that I needed to demonstrate that the sacrifices of those during the civil rights movement were not in vain during my time.”

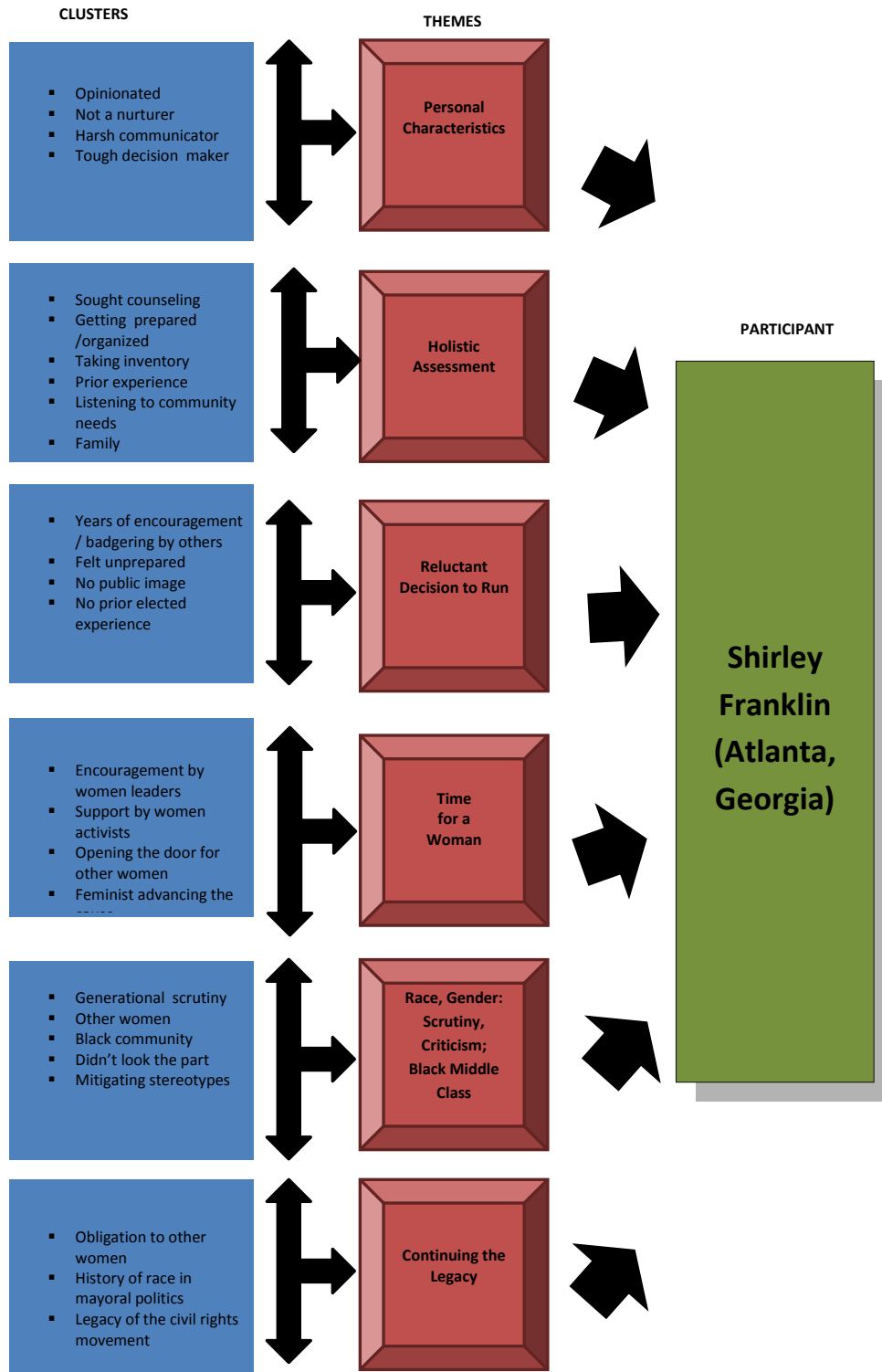


Figure 6. Thematic Analysis of Shirley Franklin

The Honorable Sharon Sayles Belton: Reflections of Success

Mrs. Belton is an accomplished woman. What she achieved while serving the city of Minneapolis as Mayor, with the help of many supporters, she spoke of with sincere pride. That pride permeated throughout the interview. The five themes that emerged from her interview were “Setting the Stage: Pathway to and through City Government; City Composition”, “Kitchen Cabinet”, “Issues Experience Due to Gender”, “Style of Governing” and “Legacy and Reflection of Successes: Pride in being the First.”

Setting the Stage: Pathway to and through City Government; City Composition

Mrs. Belton has what appears to be a lifelong commitment toward serving her community both in a profession and personal capacity. These prior experiences created a pathway to her service with in city government, and as well helped her to achieve success while serving her city. She views volunteer work as the platform from which she was able to first learn about what it means to be a public servant. She stated, “So I have this legacy of being involved in issues that are really important to the community.” This commitment was demonstrated through volunteer work in her youth and as an adult.

“So what I’ll tell you is that when I ran for public office, I came in with about twelve years of volunteer community experience. And so I consider myself even today a professional volunteer so I am always gonna have three or four, community boards that I serve on. And so I have a reputation for giving back to the community.”

While serving the public was important within her personal endeavors, she also chose public service as her profession prior to becoming an elected official. She has a professional background in public safety specific to victims and perpetrators of sexual

assault. She stated, “I’m a former parole officer, I’m a former advocate for domestic violence and sexual assault victims. I worked with sex offenders.” Her work within this population provided her with the opportunity to rise within the ranks of state government and garner statewide support. Ultimately, those experiences aided in her understanding government.

“Here in the state of Minnesota I was the Assistant Director of the Minnesota Program for Victims of Sexual Assault. My job was to organize in the rape crisis centers in the whole state. So when you’re doing that work, you’re kind of building up this network of people whose job it is to empower others, so you get this reputation and they get affiliated with this whole notion of empowerment.”

Her advocacy work culminated with the ability to position the needs of Minnesotans on the national stage with respect to victims of sex crimes. This too was another opportunity for her to network and have recognition outside of the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis. This time, it was from a national perspective. She described, “I mean I helped to found the National Coalition against Sexual Assault; so we are organizing women around the whole country to band together to bring legislation to Congress on behalf of victims of sexual assault. So I am one of the co-founders of that national coalition; I was that groups first national vice president.”

Following those experiences, Mrs. Belton ran for city council. It is obvious that her trajectory within city government that ultimately led to her becoming mayor was catapulted by her city council experience. She explains, “Had a good experience on the city council and in fact the last four years of my term as city council member, I was

elected by my colleagues to be city council president. So I ran for mayor after having served ten years in local government.”

Being city council president was a most high honor as she was elected by her peers to serve in that capacity. When it came time to decide if she would be the one to run for mayor, her background of serving on the city council and being city council president was a deciding factor. The exposure she experienced from having served in those positions proved to be invaluable in her quest for mayor.

“Because I had already spent ten years learning about managing the infrastructure, you know of the city. I had been elevated by my colleagues to be the spokesperson on behalf of the city council; and to be partners with the mayor representing the interests of the council. So I had some citywide exposure and some citywide experience working on big issues that affected the entire city.”

Although Mrs. Belton had obvious experience with managing the city as an elected official; a Black woman running for mayor in a city that was predominately Caucasian was still undoubtedly a challenge. Mrs. Belton discussed how the composition of the population of the city of Minneapolis was a hurdle in her decision to run. She would be moving from representing a specific segment of the city that was the only segment with a high Black population to representing the entire city.

“And I think the thing that makes race unique from some of the other races that you have studied, is that if you look at the overall population of the city of Minneapolis, in terms of people of color; people of color were a fraction of the total voting population. And when you look at Atlanta, and

you look at Washington, DC, Shirley (Franklin) and Sharon (Pratt), you know, they had, you know a core. I did not have a core. The vast majority of the people who were gonna elect me are gonna have to be majority people, they're gonna have to be white people, Caucasians.”

Originally she wanted to run for the Hennepin County Board of County Commissioners but was advised to go a different route and run for city council based on the color of her skin.

“I said I wanted to run for the County Board and this was before I ran for the city council. And my advisors said you should run for the city council first. To your point, you need to start at the local level, so go run for the city council, build the name and reputation for yourself in politics and then use that to run for the County Board. Because they believed that in 1982, 1983 Hennepin County was not prepared and the district that I lived in, in Hennepin County was not prepared to elect an African American. That was their assessment.”

“And again the view in '82, '83 was the county is not ready to elect a person of color. And so because they are not ready to elect a person of color, do city council. Do your service on the city council and we'll come back and try to use those same credentials and skills to try to position you at the County.”

The fact that the population is majority Caucasian and the lack of other Blacks to run for public office in the history of Minneapolis inhibited her decision to run for County Commission but also made her think twice about her run for mayor.

“And so I had to think about whether or not what I thought the barriers are for the constituents of the city to select me as a woman over men, given our history. To select me as a African woman over these other candidates, given our history. I mean I think in the history of the city of Minneapolis there had been on one other person of color elected to the city council and that was Van White and he was from a section of Minn. that was predominately African American. So what would the majority population do?”

Mrs. Belton and her advisors knew that in order for her to succeed she had to be packaged as a mayor for all people. She needed to appeal to the majority of the citizens of Minneapolis. If she was not successful at achieving that end, there would be no way she could win.

“And I think the thing we had to work on all the time was helping the public to know that I was the mayor for all the people and I was capable of being the mayor for all the people. Because I was African American didn’t mean that I was gonna be partial to the needs of the African American community above the needs of others. They had to trust me that I would always act in the best interest of the city, that didn’t mean and I had to explain this too, it didn’t mean that I didn’t have to have a focused strategy in area in the community where the greatest need was reflected.”

“I mean if people raised the question, you know, then we had to hit it head on. I’m the mayor for the whole city. I believe civil and human rights for all

people. We have to go to the language and I wanna call it rhetoric, but the message that just kind of reinforced that we are all in this together. And I think our matter was “a city that works” then we could tag on to it “a city that works for everyone.” Not just for you over here, but you over there. Because at the same time that some people would think oh you’re gonna be concerned with only people of color or African American’s.”

“Kitchen Cabinet”

Mrs. Belton stated that one the most significant components to her successful campaign and mayoral experience was due to her self-titled, “kitchen cabinet.” This kitchen cabinet was a comprised of a group of supporters, advisors, mentors and cheerleaders whom Mrs. Belton heavily utilized. They assisted Mrs. Belton in her decision to run, throughout her campaign and as well, while she was mayor. She spoke of her kitchen cabinet throughout her interview.

There was a coalition of women who were as she described, “bipartisan.” This group took a keen interest in the mayoral race and viewed the newly open seat as a prime opportunity for a woman. Mrs. Belton was an active participant in this group.

“So I was part of a network of women who were quite interested in politics, local politics or statewide politics and they had a vision for helping women to continue to progress in politics. And there were a group of women who were especially interested in and focused on the city council race, and their goal and objective was to have a viable woman candidate run for and be successful in winning the office of mayor of the

city of Minneapolis. We believed that this geographic area had you, know the right political construct to elect a woman.”

After much analysis by this network of women, the pool of possible candidates was identified. Mrs. Belton shared, “I was one of the women in that pool. And through a series of processes, you know, assessment and evaluation. I was identified as the candidate that would be most likely to beat any of the men that we believed would present themselves as candidates for mayor.” She went on to state how that vetting process was affirming and gave her the push she needed to embrace her decision to run. She stated, “That was wonderful, because you start out with women united to accomplish a goal. We were united as a group of Minneapolis women to get a woman elected mayor of Minneapolis. And when that became me, then those women were united around me. And they worked very hard to ensure my success.”

The small group of local women then grew their membership, state wide. She mentioned how she was astonished that she received so much support.

“The other beautiful thing is that I watched that effort that was focused among a group of women in Minneapolis grow to a network of women across the state of Minnesota. Because you’ll remember that I talked about the fact that at my job, I had to work statewide on a number of issues that were important to women, so I was well known across the state of Minnesota as an advocate for women. We were able to draw down on that statewide network for support as well as financial support and also physical support. So people came from communities all across Minnesota to door knock and to write checks.”

She also experienced this type of support on the national level. As an example of this national support, Mrs. Belton recounts, “We did some kind of big door knocking, Get Out The Vote event, and there was a bus load of women that came all the way from Chicago to Minneapolis to help get with our get out the vote. So our race got the attention of a lot of people.”

Also within her kitchen cabinet were men. Mrs. Belton explained that there were men who were quite supportive of her and also felt she was the right woman to be mayor.

“And the same was true for some men, particularly men who resonated with the discrimination that women felt. I mean they would say, I’ve got daughters, or I’ve got a granddaughter and these would be, you know, Caucasians and of course it would be African American’s but it was, you know everybody, you know, I shouldn’t say everybody; many people, many people who could relate to the campaign and relate to this opportunity because they wanted this for women. They wanted this for their daughters; they wanted it for their grandchildren who were girls. And they would express that to you directly.”

Most importantly, Mrs. Belton had to get the support of her family. While the support of others on a local, statewide and national scale was immensely helpful, she understood that her family and close circle of friends were the most imperative members of her kitchen cabinet.

“I had to vet with my family, I had to vet with my husband, my children were young so they didn’t really have a say. But I had to vet with my support system because if we were gonna do this, you know everybody

had to be prepared to pitch in, to be there to help. My girlfriends had to be there, I mean I had my political group but at the end of the day, I needed someone to back up my family and my kids. I mean there is a lot associated with this and I needed their support. Everyone that was part of my inner circle, my family circle, my extended family circle, extended family network, everybody said I will be there for you and they were. I mean they just were at every level.”

Issues Experienced Due to Gender

While Mrs. Belton had the support of many women on a local, statewide and national level, she still experienced some obstacles as she perceived with respect to her gender. In addition, she became more aware of how she was perceived by others due to her gender. Since the crime rate was at an all time high in Minneapolis during the time that she ran for mayor, she was faced with trying to mitigate the stereotype of women as soft or weak leaders who may not have the ability to make a difference in decreasing crime.

“So we didn’t really put any special messages together. Except those special messages that would reinforce me as a strong leader. That’s all we wanted to do. ‘You wanna fight crime?’ See because their view was, crime is a big issue, who’s a better crime fighter a man or woman? So I mean we had to reinforce the fact that I knew a lot about crime fighting.”

Also, Mrs. Belton had to confront general stereotypes related to gender and personal decisions she made related to parenting. She was questioned as to whether she

could handle the mayoral role while being a mother of young children. It is likely that would not have been a question had she been a man.

“But the other side of the gender role, was that I was a mother and I was a young mother and so there some people who wanted raise the issue about whether or not I should be an executive and running the city versus you know, a person whose primary job is at home. Well, come on! I was just on the city council for ten years. I was council president, I have figured how to manage my home and take care of my kids. A lot of women are taking care of their homes and taking care of their kids. What is new here?”

In addition to general scrutiny from others, Mrs. Belton had some difficulties with female reporters whom she felt were especially unfairly critical. This was another form of an issue that arose related to her gender because she felt their criticism was unfair and biased.

“During one point in the campaign, I actually spoke to a writer at the local newspaper and asked her why she was, why her writing seemed to especially critical of my campaign or of me; not so much the campaign just of me. Because it just seemed that she had gone a little bit out of her way to just really not be fair in her writing. So I had a conversation with her, I invited her in and whatever, and said ‘you know I just really want to ask this question’ because I didn’t think she was being fair, she that she was trying to bend over backwards by being nasty to me. You know she had some rationale which I didn’t accept so in my view, generally

speaking is that they treated me like I was the front runner and they didn't cut me any slack whatsoever."

Within the patriarchal power structure of the Black community is where Mrs. Belton said she experienced other obstacles because she was a woman. She shared a story about how the vetting process for running for office conducted by the elders in the Black community identified her as the candidate; but the Black men she was up against were reluctant to support her. As result, she opined, "But I think it is important to ask the question about the dynamic between African American females and African American males." She continued, "So I'm just saying I just think there's a whole body of research on the topic of the internal dynamics associated with power distribution and the assignment of power in the African American community." She encouraged me to further investigate that as a social scientist concerned with gender issues.

Style of Governing

Throughout the interview, Mrs. Belton often opined about her style of governance as being a good indicator for her success as mayor. She believed that her style of governance and leadership were beneficial to the city of Minneapolis. She described her leadership in several ways; "I mean if you keep in mind for me that my driver is partnership, collaboration; that means I better be a good listener. My agenda, my strategy was not to force people to come to my position but just to help them. Help them by being open to their ideas is better than trying to persuade them on a particular plan. I had a strategy." She said she was big fan of compromise and that helped her to foster good relationships with others. She stated, "So my view was let's compromise, let's negotiate.

I'm good at that, I'm good at that. And I tried my best to demonstrate my commitment to partner with them, that we would manage the city together."

Mrs. Belton said that she worked tirelessly to attempt to achieve common ground with her city council and for the most part, she felt she was successful. "And I think I had a reputation for building consensus. So that's my style of governing; it's collaborative and consensus building. And it's one of the reasons why I think we were able to make substantial progress against the agenda that I ran on."

What she did in particular, was to work behind the scenes to build a solid coalition. "So as long as you have a coalition of people on the city council that you are aligned with, then you can be pretty confident in being able to move the city and a particular agenda."

"And so it turned out I had a good working relationship with the new city council president. So now, when you have the city council president and the mayor and the coordinator, all on the same page, it was like the sweetheart deal that I had when I was working with Don Frazier. Because now I can work with the city council president and she can bring; she was a woman; so we could work with the city council president and she could help me deliver the city council on the agenda."

She felt her agenda required her to draw from her personal experiences and she felt that impacted her governance style. She explained, "My work was driven by my understanding and awareness of that experience. Not just African Americans, but other people of color and poor people. But my job was to close a gap. Because they won't move out of poverty unless they close a gap. So my job was to close a gap."

Legacy and Reflection of Successes; Pride in being first

Mrs. Belton describes that there was an actual report titled “Sharon Sayles Belton Accomplishments” that highlighted many of her successes throughout her eight years as mayor of the city of Minneapolis. She explained, “And so we have a report that we called the “Sharon Sayles Belton Accomplishments.” And it chronicles the whole eight years and it talks about every single thing that we said we were gonna do and every single thing that we got done. We got ninety percent of everything that we said we were gonna do, done.” This report is a source of pride for Mrs. Belton. She spoke of it fondly.

The components of that report are an outgrowth of the in depth analysis and benchmarking that Mrs. Belton and her team of city officials underwent with regard to the progress that was made on their goals. That progress was reported at the annual State of the City address. “So every year I would give a state of the city address; and so here is where everything is and I’d say this is what we’re gonna do. And at the end of the calendar year, I would report on what happened. So we kept our own scorecard, our own dashboard.”

Mrs. Belton elucidated that those accomplishments were not what just what she felt needed to happen, but were a reflection of the city’s needs. She said, “So when I looked at what I did as mayor, I needed to have part of that list of accomplishments, part of my agenda reflects the real issues that people in the city faced.” The issues ranged from improving schools to economic and neighborhood revitalization. Her accomplishments also included immeasurable endeavors such as bringing issues about race to the forefront.

“Well, I would say elevating our conversation in Minneapolis around race. The whole conversation around schools. Early childhood education and school choice. Don’t say school choice, just say schools, public schools. Improving public school outcomes. Those would be top of my list. I’d say housing, I’d say neighborhood economic development. Neighborhood development, housing, education and then I’d say of course the central river front.”

She also stated in her list of accomplishments that she and her team, “Grew the tax base, we grew the tax base, we build up the downtown, we established the central river front, we built affordable housing, we improved our public schools.” Because Mrs. Belton mentioned schools with the most frequency, “Schools, schools were really important. For a city to be strong and to attract families and business. You have to have good public schools. So I spent an inordinate amount of time working with the superintendent of the schools to ensure that we had quality schools,” improving schools appeared to the accomplishment of which she was most proud.

When it came to discussing elements of her mayoral experience for which she was most proud, Mrs. Belton discussed being the “first” with sincere pride. She considered it an honor to have been the first Black woman mayor of Minneapolis. She stated, “I take great pride in having achieved this. And I take great pride in what we accomplished over the eight year period of time.” However, with that pride was the understanding that she needed to produce. She described a sense of responsibility she felt to be a good role model and to give back.

“I think that there’s an enormous expectation that I think; you know kind of surfaces, oh my. It’s potentially a weight on your shoulder because not only are you kind of representing; I mean if you’re successful not only are you representing African Americans but you’re representing women. You know, there’s a lot of expectation that comes with being the first. There’s a lot of expectation.”

“Because I will tell you in many of the conversations that I had with people across the city during the course of the campaign, there were many people who were young and old who were black and white who talked about the fact that, “you’re the woman candidate in this office, you’re running for mayor, you’re doing something that I could have never done.” “You were achieving a goal and an objective that I could’ve never done.”

Because of the symbolic nature of her presence as the first Black woman mayor, Mrs. Belton understood the gravity of needing to do well and make the Black community proud.

“This was a particular strong comment coming from older women. ‘I never had this opportunity, I hope you win’. Because for them it was “yes, yes we can, we can do this.” We’ve always been capable and we’ve never really had our chance, you gotta do this, you gotta win because we gotta have our chance; we gotta prove to the world that we can do this. And that was just an enormous and overwhelming sentiment on the part of a lot of women, of all races.”

Most important to Mrs. Belton was that her opportunity to be the first was intended to open the door for other Black women to run for office. She felt that her winning the mayoral election was not about her; but what she could do for others who may be inspired by her.

“There is a certain amount of pride that comes with being elected the first.

But our objective as a group is that it would be the claim to fame. We never wanted to be the one and only. It was always about trying to open up the door or breakthrough the glass ceiling. I would be disappointed if I was the one and only. So the deal is, so what are gonna do now? What are gonna do next? How do we build on this? Because it wasn't about me, it wasn't about doing it just one time. So the one and only blah blah, that is not okay with me. So it's really about the next step. Where do we go from here? That's what I want to know, where do we go from here? So where's the Governor, where's the African woman governor?”

Mrs. Belton puts action behind her words and actively works to seek Black women candidates and support them. She offered, “I actually try to look for and support individuals, African American women who wanna run for public office.” Additionally she stated “So the things I am willing to do as an individual is to identify, work with, any candidates particularly African American women who wanna run for public office and I wanna help.”

Because helping those who come after her is so important, Mrs. Belton reflected on whether her achievements positively impacted Black women as opposed to women in general. She discussed her concern with her perception that white females tended to

benefit greater from her presence as a Black woman mayor than did Black women. It should be noted that Mrs. Belton was very uncomfortable discussing this notion as she doesn't want to appear to be critical to white women. She understands that white women were quite possibly the single most group of voters and supporters that helped to her to win the mayoral seat. She offered, "It wouldn't have happened given everything that we know about Minneapolis and the demographics. It really wouldn't have happened had not women, white women in this community really rallied behind the idea or notion; didn't back away from the vision to elect a woman mayor even when it turned out the best candidate was gonna be a Black woman."

But still, Mrs. Belton was perplexed by her perception that Black women were not the greater beneficiaries.

"What I'm trying to say that is I think it's easier for Caucasian women to enjoy the benefits of an experience that I've had as an African American woman than it has been for African American women to benefit from that which is this experience that I have. I would say, what I don't know is that there is any evidence whatsoever that the plight of African American women has changed dramatically. So I would like to look at; show me the research. Well first of all, the group of African American women that have achieved some level of whatever; I don't know what it says; well let's use social stratification, let's use that. I don't know if there's been enough of us. Well, you could probably do some regression and find this out.

Whether or not you could measure whether or not a measureable difference in the plight or the circumstances of African American women

versus white women. I think that would be really interesting to kind of frame out. Because my gut reaction says that more Caucasian women benefitted from any success that we as Black women have experienced to a greater degree than us as a group.”

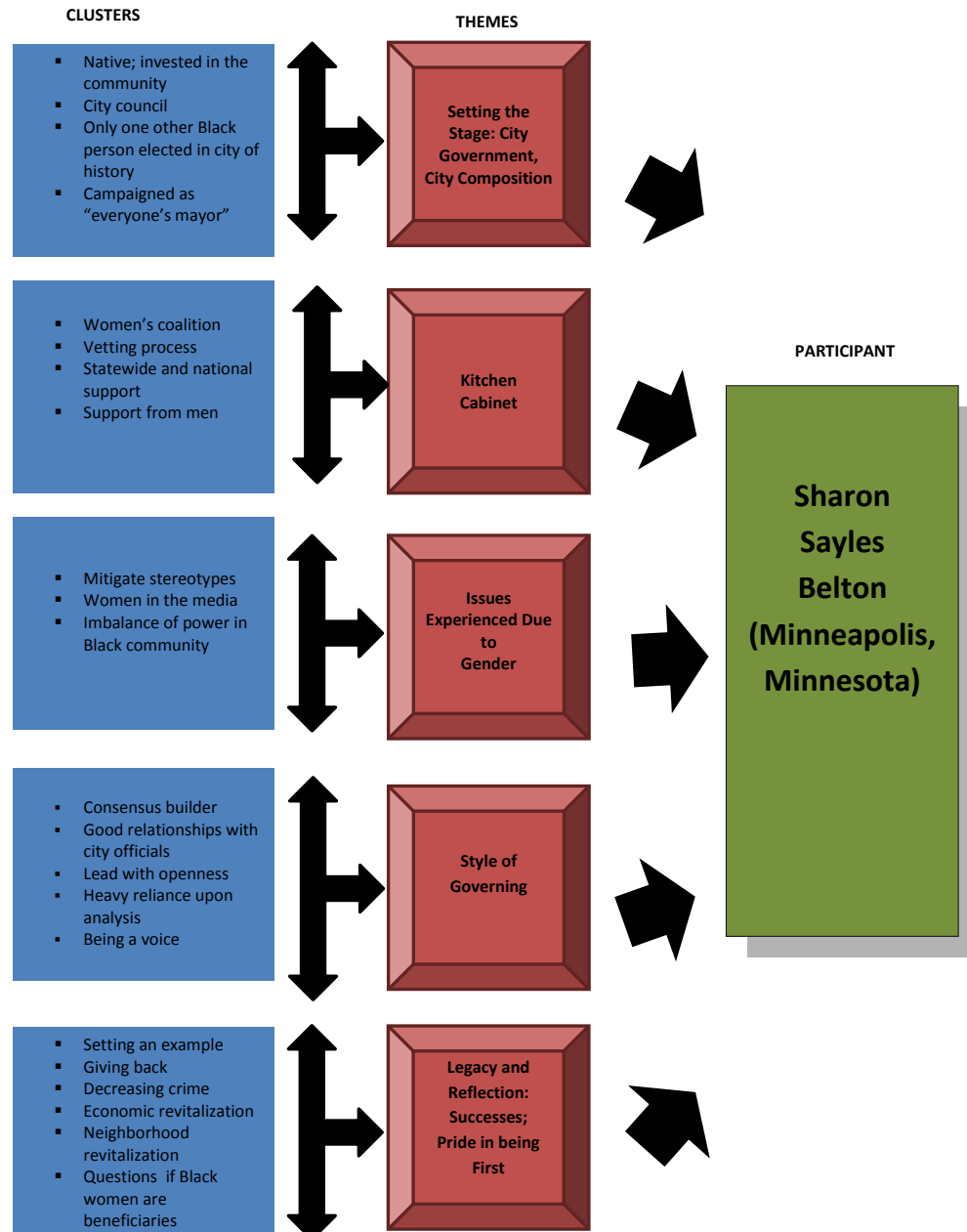


Figure 7. Thematic Analysis of Sharon Sayles Belton.

Table 11

Themes Unique to Individual Mayors

MAYORS	THEMES
Lottie Shackelford Little Rock, AR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. City pride 2. City-wide support; due to history of race relations 3. Preparation (PTA, training programs, city council) 4. Family and upbringing 5. Women in politics 6. First inconsequential to her, but important to the city and the nation 7. Subjective versus objective conflict regarding self-identification based on others expectations 8. Creating a pipeline for other Blacks women in politics
Sharon Pratt Washington DC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledges her frustrations with DC 2. Political capital was extremely beneficial 3. Was not expected to win and therefore campaign went under the radar 4. Family and being raised by single parent and extended family 5. Criticism and lack of support from other women 6. Race as a barrier with respect to expectations 7. Gender and political behavior 8. Changing the dialogue, and legacy of her tenure
Yvonne Johnson Greensboro, NC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Patchwork quilt of skills, experiences and tools to help her succeed 2. Being the first was significant 3. Great diversity among her grass roots support network 4. Felt like she was under the microscope 5. Faith was ever present 6. Being a role model to other women
Shirley Franklin Atlanta, GA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Running with reluctance; wasn't sure if she should run 2. Many felt it was the right time for a woman mayor 3. Conducted a self-assessment to make sure she was ready 4. Received a lot of criticism and scrutiny from the Black community and other women 5. Her tenure was impacted by racial, gendered and generational historic contexts 6. Personal characteristics that helped her to be successful as mayor
Sharon Sayles Belton Minneapolis, MN	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pathway to and through city government 2. Unique city population composition 3. "Kitchen Cabinet"; close network of supporters 4. Style of governing 5. Report: "SSB Accomplishments" 6. Issues encountered due to gender 7. Pride in being the "first"

Synthesis and Contextualization of Themes

The final stage of the thematic analysis is the synthesis of individual themes into a broader set of dimensions that captures the experiences across all six of the participants. This is the stage that summarizes the combined meaning of the themes identified for each participant. Utilizing the themes that were determined through the processes of phenomenological analytic rigor, an overall answer to the research question materialized. The six Black women mayors of this study did indeed experience profound impacts to their mayoral experiences that stemmed from their identification with being Black, a woman, and often times more significant, their identification with being the first Black woman mayor. The researcher identified nine common themes based on the information that was gleaned from the themes identified in chapter five, that were derived from the transcripts of each of the participant. The nine common themes are as follows are listed in the order by which how frequently they occurred among the participants:

1. Volunteer Work; Community Support
2. Successes while in Office
3. First: Opening Doors for Others
4. First Woman Mayor; Gender and Expectations
5. Women vs. Women
6. Native; Invested in the City
7. Prior Elected Office; Political Acumen
8. Family
9. Power Struggle within the Black Community

To better demonstrate the frequency of the nine common themes among the participants Table 12 is displayed. Participants are listed vertically in the order that they were interviewed and themes are listed from right to left with the themes having the most frequency listed first followed by the themes with less frequency.

Table 12

Common Themes

	Volunteer Work: Community Support	Successes while in Office	First: Opening Doors for Others	First Woman Mayor: Gender & Expectations	Women vs. Women	Native: Invested in their City	Prior Elected Office: Political Acumen	Family	Power Struggle within Black Community
Lottie Shackleford	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Sharon Pratt	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Sheila Dixon	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Shirley Franklin	X	X	X	X	X				X
Yvonne Johnson	X	X	X			X	X	X	
Sharon Sayles Belton	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X

Three salient dimensions that surfaced from the totality of the interviews and the nine common themes which address the research question are, experience, intersectionality and legacy. The participants' perceptions of how race and gender impacted their mayoral reality were made evident in the prior experiences that helped them to be prepared to hold such a position of power; the experiences they endured due to the nexus of their race and gender, and what they accomplished while in office, with the obligation to pay it forward for other women and people of color. Table 13 illustrates this synthesis and the value of the three dimensions in correlation to the nine common themes. Figure 5.11 Synthesis of Themes at the end of this chapter demonstrates the relationship between the themes and the dimensions.

Table 13

Dimensions and Corresponding Themes

DIMENSIONS	THEMES OF COMMONALITY
Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Volunteer Work: Community Support 2. Native; Invested in the City 3. Prior Elected Office; Political Acumen 4. Family
Intersectionality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. First Woman Mayor; Gender and Expectations 6. Women vs. Women 7. Power Struggle within Black Community
Legacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Successes while in Office 9. “First”: Open Doors for Others; Giving Back

Experience

Each of these women are indeed leaders in their own right. Being mayor of one of the one hundred largest U.S. cities was no easy feat for any of them, but what helped them to feel prepared for a position of such prominence and influence were prior life experiences; both personal and professional. Their life experiences are a basis from which their ideals, norms and mores were shaped by either race, gender or the combination of both. The experiences relative to their investment in their community, prior elected experience and family are areas where their race and gender served to assist in their preparation for the role of mayor.

Having a background in community service and volunteer work was a strong commonality that was found among all participants. While for some, volunteer work

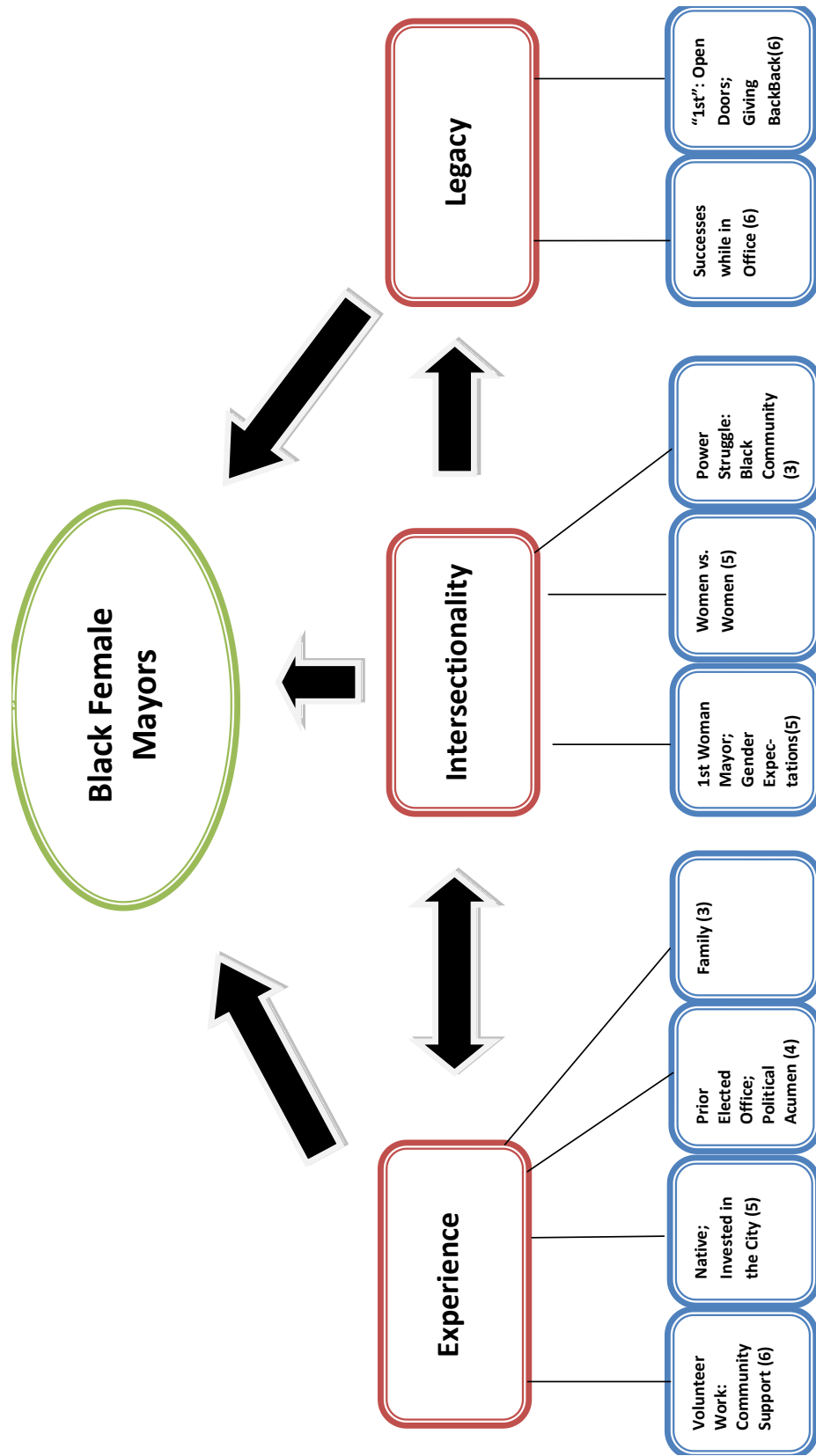


Figure 8. Synthesis of Themes

offered opportunities to hone leadership skills, for all, it presented an avenue for the participants to amass a broad base of community support. For Yvonne Johnson of Greensboro North Carolina, it was volunteer work that she felt helped her to be sensitive to and understand the needs of all people. Councilwoman Johnson discussed how vital the international communities were in supporting her while campaigning and throughout her term as mayor. She made it her priority to understand the varying cultural nuance and behaviors, attending every event she could, gaining the reputation of the mayor that is everywhere. Race was significant from the stand point of Councilwoman Johnson embracing all cultures.

For Lottie Shackleford, she described volunteering as one of her favorite activities. She credits her history volunteerism within the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and another group called Black Female Action that provided an avenue for her to display and fine tune her leadership skills while serving her community. The desire to help other women, led her to join the PTA and to help organize Black Female Action. It was those organizations that led to her envision her role in public office.

The concern and passion to contribute toward the betterment of their communities both as volunteers and as elected officials is aligned with the framework that Black women politicians operate under the auspices of an “ethic of care.” This ethic of care is a part of the collective responsibility for Black women to feel compelled to not just be a part of the process of change, but to help lead it (Harmon-Marting, 1994; Bass, 2009). The Black Identity theory is also applicable in that it refers to a sense of obligation for Black elected officials to assist in improving the Black community; especially by

mobilizing individuals within the Black community (Keller, 1978; Cross 1985; Prestage, 1991; Harris, 1995).

What also may have assisted in their desire to serve their communities is the fact that many of them were born and raised in the communities that they later presided over. Under the dimension of experience, the next most significant and frequently occurring common theme was that five out of the six women were natives of the city where they governed. As result, they perceived they had a natural inclination to want to invest in their hometowns. Many of them stated that their motivation to run was in large part born out of their experience of growing up in the city and their desire to be a change agent, empowering others to help to improve the city. Being mayor was not just a job for them, it was a calling.

With respect to race, for some, that calling was directly related to the history of race in their city. For Lottie Shackelford of Little Rock, not only did she have a strong affinity for the city due to her being born and raised there, but she understood the gravity of electing a Black mayor in Little Rock meant given the strained history of race relations. She had the majority of the city supporting her, as she perceived that Little Rock residents viewed her being mayor as a way to eradicate the negative reputation of Little Rock left from the 1957 school desegregation crisis. Little Rock residents wanted her to do succeed while in office. Race had a positive impact for her. The pride in her city and desire to remove that negative cloud provided motivation and encouragement as she campaigned for and governed as mayor.

For Sharon Pratt, race had a different impact. Also a native of her city in Washington, DC, race, she felt, was a motivator with respect to her decision to run and

her campaigning efforts; but from a different vantage point as compared to Ms. Shackelford in Little Rock. Ms. Pratt is a champion for statehood in Washington, DC and she perceived that the lack of greater authority within home rule in her city and nonexistence of statehood was tied to race. So for Ms. Pratt, wanting to change status quo and remove the obstacles associated with the authority of the federal government was a motivator stemming from the impact of race.

Being natives, these women perceived that they understood fully the needs of their cities. Sharon Sayles Belton of Minneapolis provides a different perspective as it pertains to race. Prior to her becoming elected to city council and then mayor, only one other Black person had been elected in the history of Minneapolis. Minneapolis, a city with only eighteen per cent Black population when she was elected in 1994, had never had a Black mayor, nor a woman mayor. Mrs. Belton perceived that she had the pressure of working extra hard to make certain that she appealed to everyone. For Mrs. Belton who is a very prideful woman, race had an impact from the perspective that while she was sensitive to needs of the predominately Black community where she was born and raised, she was otherwise encumbered by trying to ensure that she was not viewed as someone who did not cater to just the Black community, but served the entire city.

While being a native was not a shared experience for all of the participants, serving in a leadership capacity was not a foreign experience. This is especially true for the four of the six participants who were elected officials, in particular, they were city councilwomen before being elected as mayor. With respect to their professional backgrounds, prior elected experience had a more than obvious correlation toward them feeling prepared to hold the office of mayor. Of those four participants who were city

councilwomen, three were elected by their peers on the council as mayor pro tem or council president which is a position in essence, viewed as a vice mayor. Serving in a leadership role for the city, they felt, proved to be an outstanding training ground for understanding the role of and performing as mayor.

The occasion that four out of the six serving in an elected official capacity is aligned with the theoretical construct of the ambition theory which posits that that one's political behavior is directly linked to the elected office that one desires to hold and political goals they might have (Schlessinger, 1966; Black 1972). Previous studies have indicated that women generally were lacking in political ambition and were less likely to value it (Kirkpatrick, 1976; Fowlkes, Perkins & Rinehart, 1979). That was clearly not the case for these six mayors.

While not all of the participants were elected officials prior to becoming mayor, they all had a history of political involvement and had familiarity with city government. Whether it was in the case of Shirley Franklin who served as a cabinet member under her two mayoral predecessors and led major fundraising campaigns for other candidates; or in the case of Sharon Pratt who served in a leadership role with the Democratic National Convention and spearheaded other noteworthy campaigns; having access to political capital was critical. Research has shown that women generally have more difficulty with gaining access to political capital in comparison to men due to the perceived lack political experience (Lowndes, 2004).

It is also significant to note that research indicates that most women who are elected to office begin their political careers in local government. Local government is considered the gateway office (MacManus, 1981). However it is of import to note that for

all of the participants in this study, none of them ascended to more far reaching political offices such as state or federal representation, beyond the office of mayor.

What was also compelling within the realm of their backgrounds and prior experiences, was that the majority of the participants credit their family and how they were raised as critical to their ability to mitigate the some of the potential hardships of life that accompany being a person of color and a woman in America. While this only emerged as a theme for three of the participants, at least five out of six mentioned to some extent throughout the interview how significant their family and upbringing were to their development as a leader, as a woman and as a Black person in America. As they stated, these women were raised with the value of appreciating the history of struggles of Blacks in this country, but were taught to not let those struggles hinder their progress. As many of them explained, family was a significant factor in how they were able to rise above and hold a position that for five out of six participants, no woman had held before. Research supports the notion that family is a key component of the collective responsibility that motivates a Black woman to run for office (Rogers, 2005).

From the perspective of the participants, prior experience proved to be an overwhelming determinant in how they would be prepared for and mitigate the sometimes negative effects of being both Black and a woman in pursuit of a chief executive office of a major city. However ingrained in each of their personas was the ethic of care, typical of Black women, that was a positive force influencing their desire for public service. Their prior experience aided in defining who these women were and prepared them for elected office.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a theoretical construct that refers to the ways in which the nexus between race and gender interact in the everyday lived experiences of Black women (Byrd & Stanley 2009; Parker, 2005; Hill Collins, 2001). More commonly, Black women are referred to as the “double outsider,” particularly in the political realm because they are not members of the power elite; they are not white and are not men. Sharon Pratt provided an insightful quote regarding how Black women are often overlooked within the polity, “when they say women, they mean white, and when they say Black they mean men.”

The women in this study shared various personal experiences in relation to intersectionality. While they did not themselves define those experiences as intersectionality, nor use the exact term, they did provide stories of how they felt they were treated based on the fact that they were Black and or a woman. The mere fact that the participants had stories that were related to either race or gender in and of itself spoke to the experience of the societal burden of being a “double outsider” in not just the world of politics, but in America. Conversely, there were stories shared where intersectionality was not experienced negatively. None the less, all of those stories spoke to how their race and gender did provide an impact and thus greatly affected their mayoral experience.

Five out of the six participants were not only the first Black woman mayor but also the first woman mayor for their city of any race. While for some, that may have appeared to have been an obstacle, but for Shirley Franklin of Atlanta and Sharon Sayles Belton of Minneapolis, they spoke of the lack of prior female mayoral leadership in their cities as providing the perfect window of opportunity for them. It was as if it was their

cities were acutely primed for female leadership. Also, in the case of Sheila Dixon, who at the time that she ran for mayor in 2006, all of the prominent political leadership positions were held by women. This window of opportunity for her was empowering.

But there were a substantial amount of expectations that came with being the first woman. They stated that they felt the need to mitigate stereotypes and prove that they were strong leaders; and because they were Black, prove that they could be mayors to everyone, not just the Black community. Five out of six described intense scrutiny and criticism they received from the very moment they decided to run for mayor which then carried over to when they became mayor. This scrutiny and criticism came from all sectors of the community and most notably, the media. For the participants who described instances where they were felt they were either unfairly portrayed or targeted unjustly by the media, it was more often than not, another woman that was the culprit.

Instances where women were critical and unsupportive of the participants were common among the interviews. Whether it was being criticized for how they communicated and came across to others as in the case of Sharon Pratt and Shirley Franklin, or it was the strained relationships they had with other female city officials as in the case of Sheila Dixon; criticism and non-supportive behavior displayed by other women was troubling and in some instances presented itself as an obstacle for the participants. Even more disheartening to them was the criticism they received from other Black women. Shirley Franklin spoke of generational criticism she received from an older Black woman who shared with Ms. Franklin that she felt a woman running for mayor was “out of place.”

Participants also explained how they had to mitigate the stereotypes of Black mayors generally. Many of them perceived that some constituents expected that they would cater only to the Black community or that their reign of governance would be somehow ineffectual to everyone. Some shared that they had to ensure that they were “everyone’s mayor.” But in doing so, Sharon Sayles Belton and Sharon Pratt could not deny that their experience as a Black woman, a Black person in America did shape or influence their mayoral behaviors. Their perception was that it was the understanding of the Black experience that helped them to better identify with and address the needs of the entire city.

While one might expect that for a Black woman running for office that she may have received overwhelming support from the Black community; this was not the case for all of the participants. Arguably, the structure of the Black community is matriarchal with a dominant presence of authoritative or strong Black women, however the power base lies with Black men. This sentiment was made very clear by Sharon Pratt, Shirley Franklin and Sharon Sayles Belton. Mrs. Belton described an informal vetting process conducted by the elders of the Black community for political candidates. Mrs. Belton was in competition with men and stood as the only woman in that process. When it was decided that Mrs. Belton would receive the endorsement, to her surprise, the other male candidates did not support her.

As the participants described their perception of the imbalance of power in the Black community, they discussed it from the standpoint of disappointment, frustration and even inquired about more research to be conducted on that topic. While the participants were women of prominence and leadership within not just the Black

community, but the entire city, they still had to endure power struggles relative to their gender. These struggles were so prevalent that they emerged as a theme, in particular within the context of the Black community. These experiences were highlighted as a result of how their race and gender framed their interactions with others and how others perceived them.

Legacy

When taking into account that the participants were the first of their kind to serve as mayor, what they accomplished is critical in evaluating the effectiveness of Black women in mayoral office. These women are trailblazers and had the pressure to succeed while in office and to prove wrong any doubters or naysayers. While breaking new ground, these women did not want struggles they endured being a “first Black woman mayor” to go in vain. Not only did they have an earnest desire to make a difference for their cities, there was a thirst based on their race and gender to excel, and exceed expectations.

What the participants accomplished while in office was in their minds, essential to their mayoral experience. Throughout every interview participants shared the many accomplishments and success stories that occurred throughout their mayoral terms. For every participant this part of their legacy is a source of pride and celebration. While only one of the participants is still in elected office, all of the participants are able to continue to enjoy the fruits of their governance and the appreciable impact they made on local government policy.

In addition to the sentiment of being proud of the tangible changes to the city that governed, the overwhelming sentiment expressed in relation to their legacy was this

notion of their perceived responsibility or obligation to ensure that their presence as the first Black woman mayor was not a symbolic one time occurrence, but that it would open doors for other Blacks and Black women to be elected; not just as mayor but for political involvement generally. This harkens to the concept of the ethic care. All of the participants expressed their disappointment with the low numbers of Black women who are elected officials throughout this country. Lottie Shackelford wondered if she did enough, while Sharon Sayles Belton wondered if Black women truly benefited from her trailblazing presence or was just women generally.

While some reflected on if they did enough for other women and Blacks, Yvonne Johnson works to ensure that she is a good role model for youth providing different example of what a politician looks like; not male and not Caucasian. All of the women were deeply concerned about paying it forward; recognizing that their terms of office were indeed bigger than them. Due to their race and gender, and how rare Black women are in mayoral office, or elected in office period, the participants had the pressure to not only excel for their own self efficacy, but to shine and illuminate a path for other Black women to follow.

Making an impact and leaving a legacy is of extreme value to the participants. It is not enough to for them to be known as their city's first Black woman mayor, it is what they achieved while serving that matters most to them. For many, the label of being the first was inconsequential. They wanted to be known as a Black woman who made a difference and made a substantial impact for other Black women who wanted to run.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

The role of a mayor is integral within local governance. Their leadership and influence directly effectuates outcomes for the cities over which they preside. For big city mayors, their impact extends beyond local government and into the national policy arena. The way an individual plays the role of mayor can be influenced by his\her perception of their own identity. However, within the realm of academic research dedicated to mayoral leadership and African Americans in politics, Black female mayors have largely been ignored. In particular, there are no known attempts at investigating the intersection of race and gender in understanding Black women as mayors. Perceptions of their lived experiences as mayors, relative to their racial and gendered identities is the focus of this research.

Through the use of Phenomenological research methods, this qualitative study answers the question, how do Black women big city mayors perceive their racial and gendered identities impacting their experiences as mayor? The participants selected in this study are the only six individuals in our nation's history to have been the first Black women to serve as mayor in the category of the 100 largest U.S. cities. Face to face, in depth interviews provided data from which to analyze their perceptions.

Phenomenological analyses, complemented by ethnographic analyses assist in arriving at thematic conclusions to aide in understanding experiences of identity unique to Black women mayors. The research uncovered nine themes that were then synthesized into three dimensions: Experience, Intersectionality, and Legacy. How each of the six mayors

dealt with the issues surrounding the intersection of race and gender was shaped by contextual factors.

Conclusion

Utilizing the framework of intersectionality it was assumed that the mayoral experiences of the participants would in some way be shaped by the effects of being both Black and a woman; a race and gender combination that is in the minority within the polity. Specifically, the participants would define their racial and gendered experiences as reflective of how they interacted within the dominant white male political culture.

The participants revealed that both race and gender did indeed shape their experiences; however those associated with intersectionality were not perceived to be structured by external forces, but rather internal elements related to their sub populations. The most impactful experiences were due to either race or gender issues occurring within the context of either their relationships with other women, or within the Black community; thus exposing a finding unique to these six women; that their experiences were not shaped by intersectionality as it is traditionally defined for women of color within the larger context of America. This finding might suggest a new construct of intra-sectionality that compliments inter-sectionality. I define intra-sectionality as identity conflict stemming from experiences occurring within one's own ethnic and gender based populations. For the participants of this study, it was primarily issues within the Black community and with other women, not men that were most profound.

Notwithstanding the contextual effects of who preceded them as mayor and the nature of their city; the six participants expressed shared themes impacting their term as mayor. All participants discussed the role of prior experiences serving as foundation for

their ability to deal with issues encountered as a result of gender and race. In addition, the participants all recognized a different form of intersectionality influencing their mayoral experiences. Lastly, these six participants had passionate views about the significance of their role as breakthrough mayors and the resulting legacy that they strived to create; they hoped that doors were opened for other Blacks and women in politics.

For five out of six, there were no women who preceded them as mayor (the exception, Yvonne Johnson). For two of the six, (Yvonne Johnson and Sharon Sayles Belton) there were no Black male mayors who preceded them. Who came before them, and if they were Black mayors or women mayors, appeared to have been a determining factor as to how they perceived they were treated by others in relationship to their race and gender. In other words, their experiences dealt with race or gender in a unique fashion, and not necessarily simultaneously. For the instances where gender was emphasized, many occurrences were as result of behaviors exhibited by other women.

Three of the six cities had a Black population that comprised more than half of the total population, and in only one city, Minneapolis, the Black population was not sizeable, less than a fifth. As a result, the situational factor of being mayor of a predominately Black city allowed for there to be less perceived concern with issues experienced from race, but more focus on gender. When issues of race were mentioned, they were within the context of the Black community and dealt more with social status and generational factors; for example, the Black middle class. In essence, the perceived impact of race for the Black woman mayor of Baltimore with a Black population of sixty-three per cent is vastly different than the Black woman mayor of Minneapolis with a Black population of eighteen per cent.

Due to the limited numbers of Black women politicians in America, and as well, Black women in local government, there is little research that provides any insight into their experiences or understanding who they are, as leaders and policy makers. This study provides a small window into their lived experiences and can inform the literature as to how identity, intersectionality and the construct of intra-sectionality impacted their governance.

Limitations of Research Methods

Phenomenology is the study of lived experiences from the perception of the participants. This is an extremely subjective exercise of research chocked full of systematic rigor. Reviewing taped interviews and transcriptions, coding data and synthesizing themes are accomplished only by the researcher. The use of reflexive journaling, consistently reviewing data and feedback from my dissertation committee served as the only mechanisms for member checking which can aid in substantiating validity and credibility. Phenomenology as a course of research is consistently criticized for its' low degree of validity, however it is a burgeoning form of methodology for research aimed at gaining a better understanding of a group of individuals who are rare to literature.

Also, because phenomenology encourages the use of small research populations the generalizability of the research findings can be questionable. The stringent thematic analysis methods applied to the review of transcripts allow for the findings to be specific to the actual participants. Findings can be used to inform the literature on the experience of a particular group but may be challenged to go further as to make broad generalizations about said group.

Implications for Further Research

Research should continue to examine the impact of race and gender in politics. The origin of this genre of study within political science and public affairs stems from the time period in American history where civil rights was common discourse and the emergence of politicians of color was noteworthy. Fifty years later, it is still noteworthy. While America has become more diverse in many ways, the electorate in no way proportionally mirrors its' constituents. One of the mechanisms by which diversity can be increased within the polity is for there to be a greater understanding of who gets elected and what they encounter while serving.

Further research can determine how race and gender impact the policy making process for politicians. That is, to examine actual policy outputs and to determine what impact if any, race and gender may have had. This study could be replicated toward varying public offices; for example, Black women who are in cabinet positions for governors and even presidents. It would also be compelling to understand better the experiences of women of color of other nationalities to note any differences or similarities.

Within the study of Black mayors and women politicians, it would be helpful for other researchers to have an enhanced understanding of Black women in politics as there are unique factors that set them apart from either Black male mayors, or other female mayors. From the participants' perspective, supporting their concerns about the inequity between men and women within the Black community, is the fact that studies on Black mayors and Black politicians tend to focus more on men; leaving a gap in research for Black women. The participants requested that there be more scholarly inquiry conducted

in that regard, as they felt this divide within the Black community provided an impediment toward their leadership. Clearly, more research needs to be conducted on how minority elected officials encounter and mitigate conflict within their own communities.

Pertaining to the participants' experiences both with other women and within the Black community, the theoretical construct of intra-sectionality introduced as a result of this study should be further explored. This research examines a rare but influential population and has provided us with a divergent perspective on how race and gender intersect.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Decision to run:

1. Research indicates that most women who decide run for office start at the local level. Why did you decide to run for the office of mayor?
2. What prior experiences helped you to feel prepared to run for the office of mayor?
 - a. Did you have mentors and how did they help you?
 - b. Did you have political capital and how did that help you?
 - c. Did you have prior experience in local government?
3. Were you asked/encouraged by community leaders, elected officials, or political parties to run for mayor?
 - a. Briefly describe the support you received.
4. When you made your decision to run, did you ever think about the fact that you would be the first Black woman mayor?
 - a. What was the impact did this have your decision to run?
 - b. Was this a motivating or discouraging factor?

Campaign:

1. Was race/ethnicity a significant factor? What made it important?
2. What role did gender play in your campaign?
3. Were the impact of race and gender ever mutually exclusive throughout your campaign?
4. Describe any barriers or obstacles encountered while campaigning.
5. While understanding that winning the election is important, were there particular events or activities that were noteworthy during your campaign?
6. Media has a substantial impact on a candidate's range of electability. How a candidate is portrayed in the media is critical. Research shows that there exist gender differences in how candidates and their campaigns are covered.
 - a. How did you feel you were portrayed by the media during your campaign?
 - b. You had media endorsements from _____ and _____ were there others you wanted but didn't get?
 - a. What do you feel was the reason why you did not get those targeted endorsements?
 - b. Was there anything done that caused to feel they were being unfair?
 - c. Did you receive support from the media for your platform/proposed policy agenda during your campaign?

Relationships:

1. Women elected officials have been found to have strong ties to the community and involve the public more within their unique style of decision making. In particular, Black women politicians are found to operate with an “ethic of care.”
 - c. What were some of the community groups you were involved with?
 - d. What was your level of involvement?
 - e. Did you receive support from community organizations during your campaign?
 - f. Did any community organizations oppose your campaign? If so, which ones?
2. Support from the Black community and in particular, the Black middle class has proven to be a key component to the success of a Black candidate.
 - a. What role did the Black community have in your campaign?
 - b. What role Black Middle Class supporting your campaign?
3. Did you encounter difficulties in receiving support from other (non-black) communities?
 - a. Do you feel those difficulties were linked toward your gender, race, or both?

Mayoral Term:

1. The structure of city governance can possibly hinder the power, authority, or influence of a mayor. For example, in some cities, mayors are more spokespersons or ambassadors for a city, while in others they are more policy makers.
 - a. When you took office, what was your perception or job of the mayor?
 - b. What aspects of city government presented difficulties?
 - i. Your role as mayor within the structure of government
 - ii. Other municipal actors
 - c. What seemed to work in your favor?
 - d. Do you feel your experience would have been different if there was a different form of government? How so?
2. Research dedicated to Black mayors often discusses how the “state of the city” once they took office had an impact on their ability to make a difference. The phrase “hollow prize” was coined to describe how when Black mayors took office it was a highly symbolic achievement for the Black community, but when the state of the city was dismal, it provided extreme barriers for them to be effective.
 - a. How would you describe the state of the city when you took office with respect to:
 - i. The economy
 - ii. The employment
 - iii. Crime
 - iii. Community and race relations
 - iv. Federal support
3. Relationships within city governance are critical.
 - a. Describe the support you received from city council.
 - b. Describe the support you received from city manager and staff.
 - c. Describe the support you received from community groups.
 - d. Describe the support you received from other politicians.
 - i. Female
 - ii. Black

4. Women politicians are known to have a collegial style of leadership and more often than not utilize a team approach toward decision making and leadership.
 - a. What kind of leader are you?
 - b. How would others describe your leadership style?
 - i. Community
 - ii. Municipal actors
 1. City council
 2. City staff
5. Race and gender have been found to have significance within politics. Being that your race and gender are in the minority within politics, and in particular local government politics;
 - a. Reflecting back on your term in office:
 - i. What role did race play in your governance?
 - ii. What role did gender play in your governance?
 - b. Were there experiences or obstacles encountered as a result of race and gender ever mutually exclusive?
 - c. Was your experience as mayor in any way shaped by your race or gender, or both?
 - d. If you had to prioritize which had the greatest impact on your governance, what would be first, race or gender?
 - e. Did you feel sense of obligation to support issues/legislation specific to the Black community?
 - f. Did you feel sense of obligation to support issues/legislation specific to women?

Post Mayoral Term:

1. Did you make a difference, if so how?
2. What advice would you have for the next Black woman who decides to run for mayor in your city?
3. What advice would have for a woman who strives to be the first Black mayor in their city?
4. Given what little research exists on Black women mayors, is there other information you feel we should know?

Appendix B: Informed Consent



INFORMED CONSENT

Department: School of Environmental Studies and Public Affairs

TITLE OF STUDY: The Significance of Identity in Politics for Big City Mayors: An

Exploratory Analysis of Black Women

INVESTIGATOR(S): Dr. Lee Bernick PhD, Principal Investigator and

Constance Brooks, Student Investigator

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: Dr. Lee Bernick, 702-895-1068

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to address gaps in public affairs research dedicated to Black elected officials, specifically, Black women mayors. Due to the lack of research, we still do not fully understand the issues and concerns unique to Black women mayors; especially with regard to governance. An in depth analysis Black women mayors and the issues they confronted while both running for office and then in office will provide a greater understanding of the intersection of gender and race. With greater understanding, Black women mayors can receive more support to aid them in achieving success in public service.

Participants

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are one of only six African American women in history to have served as the first Black woman mayor in six of the 100 largest United States cities.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Participate in a face-to-face 90-minute audio-recorded interview.

Benefits of Participation

There may or may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope that this research will allow for a greater understanding of the concerns and issues unique to Black women mayors. In turn, Black women mayors can then receive more support to aid them in achieving success in public service.

Risks of Participation

There are risks involved in all research studies. Since you were a public official and your record in office is public information, this study has only minimal risks.

*Approved by the UNLV IRB. Protocol #1201-4025M
Received: 03-30-12 Approved: 04-09-12 Expiration: 04-08-13*

Participant Initials _____

1 of 2

TITLE OF STUDY: **Black Mayors and Public Policy: An Exploratory Study**

Cost /Compensation

There will not be a financial cost to you to participate in this study. The interview will take approximately 90 minutes of your time. You will not be financially compensated for your time. If you would like a copy of the completed research one will be provided.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Dr. Lee Bernick, Principal Investigator at 702-895-1068. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact **the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 702-895-2794.**

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Confidentiality

This study has a unique population and anonymity cannot be protected. In our interview, if you indicate something is “off the record” that will be honored and not attribution will be made to you. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be destroyed.

Participant Consent:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

Participant Name (Please Print)

Consent to audio record the interviews

Date

Participant Name (Please Print)

*Approved by the UNLV IRB. Protocol #1201-4025M
Received: 03-30-12 Approved: 04-09-12 Expiration: 04-08-13*

Participant Initials _____

2 of 2

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